

Enwhitening Haitian darkness

Comparing US foreign policy officials' discursive legitimisations of the US Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the US intervention in Haiti (1994-6)

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Abstract

This research compares US foreign policy officials' discursive legitimisations of the US Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the US intervention of Haiti (1994-6). Inspired by contemporary news reports that continue historical discourses of supposed Haitian incapability for self-governance, this thesis sheds light on the similarities of such discourses with US foreign policy discourses in 1914-5 and 1991-6. This thesis aims to undercut such discourses through highlighting the role of international and US involvement in Haitian turmoil. Although research has been conducted into both interventions, their discursive legitimisations by US foreign policy officials have not been researched nor compared. The sources were drawn from the Foreign Relations of the United States (1914-5) and the Foreign Policy Bulletin (1991-6), and analysed through critical discourse analysis, guided by concepts such as standards of civilisation, racialisation and colour-blind racism. This thesis finds that the 1915 Occupation relied on a discursive civilisational Self/Other dichotomy, US exceptionalism, explicit stereotypes of supposed Haitian racial backwardness, and imperial standards of civilisation. As civilisation was seen to be both learned and hereditary, US foreign policy officials constructed the US as helpfully administering the Haitians their civilisational cure, allowing the US to claim to intervene on behalf of Haitian sovereignty, while actually obliterating it. The 1994 intervention relied on a similar civilisational Self/Other dichotomy, although now based on US standards of civilisation that had become discursively connected to international institutions while simultaneously grounded in US exceptionalism. This dichotomy was instantiated through relying on specific renditions of both Haitian and US history, naturalising the existing racial hierarchy between Haiti and the US. Again, the intervention was constructed as act of helpfulness. However, the implicitness of the racial hierarchy meant the intervention was constructed as a Haitian solution, while in actuality imposing US-ideological policies. In sum, while the 1994 discourse did so much more implicitly, both interventions combined racialised notions of Haitian backwardness with US exceptionalism, refiguring Haitian sovereignty compatible with US imperial oversight. The discourse of black Haitian incapability underwrote both interventions, and might still do so. This calls for a reconfiguration of the relationship between the international community and Haiti, in order to end the imperially-created self-fulfilling prophecy of black Haitian governmental incapability.

Keywords: *Haiti, US, assumptions of racialised inferiority, (colour-blind) racism, (standards of) civilisation*

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1. Introduction

‘The failed state of Haiti is once again spiralling into anarchy and possibly civil war.’¹ ‘It’s a siege, it’s a war: Haiti’s gangs tighten violent grip in lethal insurrection.’² “‘There is no hope’: Crisis pushes Haiti to brink of collapse.”³ These are just some examples of recent news reports on Haiti, from diverse news outlets such as *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *FOX News*, or my native Dutch *NOS*, that generally paint the picture of a deeply failed state, characterised by severe disorder, virulent gang violence and the occasional lynching mob.⁴ Much attention is paid to the ongoing political crisis that has seen several gangs gain control over large parts of Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince. A March 2024 United Nations [UN] report estimated the number of casualties due to gang violence in 2024 upwards of 1,500 already.⁵ The UN has authorised an international police force in order to curb the violence, although at the time of writing, it has yet to be deployed.⁶ The image painted is clear: Haiti is in severe trouble, and Haitian government is unable to resolve it.

This, however, is a selective image, as it leaves out the adverse role that centuries of foreign involvement in a nominally independent Haiti have played in weakening Haitian government or producing social unrest. From the 1791 start of the Haitian Revolution and the subsequent 1804 declaration of independence from France, Haiti has experienced repeated denials of its sovereignty. The country was excluded from the international sphere, was forced to repay France 150 million francs for the loss of its slave ‘property,’ and was subjected to a whopping 26 United States [US] military interventions between 1849 and 1915.⁷ The final intervention of this period was the full-fledged 1915-34 occupation, which created a legacy of Haitian dependence on the US relevant up until today.⁸ This legacy saw the US supporting several Haitian dictators and controlling Haitian politics. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide appeared to break this dependence, but was soon deposed by a military coup, with rumours of US

¹ Tom Cotton, ‘Haiti’s Crisis Isn’t Ours and We Need to Keep It That Way’, Fox News, 2 April 2024, <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/haitis-crisis-isnt-ours-need-keep-that>.

² Tom Phillips and Etienne Côté-Paluck, “‘It’s a Siege, It’s a War’: Haiti’s Gangs Tighten Violent Grip in Lethal Insurrection”, *The Guardian*, 1 April 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/01/haiti-gang-violence-evacuation-update>.

³ Kirk Semple and Meridith Kohut, “‘There Is No Hope’: Crisis Pushes Haiti to Brink of Collapse”, *The New York Times*, 20 October 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/20/world/americas/Haiti-crisis-violence.html>.

⁴ *The Guardian*, accessed 2 May 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/haiti>; *The New York Times*, accessed 2 May 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/section/world/americas>; *Fox News*, accessed 2 May 2024, <https://www.foxnews.com/search-results/search?q=haiti>; *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting*, accessed 2 May 2024, <https://nos.nl/zoeken?q=haiti&page=1>.

⁵ United Nations, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (UN, 28 April 2024), <https://doi.org/10.18356/d9bf1c42-en>.

⁶ Caroline Kimeu and Tom Phillips, “‘It’s Mission Impossible’: Fear Grows in Kenya over Plan to Deploy Police to Haiti”, *The Guardian*, 28 March 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/28/kenya-plan-deploy-police-haiti>.

⁷ Julia Gaffield, “The Racialization of International Law after the Haitian Revolution: The Holy See and National Sovereignty,” *American Historical Review* 125, no. 3 (2020): 841-868; Jordan E. Dollar, ‘Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide’, *St. Thomas Law Review* 20, no. 3 (2008): 645; Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 2nd ed. (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2003), 7.

⁸ Leon D. Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies: A Century of America’s Occupation, Deoccupation, and Reoccupation of Haiti* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2015), <https://web-p-ebscobhost.com.access.authkb.kb.nl/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmx1YmtfXzg3OTI1OV9fQU41?sid=5e9af11d-9135-4906-bc5b-5a94b2fb39f2@redis&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>.

involvement.⁹ Eventually, however, another US military invasion of Haiti restored his presidency in 1994. Still, foreign intervention has continued throughout the twenty-first century. Although much of this involvement was intended to be helpful, or claimed to be, at least, its outcomes have often been ambiguous, sometimes even exacerbating existing problems.¹⁰

This obscuring of the adverse consequences of foreign involvement in Haitian history is part of a wider historical pattern of neglecting Haitian historical achievements, as black Haitian political autonomy was irreconcilable with western racist notions of supposed black incapability for self-governance; notions that are proliferated through obscuring this very role of foreign involvement. Therefore, this thesis aims to shed light on Haiti's history of foreign involvement, focussing on two major interventions: the 1915-34 US Occupation of Haiti, and the 1994-6 US intervention in Haiti.

The 1915 Occupation saw the US take control of Haitian government, opening up the Haitian economy to foreign investment in what was claimed to be an emancipatory mission.¹¹ This Occupation is (now) characterised as imperial endeavour. The 1994 US intervention has been starkly contrasted with its 1915 predecessor, as it sought to restore Haitian democracy and self-determination.¹² However, other scholars have criticised the 1994 intervention for its failure to achieve democratic improvements, while having succeeded in opening up Haitian markets to foreign (US) investors, to the detriment of Haiti's poor majority – an interesting parallel to the 1915 Occupation.¹³ Importantly, both interventions have been accompanied by journalistic discourses of supposed Haitian racial incapability for self-government, and have accordingly been characterised as arising out of racially structured US foreign policy.¹⁴ Although several historians have drawn on US foreign policy officials' statements, US foreign policy discourses that legitimised these two interventions – possibly including these racist assumptions – have not been well-researched nor compared. To shed light on the assumptions and ideas that legitimised these interventions, and to contribute to the ongoing reevaluation of Haitian history, this thesis answers the following research question:

How did US foreign policy officials discursively legitimise the US interventions in Haiti in 1915-34 and 1994-6, and how do these legitimisations compare?

⁹ Kathleen Marie Whitney, 'SIN, FRAPH and the CIA: U.S. Covert Action in Haiti', *Southwestern Journal of Law and Trade in the Americas* 3, no. 2 (1996): 303.

¹⁰ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*; Noah Chomsky, 'The "Noble Phase" and "Saintly Glow" of US Foreign Policy', in *Getting Haiti Right This Time: The U.S. and the Coup*, by Noah Chomsky, Paul Farmer, and Amy Goodman (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004), 6; Loretta Pyles, Juliana Svistova, and Suran Ahn, 'Securitization, Racial Cleansing, and Disaster Capitalism: Neoliberal Disaster Governance in the US Gulf Coast and Haiti', *Critical Social Policy* 37, no. 4 (1 November 2017): 598-9, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018316685691>; Toni Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations: Ideological and Discursive Repetitions: 1915-1934 and 2004 to Present', *Caribbean Studies* 42, no. 2 (2014): 144-5.

¹¹ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 16-7, 20-2.

¹² Stephen Solarz, 'Foreword', in *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, by Hans Schmidt, 2nd ed. (Rutgers University Press, 1995), ix-xv.

¹³ Chomsky, 'The "Noble Phase" and "Saintly Glow" of US Foreign Policy,' 6.

¹⁴ John W. Blassingame, 'The Press and American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1904-1920', *Caribbean Studies* 9, no. 2 (1969): 27-43; Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations'; Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide'.

This question is divided into two sub questions:

- i. *How did US foreign policy officials discursively legitimise the US Occupation of Haiti of 1915-34?*
- ii. *How did US foreign policy officials discursively legitimise the US intervention in Haiti of 1994-6?*

These questions have been investigated through a critical discourse analysis performed on US foreign policy sources, written by Secretaries of State and Navy, Presidents, Ambassadors and other diplomatic personnel. For the 1915 Occupation, official foreign policy communication from 1914-5 was analysed, drawing on the *Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS]* series. *FRUS* is the official collection of diplomatic correspondence assembled by the US governmental Office of the Historian. For the 1994 intervention, public foreign policy statements from the period 1991-6 were analysed, drawing on the *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, a former reference periodical that provided a systematic record of US foreign policy.

The scientific relevance of this thesis stems from the lack of analysis of political discourse on the 1915 and 1994 interventions. Although studies of popular media discourse surrounding these interventions exist, the political discourse is not researched much, despite arguably containing the immediate legitimisations for these interventions. This applies to both, but especially to the 1994 intervention. In addition, while these political discourses have not been compared, popular media discourses on the 1915 and the 2004 UN intervention in Haiti have been shown to exude similar racist discourses.¹⁵ The possibility of similarities in racist discourses and political legitimisations between 1915 and 1994 merits scholarly attention. As these interventions are positioned at multiple crossroads of history, such as the early twentieth century birth of the liberal international order, related claims of disappearing imperialism throughout the twentieth century, the post-Cold War intensification of this liberal order, and subsequent claims of reappeared imperialism, this analysis has (contemporary) implications for concepts such as empire and liberalism.¹⁶ However, as the Haitian Revolution and Haitian political autonomy presented the ‘unthinkable’ due to Western racialised discourses of black incapability for self-government, the Haitian Revolution and Haitian history in a broader sense have not been acknowledged for the historical importance they carry.¹⁷ Through investigating these intersections between Haitian and world historical events, this thesis contributes to reversing this historical erasure.

The societal relevance of this thesis also stems from this ‘silencing’ of Haitian history, that is

¹⁵ Pressley-Sanon, ‘Haitian (Pre)Occupations’.

¹⁶ G. John Ikenberry, ‘The End of Liberal International Order?’, *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (1 January 2018): 13, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix241>; Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5; John J. Mearsheimer, ‘Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order’, *International Security* 43, no. 4 (2019): 27; Julian Reid, ‘The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: A Critique of the ‘return of Imperialism’ Thesis in International Relations’, *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2005): 237–41.

¹⁷ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995), 73-4.

reproduced in the majority of news reports on Haiti, including the ones highlighted above. Although *The New York Times* has in 2022 devoted a series of publications to the adverse roles of foreign powers in Haitian history, and although other public media such as *The Guardian* have devoted some attention to this history, most reports on Haiti neglect Haitian history before 2004.¹⁸ These reports so instantiate the centuries-old notions of Haitian and black ‘incapability’ for self-governance, just like (some) contemporary books.¹⁹ However, throughout Haitian history up until today, such notions have seen Haitians excluded from devising the solutions to Haitian problems, which has repeatedly resulted in solutions unable to solve, instead sometimes even exacerbating these very problems.²⁰ The goal of this thesis is therefore to undercut these proliferated narratives of black incapability for self-governance by highlighting international and US complicity in contemporary Haitian problems.

This thesis proceeds as follows. First, I provide a historiographical overview of scholarly writing on Haiti, the 1915 and 1994 interventions, and US (racist) discourses on Haiti. Afterwards, I outline my analytical framework, selected sources and methodology. In the second chapter, I discuss the 1915 US Occupation of Haiti, specifically its historical antecedents from 1791 to 1914, and then the 1914-5 US foreign policy discourse. In the third chapter, I discuss the 1994 US intervention in Haiti, again starting with its historical antecedents, tracking Haitian-US relations from 1934 to 1996, and thereafter discussing the 1994-6 US foreign policy discourse. In the concluding chapter, I first explicitly compare these discourses to answer the research question. Then, I highlight the scientific and societal implications of this study, discuss its limitations, and finally provide some recommendations.

1.1 Historiography

This historiography aims to provide an overview of historical writing on the US interventions in Haiti of 1915 and 1994. It is ordered thematically; starting in the late eighteenth century I introduce two important themes in history writing on Haiti: debates on black (in)capability for self-government and the historical role of black versus mixed race Haitians. Hereafter I shift focus to historical writing on two aspects of the 1915 US invasion of Haiti; its (possibly) imperialist character and its effects. Then, I discuss the 1994 US invasion of Haiti, to finally couple racist discourses with both US invasions, discussing previous studies into US racist discourses on Haiti. This historiography mainly discusses work from Haitian, Anglophone Caribbean, and American historians. Important to note is that these groups, often occupying different

¹⁸ The New York Times, ‘The Ransom: Haiti’s Reparations to France: Haiti “Ransom” Project: Reactions and Updates’, *The New York Times*, 23 May 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/23/world/haiti-france-ransom>; Reuters, ‘France Urged to Repay Billions of Dollars to Haiti for Independence “Ransom”’, *The Guardian*, 18 April 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/18/haiti-france-reparations>.

¹⁹ J. Michael Dash, ‘The (Un)Kindness of Strangers: Writing Haiti in the 21st Century’, ed. John D. Garrigus et al., *Caribbean Studies* 36, no. 2 (2008): 171–75.

²⁰ Pyles, Svistova, and Ahn, ‘Securitization, Racial Cleansing, and Disaster Capitalism,’ 586.

sides of a debate, were generally not in direct conversation with one another, due to working with different sources.²¹

Haitian historiography: Black humanity and self-government

Before 1791, writing on Haiti took the form of traveller accounts and natural histories.²² After the 1791-1804 Haitian Revolution, two themes relevant to this historiography emerged; the first concerning the capacity of the black Haitian population to demonstrate humanity or civilisation, i.e. the capacity for self-governance, and the second concerning the historical role of black and mixed race Haitians. Roughly said, Haitian and Caribbean historians argued in favour of black capacity for self-government, while British and American historians argued the opposite.²³ The first seminal work in Haitian historiography and in this debate was Haitian historian Thomas Madiou's *Histoire d'Haïti* (1847-8), who used oral history, memoirs, and both French and Haitian official reports to argue that the Haitian revolutionaries, in drawing from the enlightened French Jacobins, exhibited a clear capacity for civilisation.²⁴ J.A. Froude's *The English in the West Indies* illustrates the other side of this debate, classifying Haiti as a failed state to argue that its black population was incapable of self-government.²⁵ In this debate, a distinction was made between Haiti's darker-skinned masses and its lighter-skinned mixed race elite, stemming from colonial prejudice against black people.²⁶ The Haitian Alexis Beaubrun Ardouin's 1853-60 *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti* had started this debate by criticising Haiti's dark-skinned leaders as despots, and hailing its mixed race leaders as true freedom fighters.²⁷ However, his fellow Haitian Louis-Joseph Janvier rebuked him through tracking all Haitian constitutions in *Les Constitutions d'Haïti* (1886). In *Froudacity* (1889), the most prominent rebuttal of Froude, Trinidadian J.J. Thomas argued that Haiti's poverty was not the consequence of black incapability, but was due to the conflict between Haiti's black majority and mixed race elite.²⁸ Then, the US invasion of Haiti in 1915 showed the persistence of the notion of black incapability for self-government in white Anglo-Saxon circles, premised as it was on assumptions of black incapability.²⁹

In fact, the US invasion of Haiti intensified this ongoing debate, as it motivated Haitian historians to continue arguing against the denial of black and Haitian capacity for self-government. General Alfred Nemours in his 1925 *Histoire Militaire* used Haitian and European archival sources to argue that the

²¹ Matthew J. Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', *Small Axe* 18, no. 1 (March 2014): 68.

²² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, 'Historiography of Haiti', in *General History of the Caribbean*, ed. B. W. Higman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2003), 443-4, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-73776-5_16.

²³ Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', 61-2.

²⁴ Trouillot, 'Historiography of Haiti', 457.

²⁵ Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', 58.

²⁶ C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2022 [1980]), 36-7.

²⁷ Trouillot, 'Historiography of Haiti', 458-60.

²⁸ Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', 58.

²⁹ Robert Knox, 'Haiti at the League of Nations: Racialisation, Accumulation, and Representation', *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 21, no. 2 (2020): 245-274.

Haitian military capacities shown during the Haitian Revolution were proof of civilisation. At the same time, Caribbean historians began to revalue the Haitian Revolution.³⁰ The most famous example is Trinidadian Marxist C.L.R. James, who used Haiti as example to argue in favour of black self-governance in his 1938 *The Black Jacobins*.³¹ On the other hand, contemporary US scholars, like anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits in his 1937 *Life in a Haitian Valley*, continued the Anglo-Saxon writing on supposed Haitian backwardness even after the 1915-34 Occupation.³²

The US Occupation also reinvigorated the distinction between lighter-skinned and darker-skinned Haitians. In 1934, Antoine Michel published his *L'emprunt de trois millions de pastres*, based on parliamentary records, laws and newspapers, in which he argued that problems caused by colour differences were the indirect cause of the US occupation, continuing J.J. Thomas's argument.³³ In his 1929 *La mission du general Hédouville à Saint-Domingue*, Michel had already highlighted the role of whites in aggravating colour divisions between Haitians, especially relevant in its context of the US occupation.³⁴ After 1934, this debate took a turn, as the Haitian mixed race elite was blamed for the underdevelopment of the Haitian masses in Eric Williams's 1942 *The Negro in the Caribbean*.³⁵ This coincided with the 1940s rise of the *Noirist* black consciousness movement in Haiti, with its leader Dumarsais Estimé becoming president in 1946.³⁶ Williams's criticism was continued by Roger Gaillard's nine-volume *Les blancs débarquent*, from 1972 to 1992. He used Haitian, French and US primary sources and US secondary sources to argue that the Haitian elite was one of the causes of the 1915 Occupation.³⁷

This debate on black capacity for civilisation is still relevant today. Although it is not explicitly waged, several twenty-first century books perpetuate the writing on supposed Haitian backwardness.³⁸ Parts of this discourse can for example be found in the 2011 UN publication *Fixing Haiti: MINUSTAH and Beyond*.³⁹ Nevertheless, such discourses are increasingly challenged as Haitian history receives increasing attention and the Haitian Revolution is more and more recognised as great Enlightenment revolution.⁴⁰

The US Occupation of Haiti, 1915-34: Imperialism or brotherhood?

The 1915 US Occupation not only aggravated existing debates, but also led to the emergence of a debate on the Occupation itself: was it a noble act of brotherhood meant to help Haiti, or was it an imperialist

³⁰ Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', 59-62.

³¹ James, *The Black Jacobins*.

³² Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', 59-62.

³³ Trouillot, 'Historiography of Haiti', 464-5.

³⁴ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 34.

³⁵ Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', 59-61.

³⁶ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 57-9.

³⁷ Trouillot, 'Historiography of Haiti', 476-477.

³⁸ Dash, 'The (Un)Kindness of Strangers'.

³⁹ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations'; Jorge Heine and Andrew Stuart Thompson, *Fixing Haiti: MINUSTAH and Beyond* (Tokyo New York: United Nations University Press, 2011).

⁴⁰ Christienna Fryar, 'Introduction', in *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2022 [1980]), ix.

endeavour to further US economic control?⁴¹ Ernest Gruening, himself an anti-imperialist, outlined the official (imperial) US viewpoint, which held that the US intervened on moral, economic and strategic grounds: to protect human lives and foreign property, to assume control over Haitian finances in order to avoid defaults on foreign loans, and to prevent imperial Germany from acquiring a naval base on Haiti.⁴² He also refuted them: no American lives or property had been lost; Haitian troubles were caused by foreign ownership of the *Banque Nationale d'Haiti*; and the First World War had reduced German naval capacity. Based on US political and diplomatic documents, like statements by Secretaries of State and naval officers, Gruening charged that the real motives behind the US intervention were private interests.⁴³

In his influential *Haiti and the United States, 1714-1938*, published in 1940 and republished in 1966, Ludwell Lee Montague took a different stance. Montague saw the Occupation as a fraternal endeavour, aimed at uplifting the Haitian people. This is reflected in his evaluation of the vocational educational system implemented by the US in Haiti. According to Montague, as the US recognised the impossibility of quickly establishing stable democracy in Haiti, they adapted their educational policy to start a long process of building democracy from the ground up. Haitians were to be trained in agricultural and manual labour to achieve basic civilisation, to then be gradually introduced to American civilisation and democracy.⁴⁴ This way, Montague saw the Occupation as sensible attempt to emancipate and civilise Haiti. Montague did believe in the potential of black civilisation, although it's time of arrival was unclear and it was to be achieved through white, American guidance.⁴⁵

As time passed, the US Occupation began to be seen in a different light. Hans Schmidt's 1971 book *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, with a second edition printed in 1995, illustrates this point. Schmidt saw the Occupation as colonial, as the US consistently placed their own interests above Haiti's. He gave several examples: the US instituted a forced labour programme (*corvée*), appointed a marine general as commander, and applied extractive fiscal management on Haitian finances.⁴⁶ His analysis highlighted how the US Occupation was based on racist preconceptions of Haitian backwardness. These notions led the US to destroy the 'quite impressive' Haitian democratic institutions they claimed to protect.⁴⁷ Schmidt criticised the educational policy so valued by Montague as a model based on the British occupation of Egypt: exercising power for the good of a supposedly backwards people.⁴⁸ He was critical of the racist assumptions underlying this model, although he did not inherently disagree with its 'technocratic progressivism,' but argued that its failure laid in the military

⁴¹ Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, 2nd ed. (Rutgers University Press, 1995), 17 <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb04590.0001.001>.

⁴² Ernest Gruening, 'The Issue in Haiti', *Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 2 (January 1933): 279-80.

⁴³ Gruening, 'The Issue in Haiti', 279-89.

⁴⁴ Ludwell Lee Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714-1938*, 2nd ed. (New York, Russell & Russell, 1966 [1940]), 243, <http://archive.org/details/haitiunitedstate0000mont>.

⁴⁵ Montague, 257.

⁴⁶ Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 11-12.

⁴⁷ Schmidt, 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

character and racial prejudice of the occupation.⁴⁹ So, Schmidt saw the Occupation as a colonial endeavour, challenged the motive of spreading democracy and criticised its racist preconceptions. However, he did believe in its emancipatory rationale, arguing that uplift failed to materialise due to the Occupation's imperial, racist and military character.

In 2015, Haitian scholar Leon D. Pamphile published *Contrary Destinies: A Century of America's Occupation, Deoccupation, and Reoccupation of Haiti*, discussing Haitian history and Haitian-US relations from the antecedents of the 1915 invasion, up to 2015. Pamphile's overarching theme was how the conflicting interests of Haiti and the US, centred on migration, Haitian economic and political dependence on the US, and ideas of white supremacy, have led to Haitian demise.⁵⁰ Building on Brenda Plummer, Pamphile named three US motives for the 1915 Occupation: establishing orderly government to create a suitable environment for US investors; ousting European imperial powers in order to realise hegemony in the Caribbean; gaining a bigger market share by penetrating the Haitian economy with investments.⁵¹ Pamphile saw the Occupation as an opportunity for the US to further their political and economic control on Haiti, undergirded by racist assumptions of Haitian backwardness. Relatedly, where Montague saw the agricultural educational system as a sensible way to uplift the Haitian people and Schmidt more critically disagreed with its racist assumptions, Pamphile saw this policy as a means of furthering US cultural control. In sum, Pamphile saw the Occupation as motivated through US interests, supported by racist images of Haitian backwardness. For him, the Occupation was very much imperial.

The last publication to be discussed regarding the 1915 Occupation is Robert Knox's 2020 article, 'Haiti at the League of Nations: Racialisation, Accumulation, Representation.' Where Montague saw the Occupation as rooted in a US desire to further Haitian development out of US strategic interests, and Schmidt saw it as guided by US interests while being critical of its white supremacist foundations (although still believing in its uplifting potential), Pamphile saw it as a mix of US interests, underwritten by white supremacy. Knox focused on economic and racial dimensions and saw the Occupation as a spatial fix: Haiti was a geographical expansion of US capitalism, to resolve overaccumulation of capital in the US, leading to the restructuring of Haitian politics and economy.⁵² It was also a racial fix as the Occupation drew on racial stereotypes of Haitian backwardness. For Knox, the invasion did not simply deny Haitian sovereignty, but instead affirmed that black Haitian sovereignty could exist together with white US control. He saw Haiti as the first example of exercising economic control over foreign governments based on their consent and legal sovereignty, a technique for Knox commonplace in the

⁴⁹ Schmidt, 15-16.

⁵⁰ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, xvi.

⁵¹ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 16-21; Brenda Gayle Plummer, 'Black and White in the Caribbean: Haitian-American Relations, 1902-1934' (Cornell University, 1981), 1-8.

⁵² Knox, 'Haiti at the League of Nations,' 250-7; David Harvey, 'Globalization and the "Spatial Fix"', *Geographische Revue: Zeitschrift Für Literatur Und Diskussion* 3, no. 2 (2001): 24.

International Monetary Fund [IMF] and World Bank [WB].⁵³ Therefore, for Knox, the Occupation was a firmly imperial one. Related to the debate on imperialism, is a debate on the effects of the occupation.

The effects of the US Occupation of Haiti, 1915-34

The effects of the 1915 US Occupation of Haiti mentioned in the literature can be classified broadly into economic and political effects, with debate centring on whether these effects were positive or negative. Initially, the economic effects of the US Occupation of Haiti were seen somewhat positively, as Montague reported improved quality of life and refurbished infrastructure, although simultaneously conceding that the economic prosperity initially promised by the US did not materialise, due to causes beyond US control.⁵⁴ Schmidt was more critical: he argued that the infrastructure's complex maintenance requirements resulted in quick decay, while extractive US fiscal management deprived Haiti of Haitian capital.⁵⁵ Altogether, Schmidt concluded that the Occupation did not directly impact Haitian lives. In contrast, Pamphile saw a legacy of Haitian economic dependence on US trade and aid.⁵⁶ Knox agreed with Pamphile, arguing that the Occupation economically restructured Haiti into an exporter of raw materials and agricultural products longed for by the industrial US.⁵⁷

Politically, Montague was even more positive, as he contended that the Occupation brought peace and stability.⁵⁸ Schmidt, however, critically emphasised the US destruction of Haitian democratic institutions, while more positively assessing the creation of an efficient military, the emergence of Haitian nationalism, and emancipation for Haiti's black, poor and female populations.⁵⁹ Pamphile, in turn, saw a legacy of Haitian political dependence on the US.⁶⁰ Simultaneously however, Pamphile charged that the strengthening of the Haitian army resulted in several coups throughout the twentieth century, while, contrary to Schmidt, arguing that the Occupation served to reinforce the dominance of Haitian mixed race elites.⁶¹ Pamphile did agree with Schmidt that the 1915 Occupation inspired Haitian nationalism. Knox again agreed with Pamphile that the US Occupation had created the conditions for future dictatorships and the continuation of US 'neocolonialism,' arguing additionally that the Occupation successfully reconciled black sovereignty with white imperial oversight in international legal standards.⁶²

The US intervention of 1994-6: repeated imperialism?

As in 1915, the 1994 intervention quickly sparked debate, again centred on the question: was it helpfulness, or imperialism? The foreword to the 1995 edition of Schmidt's *The United States Occupation*

⁵³ Knox, 272-3.

⁵⁴ Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714-1938*, 226.

⁵⁵ Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*.

⁵⁶ Pamphile, 40-43.

⁵⁷ Knox, 'Haiti at the League of Nations', 250-7.

⁵⁸ Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714-1938*, 226.

⁵⁹ Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 233-234.

⁶⁰ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 36-7, 47-51.

⁶¹ Pamphile, 32-4, 55.

⁶² Knox, 'Haiti at the League of Nations,' 271-4.

of Haiti, written by former US congressman Stephen Solarz, provides the first account of the 1994-6 intervention.⁶³ Solarz contrasted the 1915 Occupation with the 1994 intervention, as for him the latter was not about imperialism, but about restoring democracy and self-determination. It was about reinstalling the only truly democratically elected president in Haitian history, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Solarz argued, not about ‘installing an unpopular client whose main qualification was his willingness to embrace our cause.’⁶⁴ Further differences were the involvement of the UN, and the presumed absence of racism due to the more diverse US army. For Solarz, these two occupations were very different.

Other sounds were soon to be heard. Judson Jefferies questioned the altruistic US motive of restoring democracy, and pointed to the time between Aristide’s removal in 1991 and his reinstalment in 1994; he argued that the willingness of the US to reinstall Aristide was contingent on Aristide’s acceptance of US neoliberal doctrine.⁶⁵ Whereas Aristide was elected as anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, he implemented neoliberal economic reforms upon reinstatement. Jefferies went on to argue that the 1994 intervention was not motivated by a concern for human rights, but rather by economic interests; creating an environment for the US to flourish and ensuring Haitian cooperation in US-led global capitalism. Besides these neoliberal reforms, however, Jefferies contended that this intervention did achieve some beneficial developments in Haitian democracy, although Haitian political institutions remained fragile and poverty widespread.⁶⁶ So, for Jefferies, the intervention arose out of US imperial interests, although it did have some beneficial effects.

Pamphile would agree with Jefferies, seeing the US intervention of 1994 as result of a continuous US desire for and execution of control in Haiti. Like Jefferies, he saw the restoration of Aristide as enforcement of neoliberal economic policy, a way to maintain control and safeguard US interests.⁶⁷ Although less blatant than in 1915, Pamphile additionally signalled US racist paternalism towards Haiti. However, where Jefferies observed some beneficial impact of the intervention, Pamphile remained sceptical and pointed to continued political instability and transgressions committed by international peacekeeping forces.⁶⁸ For Pamphile, the 1994 intervention was imperial, and (again) failed to achieve beneficial results.

US discourses on Haiti: racist paternalism

Finally, some studies into US discourses on Haiti exist. As these either focus on journalistic or scholarly sources, or only take into account one occupation, they cannot tell us about (the comparison between) 1915 and 1994 US foreign policy discourse on Haiti. However, as popular and political discourses are arguably related, some words on these studies are in order. First, John W. Blassingame, in his 1969 ‘The

⁶³ Solarz, ‘Foreword’, ix–xv.

⁶⁴ Solarz, xi.

⁶⁵ Judson Jefferies, ‘The United States and Haiti: An Exercise in Intervention’, *Caribbean Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (2001): 78.

⁶⁶ Jefferies, 84-90.

⁶⁷ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 109-111.

⁶⁸ Pamphile, 112-126.

Press and American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1904-1920,' analysed US periodicals' reports on the US occupations of Haiti (1915-34) and its neighbour, the Dominican Republic (1916-24).⁶⁹ Blassingame concluded that the period 1904-19 saw widespread journalistic support for intervention in both countries, at least partially influenced by racist notions of black incapability for self-governance, for example through stereotypes of ignorance, savageness, disorder and anarchy. At the same time, these stereotypes were more salient regarding predominantly black Haiti, compared to the relatively whiter Dominican Republic.⁷⁰ This concurs with Stephen Pampinella's 2021 study of US political discourses surrounding these occupations, who also observed that racial stereotypes towards Haiti were more negative, arguing that these explained the longer occupation of Haiti.

Toni Pressley-Sanon extended Blassingame's arguments to twenty-first century foreign involvement in Haiti, in his 2014 'Haitian (pre)occupations: Ideological and discursive repetitions: 1915-1934 and 2004 to present.'⁷¹ Pressley-Sanon studied US news media and scholarly sources on the 1915-34 US Occupation and the 2004-17 UN mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), arguing that both these events coincided with ideological and paternalistic racism that undergirded imperial interests. Similarly, Jordan E. Dollar has argued that US policy towards Haiti since 1804 has been one of racial essentialism: the belief that biological differences between 'races' are tied to cognitive or civilisational abilities.⁷² He argued that this underlying racism shifted from explicit in the early twentieth century, to implicit and perhaps unconscious in the late twentieth or early twenty-first century. Although Dollar argued for an interesting continuity in US policy towards Haiti, he only drew on secondary sources; as such, his analysis is not based on US foreign policy discourse.

I have tried to give a comprehensive overview of the historiography of Haiti and Haitian-US relations. After the Haitian Revolution, the debate on black capacity for civilisation and self-governance arose. This debate has remained relevant up until today and was connected to the issue of whether Haiti's mixed race or black population had contributed more to the country's development. Then, in 1915, the US occupied Haiti for the first time, which spurred on these existing debates. With the Occupation emerged also a debate on its motives: US imperialists argued the intervention was based on moral, economic and strategic grounds, whereas anti-imperialists like Gruening charged its main grounds were US private interests. Early US commentators like Montague saw the Occupation as a legitimate (though unsuccessful) attempt to raise Haitian civilisation. Later, Schmidt was more critical, still believing in the emancipatory mission, but criticising its racist underpinnings and colonial nature. Subsequently, Pamphile saw the invasion as attempt to further US interests, based on assumptions of white supremacy. Finally, Knox argued that the Occupation was motivated by a capitalist desire for accumulation combined with

⁶⁹ Blassingame, 'The Press and American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1904-1920'.

⁷⁰ Blassingame, 29-30.

⁷¹ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations'.

⁷² Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide'.

racial prejudice, providing the necessity for geographical expansion in Haiti. Despite historical shifts, there seems to be a present consensus that 1915 US formal imperialism made Haiti structurally dependent on the US, creating a legacy of informal US imperialism. Solarz saw the 1994 US intervention as a way to make things right through restoring democracy. Others, like Jefferies and Pamphile, argue the contrary: that again, its main causes were US economic interests and racist paternalism. Whereas Jefferies saw some positive effects on democracy, Pamphile remained more sceptical. In addition, the few discourse or content analyses, although mainly conducted on journalistic sources, all signal racist assumptions underlying the 1915 Occupation, with both Dollar and Pressley-Sanon arguing that these remain present in the twenty-first century. However, none of these studies amount to an analysis of US foreign policy discourse comparing the 1915 and 1994 events, and therefore none can illuminate policy makers' beliefs or strategies that legitimised US military interventions. Given the continued (calls for) foreign involvement and (US) aid in Haiti, possible historical continuities or ruptures between these events merit scholarly attention.

Therefore, this thesis analysed US foreign policy official's discourse on the 1915 US Occupation of Haiti and the 1994 US intervention in Haiti. Based on and adding to the existing literature an analysis and comparison of 1915 and 1994 US foreign policy discourses, I regard both events as imperial, due to the continuous histories of imperialism preceding them, and their imperial (and racial) hierarchies. My analysis demonstrates significant similarities between discourses on these interventions, including but not limited to underlying racist assumptions. As such, it agrees on the role of racist assumptions in 1915 mentioned by scholars such as Schmidt, Pamphile, Knox, and Blassingame. This thesis adds to their analyses through performing a discourse analysis on 1915 and 1994 US foreign policy discourse and the 1915-1994 comparison. Scholars like Pamphile and Dollar charged that the 1915 Occupation has considerably influenced Haiti's fate and resulted in the 1994 intervention, a point that I agree with and highlight in the historical background sections of this thesis. Moreover, this thesis highlights a similarity in the racist assumptions underlying 1915 and 1994 US discourse towards Haiti, agreeing with Pressley-Sanon's, Dollar's and Pamphile's arguments about the continued imperial and racial hierarchies. This thesis broadens their arguments specifically to the 1994 intervention, while also adding to their arguments through analysing US foreign policy discourse. Finally, through highlighting first the continuity of discourses of Haitian incapability for self-government, a continuity that extends up until today, and second the adverse role of US and other foreign involvement in Haitian history, this thesis achieves its societal relevance through undercutting these continued narratives of Haitian incapability, echoing much more distinguished scholars, such as C.L.R. James and Michel-Rolph Trouillot.

1.2 Theoretical and conceptual framework

In this section, I highlight and explain the concepts relevant to my analysis, some of which were already touched upon in the historiography. As consistent with discourse analysis (see the methodology section

below), some contextual concepts are highlighted as well. First, this thesis is rooted in *imperialism*: ‘a transnational form of political domination, [...] whereby [...] a metropole exerts control over other societies.’⁷³ Imperialism can be formal; manifested through the official transfer of sovereignty from colony to metropole, but it can also be informal, manifested through political or economic manipulation. As discussed in the historiography, this concept has been linked to both US interventions in Haiti. Connected to imperialism is the concept of *sovereignty*. Sovereignty means the ability to govern a demarcated territory without outside interference. Sovereignty is inherently social; it has to be acknowledged, and it engenders a hierarchy about ‘who has the right to intervene against whom.’⁷⁴ This acknowledgement is connected to (*standards of*) *civilisation*. These standards are certain norms, like the adoption of institutions such as the rule of law, bureaucracy and diplomacy, that when adhered to, signal civilisation.⁷⁵ Civilisation was something that had to be spread, according to western imperial standard-setters, and was done so through ‘civilised’ imperial rule. Therefore, theoretically speaking, being civilised meant being sovereign; being capable of self-governance. However, these standards proved not to be decisive in signalling civilisation: an independent Haiti had instituted reputable courts, a bureaucratic administration and was perceived as treaty-worthy, yet was still dubbed uncivilised and not recognised as sovereign, leading to the 1915 occupation.⁷⁶ Haiti was excluded from sovereignty based on race; it was racialised as a backwards nation.

Racialisation is the process of ‘othering’ a certain social group, turning them into an inferior group (or race). In that process, physical distinctions are seen to represent underlying cultural differences, hence leading to differing behaviour.⁷⁷ As such, racialisation is connected to racial essentialism, as discussed in the historiography. This racialisation can lead to the classification and stereotyping of certain social minorities as deviant, criminal, backwards or violent; these classifications can then play a role in legitimising military interventions or educational programmes, even if with beneficial intent.⁷⁸ This racialisation can work two ways: not only social groups, but behaviour can be racialised as well.⁷⁹ In that case, disorder or violence becomes connected to certain ‘races.’ For instance, the political turmoil in the Haiti of 1915 is then attributed to the supposedly backwards Haitian nature, decoupling it from foreign meddling. Or, the idea that the existence of slavery in Ethiopia and Liberia during the 1920s must be due to the supposedly backwards Ethiopian and Liberian nature, decoupling it from contemporary practices of

⁷³ Julian Go, *Policing Empires: Militarization, Race, and the Imperial Boomerang in Britain and the US* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 12-3.

⁷⁴ Edward Keene, “International Hierarchy and the Origins of the Modern Practice of Intervention.” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (2013): 1078.

⁷⁵ Gerrit Gong, *The Standard of Civilization in International Society* (London: Macmillan, 1984): 14-5.

⁷⁶ Gaffield, ‘The Racialization of International Law after the Haitian Revolution,’ 841–68.

⁷⁷ Go, *Policing Empires*, 20-3.

⁷⁸ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*.

⁷⁹ Go, *Policing Empires*, 23-4.

western imperialism throughout Africa.⁸⁰ However, this racialisation cannot be expected to be exactly the same for both interventions researched here. This is elucidated by the concept of *colour-blind racism*.

Colour-blind racism is a form of racism that is specific to the US. Whereas the early twentieth century and the 1915 Occupation were characterised by explicit ‘Jim Crow’ racism, since the 1960s this has been replaced by colour-blind racism, a more implicit form of racial prejudice.⁸¹ Colour-blind discourse is characterised by subtlety; at first glance, it appears to be neutral. This colour-blindness is manifested in four discursive frames: abstract liberalism, like using the abstract liberal principle of equal treatment to argue against affirmative action, while foregoing the underrepresentation of minorities; the naturalisation of racially unequal relations; the use of cultural arguments to explain differences between populations, closely linked to racialisation; and finally, minimisation of racism.⁸² As these frames obscure structural racial inequalities, colour-blind racism absolves the dominant social group from complicity in these inequalities, enabling the perpetuation of these very structures and keeping the dominant group’s moral self-image intact.⁸³ Due to their implicitness, colour-blind racist views can be and often are unconscious.⁸⁴ These concepts were central in this research, but, as consistent with discourse analysis, emergent concepts have been included.

1.3 Sources

This study mainly used documents produced by the US Department of State, US presidents, US ambassadors or diplomats and other foreign policy personnel. For the first intervention, the documents originate from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, published by the US Office of the Historian, legally responsible for the publication of US foreign policy documentary history.⁸⁵ This collection contains mainly diplomatic memos from the Departments of State and Defence, diplomatic personnel in Haiti and occasionally US President Woodrow Wilson. Generally, the 1914 US marine landing in Haiti is seen as the precursor to the 1915 invasion, so documents from 1914 have been included. In order to keep the amount of documents manageable, only documents from 1914-5 were analysed.⁸⁶ This has possible implications for the results. For instance, after 1930, the gradual transition to a (nominally) independent Haiti commenced.⁸⁷ This might have been accompanied by a discourse change, but since this research focused on the immediate legitimisation discourse, I have placed the cut-off date in 1915. In total, 331 documents dating from 1914-5 have been analysed.

⁸⁰ Adom Getachew, ‘The Counter-Revolutionary Movement: Preserving Racial Hierarchy in the League of Nations’, in *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton University Press, 2019), 59.

⁸¹ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, ‘The Structure of Racism in Color-Blind, “Post-Racial” America’, *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 11 (2015): 1358–76.

⁸² Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 53-76.

⁸³ Barbara Applebaum, ‘White Privilege/White Complicity: Connecting “Benefiting From” to “Contributing To”’, *Philosophy of Education* 64 (2008): 296-7, <https://doi.org/10.47925/2008.292>.

⁸⁴ Applebaum.

⁸⁵ ‘About Us - Office of the Historian’, accessed 4 February 2024, <https://history.state.gov/about>.

⁸⁶ Knox, ‘Haiti at the League of Nations,’ 248.

⁸⁷ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 43-4.

The documents on the second intervention originate from the *Foreign Policy Bulletin [FPB]*, a former reference periodical for US foreign policy primary sources.⁸⁸ These sources span from 1991 to 1996. In 1991, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was deposed as Haitian president through a military coup. He fled to Washington, where he started to assemble support for his reinstalment as the US installed sanctions. Although an intervention did not materialise until 1994, explicit US government involvement with this event thus started in 1991 already. At the other end, 1996 has been chosen because 1996 saw the end of the joint US and UN operation in Haiti. Given the scope of this thesis, surveying all relevant documents would have been rather ambitious. As the *FPB* generally published important documents, it represents a theoretical sampling approach that bases data collection on expected results, consistent with discourse analysis.⁸⁹ In total, 124 documents dating from 1991-6 have been analysed.

These documents have been selected as they can be expected to accurately reflect US governmental foreign policy discourse. The documents were written by Department of State or Navy officials, presidents, ambassadors and other foreign policy personnel to legitimise their decisions, in the context of their own actions: the interventions of 1915 and 1994. As the 1915 documents were formal correspondence, they were not meant for an external audience, which means they could better reflect US decision-makers' actual opinions; possibly including racist views. In contrast, the 1994 documents were directed towards a large external audience, so they might not necessarily reflect actual opinions. This might lead to silences or falsehoods, for instance regarding actual motives. However, given the focus of this research on the legitimisation of the two interventions, public statements are suitable, as they show how these interventions were justified to 'the outside world.' The 1915 audience consisted of fellow US foreign policy officials or their Haitian counterparts, while the 1994 audience consisted of domestic US journalists and civilians, but also of an international part, such as the UN General Assembly. All documents were originally published by the US, and as such are authentic and original, although mainly those regarding the 1994 intervention might be tailored to external audiences. The authors of these documents can be knowledgeable, as they often are some sort of foreign policy expert, but, as previous research has shown, they might also be blatantly racist or ignorant, like Chief Commissioner Russell, who attributed to the Haitians an average mental age of seven.⁹⁰ Related to this, word usage in these documents is mostly literal, although as my analysis will show, they do contain implicit assumptions.

1.4 Methodology

These assumptions were investigated using critical discourse analysis. As this research focused on the discursive legitimisation of the two interventions, it focused for instance on the racialised narratives that

⁸⁸ 'Foreign Policy Bulletin', Cambridge Core, accessed 4 February 2024, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/foreign-policy-bulletin>.

⁸⁹ Barney Galland Glaser and Anselm Leonard Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Aldine, 1967); Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy, *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction* (Sage Publications, 2002), p. 8 of Ch. 4 "The Challenges of Discourse Analysis".

⁹⁰ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 32.

were constructed in both of these events. Given this focus on narratives, discursive construction and the increasingly subtle nature of (US) colour-blind racism, discourse analysis provided the right tools to answer the research question, as its main strengths lies in uncovering social constructions.⁹¹

A discourse is a collection of concepts and objects: for instance texts, interviews and language use, but also cartoons or wider visual representations.⁹² The way these textual or visual representations are produced, spread and received are also a factor in discourse.⁹³ Language use and broader discourse are not mirrors of some objective reality, but the framework with which people construct their social life-worlds.⁹⁴ Through systematically studying texts, discourse analysis seeks to uncover these constructive effects.⁹⁵ Therefore, discourse analysis does not simply seek to understand social reality, but examines the way this reality is produced; it takes a strong constructivist stance.⁹⁶ A famous example comes from Thomas B. Lawrence and Nelson Phillips, who described how a shift in discourse regarding whales, from whales as monsters to whales as admirable creatures, enabled tourist whale watching.⁹⁷ Critical discourse analysis specifically focuses on the role of discourses in constituting or sustaining unequal power relations and ideologies.⁹⁸

Important in critical discourse analysis is to analyse the primary sources as one integrated corpus: a discourse consists of a collection of and relations between multiple texts. Additionally, not only the texts themselves, but also their social context and the wider discourse in which these texts can be understood carry importance.⁹⁹ Discourse analysis is characterised by a 'three-dimensional'¹⁰⁰ approach, taking into account text, context and discourse.¹⁰¹ In order to provide structure to the analysis, I focus on several *sensitising concepts*, which are explicated in the conceptual framework: these are relevant to a 'three-dimensional,' contextual understanding of the US legitimisation of their interventions in Haiti. However, discourse analysis is ultimately about identifying emergent concepts in the selected corpus, not about imposing a rigid conceptual framework.¹⁰² The concepts nevertheless remain useful to identify important (contextual) themes and enable systematic comparison.

The primary sources were imported into ATLAS.ti, where a process of open and axial coding was applied. The writing process was characterised by iteration: reading, interpreting and writing back and

⁹¹ Phillips and Hardy, *Discourse Analysis*, 2.

⁹² Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy, 'Managing Multiple Identities: Discourse, Legitimacy and Resources in the UK Refugee System', *Organization* 4, no. 2 (1997): 165-6.

⁹³ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

⁹⁴ Thomas B. Lawrence, Nelson Phillips, and Cynthia Hardy, 'Watching Whale Watching: Exploring the Discursive Foundations of Collaborative Relationships', *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 35, no. 4 (1999): 486.

⁹⁵ Phillips and Hardy, *Discourse Analysis*, 4.

⁹⁶ Phillips and Hardy, 6.

⁹⁷ Thomas B. Lawrence and Nelson Phillips, 'From Moby Dick to Free Willy: Macro-Cultural Discourse and Institutional Entrepreneurship in Emerging Institutional Fields', *Organization* 11, no. 5 (2004): 689-711.

⁹⁸ Phillips and Hardy, *Discourse Analysis*, p. 3 of 18, Ch. 2 "The Variety of Discourse Analysis".

⁹⁹ Phillips and Hardy, 4-5.

¹⁰⁰ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*.

¹⁰¹ Phillips and Hardy, *Discourse Analysis*, 5.

¹⁰² Linda A. Wood and Rolf O. Kroger, *Doing Discourse Analysis: Methods for Studying Action in Talk and Text* (Sage Publications, 2000); Phillips and Hardy, *Discourse Analysis*, 5.

forth, until the main concepts were identified and worked out, according to the grounded theory-method.¹⁰³

Finally, as a discourse represents an ideational context from which to understand the world, mapping out what can be said, thought and done, discourse analyses tend to overemphasise structure. Nevertheless, historical actors can strategically deploy or influence discourses; discourses can be rhetoric used by agential historical actors to legitimise certain policies.¹⁰⁴ Although my analysis might at times overemphasise discourse as a structure, agency in deploying and shaping these discourses, and thereby legitimising possible courses of action, is important to keep in mind.

¹⁰³ Glaser and Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*.

¹⁰⁴ Colin Hay and Ben Rosamond, 'Globalization, European Integration and the Discursive Construction of Economic Imperatives', *Journal of European Public Policy* 9, no. 2 (2002): 147–67 [section: 'Globalisation as discourse; globalisation as rhetoric'].

2. The US Occupation of Haiti, 1915-34

This chapter answers *how US foreign policy officials legitimised the US Occupation of Haiti of 1915-34*. First, the historical background of this occupation is discussed, highlighting the long history of imperial involvement that culminated in the 1915 US Occupation of Haiti. Then, I discuss the 1914-5 discursive legitimisations of this 1915 Occupation; specifically the civilisational hierarchy, reigning conception of civilisation and explicit stereotypes of supposed black racial inferiority, that together legitimised the Occupation as helpful civilising mission, refiguring black Haitian sovereignty compatible with formal white US imperialism.

2.1 Historical background

In 1791, the Haitian Revolution broke out as a slave revolt, in the wealthy French colony of Saint-Domingue. After fourteen years of fighting and negotiating, Haitian General Jean-Jacques Dessalines formally declared Haitian independence in 1804.¹⁰⁵ Dessalines abolished slavery, forbade white people's ownership of property in Haiti, and established Haitian *de facto* sovereign independence, although it's *de jure* sovereignty would not be recognised for some time to come: the first international recognition of Haitian independence occurred only in 1825, as France recognised Haitian independence in exchange for a whopping 150 million francs indemnity fee, later reduced to 90 million.¹⁰⁶ Haiti was forced to take out a loan from French banks to finance these payments. If Haiti would miss a single repayment, the French could lawfully invade; as such, the treaty severely undermined Haitian economic sovereignty, and threatened Haitian political sovereignty.¹⁰⁷ Whereas the treaty was a necessity for international recognition, it would cause severe economic misfortunes and socio-political crises in the decades, perhaps centuries to follow.¹⁰⁸

Besides, even with French recognition, due to racial hierarchies Haiti's independence and entry into the 'family of nations' was not a *fait accompli*. As set out in the theoretical and conceptual framework, membership of this family was allegedly contingent on a country's adherence to civilisational norms, such as courts, democracy, constitutions and Christianity.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, in Haiti's case, these institutions proved not to be decisive as the country was not duly recognised. However, besides extending diplomatic recognition, a country's acceptance into the family of nations could be signalled by international treaties, as treaty-worthiness, the ability to abide by an international treaty, was also an important tenet of civilisation. Still, even after French recognition, the first non-French treaty signed by Haiti only followed in 1839 with the anti-slave trade treaty between the United Kingdom and Haiti, and

¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey Sommers, *Race, Reality, and Realpolitik: U.S.–Haiti Relations in the Lead Up to the 1915 Occupation* (Lexington Books, 2015), 4-5.

¹⁰⁶ Sommers, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Gaffield, 'The Racialization of International Law after the Haitian Revolution,' 848.

¹⁰⁸ Gaffield, 848.

¹⁰⁹ Gong, 14-5.

only after decades of negotiations did Haiti sign a concordat with the Pope in 1860.¹¹⁰ Contrastingly, during Haitian-Papal negotiations, Rome did establish concordats with the younger (and relatively whiter) nations of Bolivia (1851), Costa Rica (1852) and Guatemala (1852). In a similar vein, despite attempts by Boyer already in 1822 to establish official diplomatic relations, US recognition of Haiti would not be realised until 1862. In 1823 however, the US did recognise the younger and relatively whiter Latin American republics of Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Chile and Mexico, despite their lack of adherence to the standards of civilisation when compared to Haiti.¹¹¹

This withheld recognition was due to racialisation. As Haiti's adherence to the standards of civilisation showed the possibility of black civilisation, it challenged dominant global racial hierarchies and white Self/Other conceptions.¹¹² These racial hierarchies undeniably existed for longer, as they were rooted in colonial slavery.¹¹³ However, Haiti's *de facto* independence and its adherence to the standards of civilisation, that were previously adequate to justify these hierarchies, upset these notions of black incapacity for self-governance, and spurred a change in these standards: their elasticity in theory created the possibility of black civilisation, but in practice precluded it. From now on, civilisation was explicitly tied to race; racialised blackness came to equal inherent barbarism.¹¹⁴ This racialised blackness was a dominant sentiment regarding Haiti: French planters already portrayed Haitians as biologically uncivilised and barbarous to preserve the idea of white superiority.¹¹⁵ Additionally, as discussed in the historiography, Haitian independence sparked a wave of Anglo-Saxon writing against the possibility of black sovereignty.¹¹⁶ From now on, the fact that Haiti was governed by and predominantly consisted of black people, excluded the possibility of its sovereign equality, as racialised blackness equalled barbarity in the minds of the supposedly civilised western imperial standard-setters. This exclusion made racialised blackness a self-fulfilling prophecy.¹¹⁷

Moreover, as global order could be characterised as a hierarchy of sovereignty and intervention, as deciding 'who has the right to intervene against who,'¹¹⁸ this racialised blackness opened the door for white interventionism, perceived (by whites) as guidance. An early Haitian example is the 1839 anti-slave trade treaty with the United Kingdom: ironically, the British regarded Haitians as barbarous due to the lack of explicit criminalisation of slave trade, foregoing the fact that Haiti not only originated from a

¹¹⁰ Gaffield, 'The Racialization of International Law after the Haitian Revolution,' 861-2, 866.

¹¹¹ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 12; Gaffield, 'The Racialization of International Law after the Haitian Revolution,' 855-6.

¹¹² Marta Fernández Moreno, Carlos Chagas Vianna Braga, and Maira Siman Gomes, 'Trapped Between Many Worlds: A Post-Colonial Perspective on the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)', *International Peacekeeping* 19, no. 3 (June 2012): 380-1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2012.696389>.

¹¹³ James, *The Black Jacobins*, 14.

¹¹⁴ Gaffield, 'The Racialization of International Law after the Haitian Revolution,' 867-8.

¹¹⁵ Gaffield, 847; Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide,' 643-5.

¹¹⁶ Smith, 'Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography', 61-2.

¹¹⁷ Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide,' 643-5.

¹¹⁸ Keene, 'International Hierarchy and the Origins of the Modern Practice of Intervention,' 1078-9.

slave revolt, but even was the first country in the world to abolish slavery altogether.¹¹⁹ This way, black sovereignty became tied to a supposed lack of humanitarian norms and notions of failed statehood, similar to how early twentieth century slavery in Liberia and Ethiopia was disconnected from the colonial economic system surrounding them.¹²⁰ In the Haitian case, this image of failed statehood was reinforced by the idea of Haitian regression. Haiti was seen as modern under French rule, but was seen to have regressed after independence, necessitating renewed white oversight, at least according to the ‘civilised’ and imperial Europeans and Americans, who turned a blind eye to the historical developments that caused Haitian turmoil, such as their enormous debt or decades-long exclusion.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the idea reigned that as the French had (with violent slavery) been able to extract enormous wealth from Haiti, with white guidance, this could be done again.¹²² This perceived benevolence of white guidance brings us to Haitian-American relations.

Haitian-American relations

As Leon Pamphile notes, with the Haitian Revolution of 1791 and the subsequent formal declaration of independence in 1804, Haiti joined the US to become the second independent postcolonial republic in the Americas.¹²³ Initially, both republics found themselves opposing France and engaged in trade. Haitian independence proved beneficial to the US, as the loss of Haiti led the French to relinquish their colonial ambitions, enabling the Louisiana Purchase.¹²⁴ However, relations soon turned sour. As Haitian independence was perceived as proof of black capacity for self-government by enslaved people in the US, it challenged the white supremacist foundation of the US, and inspired (a fear of) slave revolts. As Haiti formed a threat to the US slavery-based economy, the US instituted a (porous) trade embargo.¹²⁵ For Pamphile, ever since Haitian independence, these conflicting interests of the US and Haiti were instrumental in what he terms their contrary destinies.¹²⁶

In 1823, President James Monroe proclaimed the Americas as a distinct sphere, meant to be free from European influence. This Monroe Doctrine was predicated on American exceptionalism, the belief that the US is unique in its norms, values, political institutions and development.¹²⁷ This belief inspired the Manifest Destiny, the US’s supposedly holy mission to extend its civilisation to those in the Americas, another part of the Monroe Doctrine.¹²⁸ In the spirit of this doctrine, the US extended recognition to several Latin American republics in 1823, while Haitian President Boyer’s request for US recognition in

¹¹⁹ Gaffield, ‘The Racialization of International Law after the Haitian Revolution’, 861-2.

¹²⁰ Getachew, ‘The Counter-Revolutionary Movement’.

¹²¹ Knox, ‘Haiti at the League of Nations’, 256.

¹²² Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902-1915* (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1988), <http://archive.org/details/haitigreatpowers0000plum>, 5-6.

¹²³ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 1.

¹²⁴ Pamphile, 4-7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 21-2.

¹²⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 18.

¹²⁸ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 14.

1822 was ignored. Instead, Haiti was left waiting for recognition until 1862. This left the island nation liable to European imperial pressures, resulting in the previously mentioned 1825 indemnity payment to France. However, even official diplomatic recognition in 1862 did not secure Haitian sovereignty. Of the 26 US military interventions in Haiti between 1849 and 1915, 22 happened after recognition.¹²⁹ Whereas the protectionary element of the Monroe Doctrine apparently did not apply to Haiti, the civilisational element apparently did.

Although the first cracks in Haitian-US relations appeared at the start of the nineteenth century, their fates truly diverged from the 1840s, as multiple transformations such as the industrial revolution unfolded.¹³⁰ These transformed the US from a young agrarian republic to an industrial regional hegemon, whereas Haiti remained isolated.¹³¹ As the US industrialised and intensified its capitalist economy, it increasingly needed expansion into foreign markets – expansion that materialised, as by the 1890s, the US had acquired a strong influence in the Haitian economy.¹³² This increased Haiti's relevance to the US, as its economic investments warranted a stable environment. Even further, as the US had invested in and expanded its navy, it increasingly gained the ability to project its power over the Caribbean Sea. Together, uneven development, the US's industrialisation and increased naval power led the US to look toward its Haitian neighbour.

In addition to these domestic US factors, the Spanish-American war, the opening of the Panama Canal and the First World War also played a role in the build-up to the US Occupation of Haiti. First of all, in 1898 the Spanish-American war broke out, ending in the US acquisition of colonial territories in Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam.¹³³ This war presented a turning point for American imperialism as it confirmed the US's ability to enforce the Monroe Doctrine.¹³⁴ The US's invigorated confidence combined with the Manifest Destiny and US exceptionalism to reconcile US imperialism with its supposedly superior democratic self-image, refashioning US interventions as liberal interventionism, centred around freedom, democracy and liberal economics, combined with colonial uplift.¹³⁵ This reconciliation was manifested in the 1904 Roosevelt Corollary, that refashioned the Monroe Doctrine to justify future US intervention in Western Hemispherical countries that 'loosened the ties of civilized society.'¹³⁶ As such, in the wake of the Spanish-American war, US military interventions in the Caribbean increased in number: fourteen out of the 26 US interventions in Haiti from 1849 to 1915 came after

¹²⁹ Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 7.

¹³⁰ Barry Buzan, "Universal Sovereignty," in *The Globalization of International Society* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2017), 5.

¹³¹ Sommers, *Race, Reality, and Realpolitik*, 5-6.

¹³² William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy and the Roots of American Empire: A Study of the Growth and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Mass-Market Society* (New York, 1969), 29; Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 16.

¹³³ Pamphile, 15.

¹³⁴ Mary Nolan, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4.

¹³⁵ Sommers, *Race, Reality, and Realpolitik*, viii.

¹³⁶ 'Message of the President [Roosevelt],' 6 December 1904, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS]*, With the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 6, 1904 [APC-1904], (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905).

1898.¹³⁷ These interventions were not limited to Haiti: other parts of the Caribbean saw US interventions too, notably Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Panama.¹³⁸

Second, as the Panama Canal opened in 1914, the strategic importance of Haiti drastically increased as trade through the Caribbean surged.¹³⁹ In addition, under the guise of the Monroe Doctrine and in tandem with US (economic) interests, the US sought to oust the French, British and Germans vying for influence in Haiti, while the First World War intensified the imperial rivalry with Germany. Nevertheless, Plummer asserts that ‘the German threat was exaggerated,’ with anti-imperialists in 1933 already making likewise claims.¹⁴⁰ This imperial rivalry still impacted Haiti. As foreign trade now increasingly relied upon domestic state support, imperial ventures often took pacific forms, through contracts and concessions.¹⁴¹ Haitian examples are numerous: railway, copper mining, national bank and treasury contracts and concessions. These imperial influences, from US military interventions to economic concessions, often caused instability, as imperial power politics continually and purposefully undermined Haitian economic and political stability. However, as foreign investments required stability to ensure good investment returns, instability made Haiti a target for imperial intervention. This instability tied into existing racial sentiments of supposed black unruliness, disorder, and incapability for self-governance, which were commonly expressed in early twentieth century US news media, representing Haitians as in need of white guidance.¹⁴² Eventually, as instability climaxed in 1914-5, so did a century of foreign involvement in Haiti, as this white ‘guidance’ materialised with the 1915 Occupation.

Events of 1914-5

Haitian government in the period 1914-5 saw four regime changes. During this period, the US regularly sent warships into Haitian waters and occasionally landed marines on Haitian territory to protect the American legation; Haitian sovereignty went unacknowledged. The regime changes were partly due to foreign legations harbouring political refugees or revolutionary leaders, and financial problems, which saw the Haitian government rely on advances made by the privately US-controlled *Banque Nationale*.¹⁴³ According to US diplomatic personnel, had it not been for these financial difficulties, successive Haitian governments would have been able to quell the revolutions that instead threw them over.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, in September 1914 the *Banque* stopped advancing money in an attempt to destabilise Haitian government and force US supervision over Haitian customs – something which the Department of State had

¹³⁷ Sommers, *Race, Reality, and Realpolitik*, viii.

¹³⁸ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 15.

¹³⁹ Plummer, *Haiti and the Great Powers, 1902-1915*, 88.

¹⁴⁰ Plummer, 12-3; Gruening, ‘The Issue in Haiti’, 280.

¹⁴¹ Plummer, 13.

¹⁴² Blassingame, ‘The Press and American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1904-1920’.

¹⁴³ ‘Consular Assistant Hazeltine, on Special Detail, to the Secretary of State,’ 30 July 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 528.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Consular Assistant Hazeltine, on Special Detail, to the Secretary of State,’ 30 July 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 528.

unfruitfully proposed to Haiti with the Haitian-American Convention in July 1914.¹⁴⁵

As the succeeding Haitian governmental breakdown culminated in regime change, the US bargained with the new regime to sign the Convention.¹⁴⁶ The Haitian government refused, instead offering the US economic privileges. These were refused by the US, as ‘this [US] government was actuated wholly by a disinterested desire to render assistance.’¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the *Banque* intensified its sabotage and shipped \$500,000 worth of gold from Port-au-Prince to New York, using US military and diplomatic support.¹⁴⁸

As a result of these imperial power politics, the Haitian regime fell, again. The ensuing instability provided the US with a legitimate reason to intervene – in the eye of the beholder.¹⁴⁹ On July 28, 1915, the US Occupation of Haiti commenced. It pressured Haitian politicians into compliance, forcing the election of US client Philippe Sudre Dartiguenave.¹⁵⁰ On September 16, the Haitian-American Convention was finally signed. Although it was modelled on the 1914 proposal, Secretary of State Robert Lansing remarked to President Woodrow Wilson that it ‘of course, makes several alterations and additions covering the ground far more thoroughly and granting to this Government a much more extensive control than the original treaty proposed.’¹⁵¹

To sum up, ever since the Haitian Revolution, Haiti had a tough ride. The terms of recognition by former colonial overlord France set Haiti off on the wrong foot, burdening the fledgling country with an immense debt that lasted for almost 150 years and played a crucial role in later infringements on Haitian sovereignty. Next to this debt, racialised blackness equalling supposed incapability for self-governance hindered Haitian acceptance into the international sphere as it undermined Haitian sovereignty and created a perceived necessity for white guidance. At the same time, Haitian relations with the US were difficult already since the early nineteenth century. As US power surged and the US started looking outward, intervening in Haiti through ships of war became customary. The Spanish-American war boosted US expansionism, and as imperial rivalries and Caribbean trade intensified, Haiti’s strategic relevance to the US drastically rose, combining with imperially caused instability to make Haiti a target for imperial intervention. As instability tied into pre-existing assumptions of white supremacy and black incapability for self-governance, the stage for military intervention was set. Instability climaxed between

¹⁴⁵ ‘Minister Blanchard to the Secretary of State,’ 5 September 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 529; ‘Minister Smith to the Secretary of State,’ 9 June 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 519; ‘The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,’ 2 July 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 525.

¹⁴⁶ ‘The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,’ 12 November 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 544.

¹⁴⁷ ‘The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,’ 12 December 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 567.

¹⁴⁸ ‘The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,’ 15 December 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 570.

¹⁴⁹ ‘The Secretary of State to the Secretary of the Navy,’ 28 July 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 541.

¹⁵⁰ ‘The Secretary of State to Chargé Davis,’ 10 August 1915, *FRUS*, With the Address of the President to Congress December 7, 1915 [APC-1915], Joseph V. Fuller (ed.) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), Document 552.

¹⁵¹ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 13 August 1915, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS]*, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume II [LPII], J.S. Beddie (ed.) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1940), Document 358.

1914-5, and eventually saw US marines permanently occupy Haiti. In the following section, the discursive legitimisations of this 1915 Occupation are discussed.

2.2 Discursive legitimisations: 1914-5

The US foreign policy discourse that legitimised the 1915-34 US Occupation of Haiti can be classified into four analytical categories: first, a civilisational dichotomy ordering Haiti and the US, the underlying reigning conception of civilisation in 1915, and thirdly its racial structure. These three combined notions of supposed Haitian racial backwardness with supposed US civilisational superiority to reconfigure black Haitian sovereignty compatible with formal, white, US imperialism, as manifested in the fourth category: discourse regarding the 1915 Occupation itself.

Civilisational dichotomy: supposed Haitian backwardness and US exceptionalism

The discourse on the 1915 US Occupation espouses a Self/Other dichotomy of a violent, anarchical and disorderly Haiti, versus a superior US, suitable guardians of civilisation and Haitian sovereignty.

First, US foreign policy officials portrayed the situation in early twentieth century Haiti as one of savagery. This is seen through the frequent references to (unactualised) Haitian violations of its foreign obligations, but also through references to continuous fighting, repeated disorder and constant anarchy, painting the picture of both a Haitian government and a Haitian people unable to ensure domestic peace and development.¹⁵² For example, US Minister to Haiti Arthur Bailly-Blanchard wrote that ‘considerable firing [...] is customary here when a change in government is imminent.’¹⁵³ Within US foreign policy communication, violence and disorder were portrayed as regular characteristics of Haitian society. Similar sentiments were especially salient on the eve of the US Occupation, when in the morning of July 28, 1915, former Haitian President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam was murdered. In the words of a US Chargé d’affaires: ‘At 10.30 mob invaded French Legation, took out President, killed and dismembered him before Legation gates. Hysterical crowds parading streets with portions of his body on poles.’¹⁵⁴ This construction of violent, savage and disorderly Haitian masses was echoed in journalistic discourses, and tied in to, and was seen as proof of, existing sentiments of a racially backward Haiti, and enabled the US to step in: that July 28 afternoon, the US Occupation of Haiti began.¹⁵⁵ Still, the extent to which this violence was the actual US motive could be questioned, as the documents announcing the 1915 Occupation might have been drafted without a date.¹⁵⁶

While the 1915 Occupation was based on the notion of widespread and inherent Haitian disorder, characterised by hysterical crowds and mobs, At the same time, Haitians were crucially dually

¹⁵² ‘[Untitled],’ 12 September 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 465.

¹⁵³ ‘Minister Blanchard to the Secretary of State,’ 22 February 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 501.

¹⁵⁴ ‘[Untitled],’ 28 July 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 540.

¹⁵⁵ Jeffrey W. Sommers, ‘The US Power Elite and the Political Economy of Haiti’s Occupation: Investment, Race, and World Order,’ *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015): 54; Fernández Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, ‘Trapped Between Many Worlds,’ 381; Blassingame, ‘The Press and American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1904-1920’.

¹⁵⁶ Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, *Haiti: The Breached Citadel*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 2004), 99.

constructed as both violent and victim. On the one hand, there was ‘the better element of the Haytien people,’ Secretary of State Lansing wrote, who were deprived of their political and personal rights and terrorised by ‘unscrupulous military leaders.’¹⁵⁷ According to him, these people deserved protection, and provided a possible legitimisation of protecting humanity. Relatedly, Lansing planned for the US to take control of Haitian customhouses, a longstanding wish of the US government, in order ‘to provide sustenance for starving natives.’¹⁵⁸ Opposite these starving natives were the Haitian generals and revolutionary leaders, who were portrayed in US foreign policy discourse as greedy, undemocratic and terrorising tyrants, feared by all Haitians as they sought to control Haitian customs revenues; these generals and their men were (racialised as) ‘savages,’ according to Admiral William B. Caperton, who led the US Occupation.¹⁵⁹ These representations focused mainly on Haitian *cacos*, northern farmers who resisted the US Occupation. *Cacos* were consciously labelled bandits by the US to render illegitimate Haitian resistance to the occupation.¹⁶⁰ As these so-called bandits in their supposedly violent efforts to enrich themselves undermined Haitian political rights and terrorised the Haitian population, they required violent disciplining. This dual construction of Haitians as vulnerable victims and violent perpetrators created a need for both white violence and paternalistic white guidance; it enabled the military occupation and the taking over of Haitian political institutions and public revenues, rendered in line with the interests of the Haitian population.

On the other side of this dichotomy was the US, who, according to Lansing, stepped in on behalf of that same ‘better element of the Haitian people.’¹⁶¹ Prior to the occupation, US foreign policy officials repeatedly positioned the US as judge of Haitian civilisation; they were to recognise the Haitian government only if it adhered to the US definition of civilisation.¹⁶² When the Occupation commenced, Lansing declared that US ‘suggestions’ were the only route towards Haitian development or civilisation; without US guidance, Haitian civilisation was to remain a contradiction.¹⁶³ According to US foreign policy discourse, the US stepped in to provide order and secure personal freedoms. In the words of Lansing: ‘intelligent Haitians should feel gratified that it was the United States rather than some other power whose motives might not be as unselfish as ours.’¹⁶⁴ Not only did he recast (and racialise) Haitian resistance to the Occupation as childlike ungratefulness and inherent Haitian inability to recognise civilisation even as it was brought to them, but he additionally espoused a discourse of US civilisational superiority over both Haitians and other (imperial) nations, reminiscent of US exceptionalism.

This discourse was strongly connected to the Manifest Destiny of the US to spread (its)

¹⁵⁷ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358.

¹⁵⁸ ‘The Secretary of State to Chargé Davis,’ 1 September 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 459.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Admiral Caperton to the Secretary of the Navy,’ 2 August 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 548; ‘Consul Livingston to the Secretary of State,’ 27 January 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 497.

¹⁶⁰ Pressley-Sanon, ‘Haitian (Pre)Occupations,’ 127.

¹⁶¹ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358.

¹⁶² ‘The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,’ 12 December 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 567.

¹⁶³ ‘The Secretary of State to Chargé Davis,’ 22 August 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 453.

¹⁶⁴ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 7 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 354.

civilisation across the American continent, of which Haiti possibly presented a new frontier. As mentioned in the historical background, the context of the 1915 Occupation came after the awakening of the US as an imperial power, with its increased ability to enforce its hegemony over the Americas through the Monroe Doctrine and its Roosevelt Corollary, rendering US intervention in ‘unruly’ neighbours such as Haiti legitimate. In turning the American Hemisphere into the US hemisphere, President Wilson set out to tighten US relations with other western hemispherical countries. For instance, in his 1913 Mobile Address, Wilson emphasised the common experience of American nations, including the US, with colonial exploitation by European imperial powers followed by predatory loans upon gaining independence.¹⁶⁵ Through disregarding the fact that the US was already engaged in such imperial power politics to the detriment of other American nations such as Haiti or the Dominican Republic, this supposedly common experience enabled the US to brandish themselves as great emancipator of western hemispherical countries, combining this common historical experience with US exceptionalism and its Manifest Destiny to spread democracy and liberty, masking contemporary imperial dynamics.

In fact, this discourse of US exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny was visible in the (publicly spoken) words of US-client president Dartiguenave: ‘... the United States [...] desire fully to guide us in the route which centuries of civilisation have made, which we, unhappy slaves of false reasoning brought about by jealous prejudices, have never tried to find.’¹⁶⁶ Dartiguenave, who arguably contributed to US foreign policy discourse, here clearly articulated the civilisational dichotomy underlying the 1915 Occupation, with racialised Haitians unable to escape ‘false reasoning’ and ‘jealous prejudices.’ In a similar vein, Lansing argued that the US’s overriding of Haitian sovereignty presented the only possibility for Haitian stability.¹⁶⁷ As such, US discourse combined a belief in US exceptionalism with notions of Haitian backwardness, constructing a civilisational dichotomy of a civilised US and a backwards Haiti, to legitimise the US taking control of Haitian public life and finances to ‘defend’ Haitian civilisation against Haitians themselves. This brings us to the 1915 definition of civilisation.

Civilisation anno 1915: foreign lives and property, order and democratic liberties

Starting in 1804, Haiti was constructed and perceived as lacking civilisation, thus enabling foreign intervention. In 1915, Haiti was again constructed to be lacking (American) civilisation. However, these norms had somewhat shifted from order, the rule of law, schools and bureaucracy, to include liberalism and democracy. In addition, the reigning conception of civilisation as both hereditary, i.e. something the US was supposedly born with, but simultaneously learned, i.e. something Haiti could theoretically be taught, enabled the US Occupation.

The central values in US foreign policy discourse revolved around ‘maintaining order,’ ‘meeting obligations to outside nations,’ including protecting foreign property and foreign lives, and ‘the consent of

¹⁶⁵ Sommers, *Race, Reality, and Realpolitik*, 116.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Admiral Caperton to the Secretary of the Navy,’ 15 November 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 488.

¹⁶⁷ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358.

the governed and will of the people,' as articulated by Secretary of State Lansing's predecessor William J. Bryan.¹⁶⁸ In addition, they involved the elimination of traditional practices like *voudou*, strongly connected to the racialised discourse of savage Haitians.¹⁶⁹ Through proper, constitutional, civilised government supported by the US, Haitians were supposed to 'enjoy their full rights of life, liberty and property.'¹⁷⁰ Together, order, liberalism, democracy and capitalism formed the American definition of civilisation, and as such, were the values exported to Haiti. As discussed before, whereas the US was seen as panacea to Haitian problems due to its supposed excess of 'civilisation,' Haiti was seen to be lacking. However, as Lansing acknowledged himself, the US treatment of Haiti arguably was not in line with these standards of civilisation, as the US undermined Haitian sovereignty through rewriting its constitution and dissolving Haitian parliament. The racialised assumption of inferiority connected to Haitian blackness precluded Haitians from receiving equal treatment.¹⁷¹

This definition of civilisation rested on an ambiguous construction of civilisation as both learned and hereditary. In the early twentieth century, President Wilson crucially constructed civilisation as both achieved through historical development and inherited through the US's Anglo-Saxon character, making civilisation something that theoretically could be acquired through US tutelage, but that was simultaneously predicated on race and therefore practically impossible to reach for 'inferior' races.¹⁷² This simultaneously historically acquired and hereditary transmissible character of civilisation legitimised the US's civilising mission in Haiti, relying on explicit views of white supremacy.¹⁷³ This ambiguous conception underlined the US's educational programme, aiming at gradually 'introducing' Haitians to civilisation, starting with agricultural or vocational education, to only later introduce American political institutions.¹⁷⁴ As such, the dual conception of both hereditary and learned civilisation combined with racialised conceptions of US superiority to form the promise of Haitian uplift through formally imperial American guidance, legitimising the US Occupation. This hereditary character of civilisation brings us to the role of race in US foreign policy discourse.

Race in 1915

US foreign policy discourse coupled black sovereignty to humanitarian crises, necessitating and legitimating white imperial oversight of black sovereignty. In doing so, US foreign policy officials drew on explicitly racist stereotypes of supposedly disorderly, savage and anarchical Haitians rooted in

¹⁶⁸ 'The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,' 12 December 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 567.

¹⁶⁹ Andrew Linklater, *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order*, 1st ed. (Bristol University Press, 2020), 193-205, <https://doi.org/10.46692/9781529213898>.

¹⁷⁰ 'Chargé Davis to the Secretary of State,' 25 October 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 479; 'The Secretary of State to Chargé Davis,' 22 August 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 453.

¹⁷¹ 'The Secretary of State to President Wilson,' 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358; Rubin Francis Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism; the Influence of Racial Assumptions on American Foreign Policy, 1893-1946* (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1972).

¹⁷² Getachew, 'The Counter-Revolutionary Movement,' 41-52.

¹⁷³ Sommers, *Race, Reality, and Realpolitik*, 9.

¹⁷⁴ Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, 14.

historical notions of US racial superiority, connected to the dual conception of civilisation discussed above.

In US foreign policy discourse on the 1915 US Occupation of Haiti, the explicit racist stereotypes of supposed disorder were extrapolated to Haitian history, to construct the notion of perennial Haitian racialised incapability for self-government. Secretary of State Lansing, for instance, discursively rooted Haitian underdevelopment in Haiti's history of political strife and 'constant danger to life and property,' placing the blame for Haitian troubles with the Haitians.¹⁷⁵ In a similar way, President Dartiguenave called for ignoring 'facts anterior to the coming of the Americans,'¹⁷⁶ instead remembering only the US's friendly aid, ignoring the role played by both US government and US investors in exacerbating the financial difficulties of the Haitian government that, according to several US foreign policy officials, were the primary cause of Haitian instability.¹⁷⁷ Tellingly, whereas Haitian defaulting on foreign loans was a frequently cited reason for its occupation by the US, the first actual default happened under the US's watch.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, US involvement in Haitian troubles was openly downplayed, placing the blame instead with the Haitians and their supposedly inherent savagery.

This way, Haitian crises were attributed to a constructed racial inferiority on the part of the Haitians, which undermined black sovereignty and manifested in the US Occupation, which as Lansing confessed represented 'an invasion of Haytien independence.'¹⁷⁹ The constructed connection between black Haitian sovereignty and humanitarian crises reinforced the need and legitimacy of US civilisational 'guidance,' enabling Lansing to claim the impossibility of Haitian stability without US intervention and to claim US intervention to be 'in the interest of humanity.'¹⁸⁰ This strongly resembled the dynamics of the League of Nations as analysed by Getachew, which saw black (Liberian and Ethiopian) sovereignty tied to humanitarian crises through the decoupling of historical colonial legacies in the form of a slavery-based economic system from contemporary realities of Ethiopian and Liberian slavery.¹⁸¹ A similar mechanism was at play in Haiti, where the idea of Haitian regression since 1804 decoupled Haitian political turmoil from Haiti's perpetually uncertain independence due to the predatory French loan, further instability caused by imperial meddling and the forever looming and often actualised threat of imperial intervention. Connected to the conception of civilisation as hereditary for white people, and possibly learned for black people, this coupling of black sovereignty to humanitarian crises legitimised white violence and white guidance in Haiti in the name of humanity, and refashioned black sovereignty as compatible with white oversight in international (legal) norms.

¹⁷⁵ 'The Secretary of State to Chargé Davis,' 22 August 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 453.

¹⁷⁶ 'Admiral Caperton to the Secretary of the Navy,' 15 November 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 488.

¹⁷⁷ 'Minister Blanchard to the Secretary of State,' 5 September 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 529; 'Minister Smith to the Secretary of State,' 9 June 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 519; 'The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,' 15 December 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 570.

¹⁷⁸ Blassingame, 'The Press and American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1904-1920,' 41.

¹⁷⁹ 'The Secretary of State to President Wilson,' 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358.

¹⁸⁰ 'The Secretary of State to President Wilson,' 7 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 354.

¹⁸¹ Getachew, 'The Counter-Revolutionary Movement,' 52-62.

Throughout US history, people supposedly unfit for self-government based on their race have been denied equal or constitutional treatment by the US; Haiti is no exception.¹⁸² Drawing on discourses of racialised blackness and Haitian incapability for self-governance, Lansing could portray US imperialism to be the only possible cure for Haitian ‘anarchy,’ legitimising the US’s violation of Haitian sovereignty.¹⁸³ The characterisation of Haitians as either natives or savages, although not explicitly combined with mentions of race, represented a powerful othering mechanism, with a superior civilised US uplifting Haitian natives and savages. This way, US foreign policy discourse echoed contemporary newspaper representations of supposedly racially inferior Haitians, that depicted Haitians as savage, disorderly, anarchical and tyrannical.¹⁸⁴ As such, the US Occupation of Haiti fitted in a longer history of US sentiments of racial superiority, through previous interactions with indigenous Americans, Chinese and Japanese immigrants, and crucially, the historical enslavement of black people.¹⁸⁵ In fact, Haitians were seen in a similar light to African-Americans in the US, but whereas the latter were considered somewhat civilised due to their contact with whites, the former’s savagery supposedly ran unbound.¹⁸⁶ These racialised assumptions of inferiority combined with the civilisational hierarchy and the US conception of civilisation to reconcile Haitian sovereignty with US imperialism.

The intervention: Haiti’s friendly doctor

The 1915 US Occupation was constructed as a beneficial, friendly act of help. However, drawing on the civilisational dichotomy discussed above, US help went beyond aid; it was a civilisational cure. This discourse of US exceptionalism and Haitian backwardness then legitimised US claims of safeguarding Haitian sovereignty and democratic wishes, and the contradictory formally imperial US violations of this sovereignty and of these wishes.

First, ‘compelled by the appalling conditions in Haiti’, the US, as loyal friend and neighbour, stepped in to help establish orderly government, or so Secretary of State Lansing claimed.¹⁸⁷ As such, he recast the US Occupation of Haiti as beneficial, a form of aid, in line with the US’s moral self-image of civilisational superiority discussed above. The civilisational hierarchy spearheaded by the US legitimised US interventions, rebranded as emancipatory uplifting missions, as reflected by this discourse of helpfulness and the words ‘aid,’ ‘cure,’ and ‘remedy,’ which took the form of bringing Haitians liberalism, democracy and capitalism. As such, this civilisational hierarchy enabled the US to combine liberal interventionism with colonial uplift, in the name of freedom and emancipation, therefore enabling the continued US moral self-image of democratic superiority to mask the formation of (formal) US empire.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism*, xiii.

¹⁸³ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358.

¹⁸⁴ Blassingame, ‘The Press and American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1904-1920’.

¹⁸⁵ Weston, *Racism in U.S. Imperialism*, 22-34.

¹⁸⁶ Pressley-Sanon, ‘Haitian (Pre)Occupations,’ 125.

¹⁸⁷ ‘The Secretary of State to Chargé Davis,’ 1 September 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 459.

¹⁸⁸ Sommers, *Race, Reality, and Realpolitik*, viii.

This dynamic was strongly present in the negotiations regarding the Haitian-American Convention preceding the US Occupation. As the US negotiated over this Convention, it received a counter-offer granting outright concessions. The US staunchly refused, insisting their helpful, uplifting, disinterested motives.¹⁸⁹ Negotiations fell through, but the Convention was eventually implemented with the 1915 Occupation, in a more far-reaching manner, resulting in the undermining of Haitian political institutions and the restructuring of its economy – effects which sharply contradicted the US discourse of helpfulness.¹⁹⁰

Despite these seemingly altruistic motives, US help was not noncommittal, as Lansing threatened the US-controlled Haitian government with replacement upon not complying to US wishes.¹⁹¹ So, the US intervention went beyond aid between equal friends: US actions towards Haiti were characterised as remedial; according to US foreign policy discourse, Haiti was in need of ‘rehabilitation’ as the US stepped in ‘in the interest of humanity.’¹⁹² This conception of the US Occupation as disinterested uplifting mission further explains why, as discussed above, Haitian resistance was racialised as ill-tempered ungratefulness.¹⁹³

As such, the US was understood to administer a civilisational cure to its Haitian ‘patient.’ As a result, Haiti was to comply with US decisions. However, through combining this discourse of rehabilitation with the previously discussed civilisational hierarchy, US foreign policy officials were able to refashion their undermining of black Haitian sovereignty as being supportive of it. Through racialised assumptions of black inability for self-governance, the US was able to claim to intervene on behalf of both humanity and Haitian sovereign independence, asserting simultaneously its imperial oversight and Haitian sovereignty in the Haitian-American Convention. As the US was constructed as necessary to achieve civilisation, Lansing proclaimed US oversight to be the only possible solution to racialised Haitian anarchy ‘from a practical standpoint.’¹⁹⁴ Similarly, claiming to defend the Haitian masses enabled the US to discursively defend Haitian democratic wishes, while in actuality dissolving and manipulating Haitian political institutions. This way, the civilisational hierarchy and explicit racist stereotypes underlying the 1915 Occupation cleared the way for US-preferred policies that served to restructure Haitian politics and economy in line with US interests, under the guise of ‘knowing what is best’ for Haitians.

¹⁸⁹ ‘The Secretary of State to Minister Blanchard,’ 19 December 1914, *FRUS*, APC-1914, Fuller, Document 573.

¹⁹⁰ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358; Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 25.

¹⁹¹ ‘The Secretary of State to Chargé Davis,’ 24 August 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 455.

¹⁹² ‘[Untitled],’ 12 September 1915, *FRUS*, APC-1915, Fuller, Document 465; ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 7 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 354.

¹⁹³ Sommers, ‘The US Power Elite and the Political Economy of Haiti’s Occupation,’ 59.

¹⁹⁴ ‘The Secretary of State to President Wilson,’ 13 August 1915, *FRUS*, LPII, Beddie, Document 358.

2.3 Conclusion

The 1915 US Occupation of Haiti grew out of a historical legacy of fighting against colonialism and for independence in Haiti, combined with skewed regional power relations. It took place in a broader context of US-led 'emancipation' of the western hemisphere, masking and legitimising US imperialism as liberal democratic uplift. As imperial rivalries and world historical events as the Spanish-American war, opening of the Panama Canal, and the First World War increased Haiti's strategic relevance, instability caused by imperial meddling opened the door to formal US imperialism. US intervention relied on a civilisational hierarchy of superior Americans and inferior Haitians, constructed by US foreign policy officials.

Haitians were represented both as vulnerable victims and as disorderly bandits, necessitating both white US violence and white US guidance to further US-defined civilisation, meaning liberalism, democracy and capitalism. Drawing on explicit stereotypes of supposed black incapability for self-government and disconnecting Haitian realities from imperial legacies enabled US foreign policy officials to equate Haitian sovereignty with crisis and disorder, engineering an international reconfiguration of black sovereignty as solely possible in tandem with white imperial oversight. As civilisation came to be defined as something Americans were born with and Haitians could theoretically learn, Americans were the natural tutors to their Haitian neighbours. As such, the US Occupation of Haiti was legitimised as a civilisational cure, through a combination of the notions of Haitian racial backwardness with US civilisational superiority, refiguring black sovereignty compatible with formal white imperialism.

3. The US intervention in Haiti, 1994-6

This chapter answers *how US foreign policy officials legitimised the US intervention in Haiti of 1994-6*. First, the historical background of this intervention is discussed, highlighting the legacies of (informal) imperialism that connected the 1994 intervention to its 1915 precursor. Then, I discuss the 1991-6 discursive legitimisations of the 1994 intervention; specifically the civilisational hierarchy, reigning conception of civilisation and implicit racial hierarchy constructed by US foreign policy officials, that together legitimised the intervention as helpful democratising mission, continuing the reconciliation of black Haitian sovereignty and informal, white, US imperialism.

3.1 Historical background

Before discussing Haitian-US relations and the historical antecedents of the 1994 intervention, two developments in the international context merit attention: the entanglement between informal (US) imperialism and multilateral institutions, and the shift from explicit to implicit racism in the US.

First, whereas the 1915 Occupation arose out of an imperial world context, this imperialism was said to have disappeared throughout the twentieth century.¹⁹⁵ This is due to the advent of international institutions, that have come to stand for the spread of universal norms, such as human rights, all over the globe. Nevertheless, here the distinction between formal imperialism, or the official transfer of sovereignty, and informal imperialism, meaning forms of economic and political manipulation, comes into play. Whereas formal imperialism might have become out of fashion, although arguably not completely eradicated, these international institutions nevertheless became ‘entangled,’ implicated, in forms of informal imperialism.¹⁹⁶

This entanglement arguably stemmed from their creation. Throughout the twentieth century, US hegemony expanded until the US became ‘the world’s sole remaining superpower.’¹⁹⁷ As US preponderance increased it set out to create a world in its image through building a liberal institutional order after the Second World War.¹⁹⁸ The UN for instance, was partially built on the imperial logics of the League of Nations, only it assumed US instead of British hegemony.¹⁹⁹ In addition, the global financial institutions, such as the WB and IMF, were meant to create a favourable economic climate for the US, which in effect recreated the imperial world economy.²⁰⁰ To reinforce this global US dominance, US civilised values became enshrined in these international institutions; ‘universal’ values of human rights,

¹⁹⁵Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 5; Reid, ‘The Biopolitics of the War on Terror,’ 237-41.

¹⁹⁶ Reid, ‘The Biopolitics of the War on Terror.’

¹⁹⁷ David Graeber, ‘Neoliberalism, or The Bureaucratization of the World’, in *The Insecure American: How We Got Here and What We Should Do About It*, by Hugh Gusterson and Catherine Ehrenreich (California University Press, 2009), 79.

¹⁹⁸ Ikenberry, ‘The End of Liberal International Order?’, 14-7; Mearsheimer, ‘Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order,’ 18-21.

¹⁹⁹ Mark Mazower, ‘Introduction’, in *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 14.

²⁰⁰ Lee Wengraf, ‘Neoliberalism: Crisis, Debt and Structural Adjustment’, in *Extracting Profit: Imperialism, Neoliberalism, and the New Scramble for Africa*, by Lee Wengraf (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2018), 66, 74-6.

liberal democracy and global market civilisation were recast as global, universal, rational, and therefore neutral civilisational ideals.²⁰¹ In fact, as the US intervention of Haiti happened shortly after the end of the Cold War, it coincided with an intensification of the imperial dynamics of promoting liberal ‘civilisation’ by the US and its global institutional partners, which saw a return to imperial dynamics of civilisation.²⁰² As these supposedly universal norms served to perpetuate US hegemony, multilateral institutions became complicit in informal imperialism.²⁰³

These institutions, such as the Organization of American States [OAS] and UN, often worked to impose these civilisational norms on vulnerable nations, especially since neoliberalism’s ascendancy in the wake of the Third World debt crisis.²⁰⁴ As many nations in the Global South were riddled with debt, the IMF and WB offered ‘help,’ in the form of neoliberal economic reforms.²⁰⁵ However, these reforms proved a misguided strategy for capitalist development, instead undermining economic sovereignty, development and stability in the Global South and rejuvenating the imperial world economy.²⁰⁶ Although the nature of Global South exports shifted from mainly raw materials, to labour intensive semi-manufactured goods, economic relations generally did not change; while Haiti has often been exploited for its cheap supply of labour, it has not seen much economic progress.²⁰⁷ Such dynamics, conducted under the institutionalisation of informal US empire, are reminiscent of the dynamics of US imperialism in Haiti in 1915. These neoliberal institutions strengthened the imperial dynamic of obliterating sovereignty and re-entrenched the racial hierarchy constitutive of imperialism. Agreeing with Julian Reid’s argument regarding the War on Terror, informal empire and institution have become inseparable.²⁰⁸ As I will show, this institutionalisation of informal US empire is arguably reflected in 1994 US foreign policy discourse.

In addition, the advent of these supposedly neutral and universal discourses of human rights and neoliberal development that served to re-entrench imperial racial hierarchies was accompanied by a twentieth century shift in (US) racism, from explicit, biological ‘Jim Crowism,’ to implicit, cultural ‘colour-blindness.’ As discussed in the theoretical framework, colour-blind racism works to erase, ignore or explain away racial inequalities in an effort to perpetuate existing racial hierarchies.²⁰⁹ It mainly did – and still does – so through four frames: 1) abstract liberalism, like using the abstract liberal principle of

²⁰¹ Linklater, *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order*, 193-205, 208-15.

²⁰² Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, ‘Global Capitalism and American Empire’, *Socialist Register* 40 (2004): 27–33; Tanja A. Börzel and Michael Zürn, ‘Contestations of the Liberal International Order: From Liberal Multilateralism to Postnational Liberalism’, *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 286-7, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000570>; Mearsheimer, ‘Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order,’ 21-7.

²⁰³ Linklater, *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of Global Order*, 4.

²⁰⁴ Linklater, 210-1.

²⁰⁵ Graeber, ‘Neoliberalism,’ 84.

²⁰⁶ Graeber, 84; Panitch and Gindin, ‘Global Capitalism and American Empire,’ 27-8; Wengraf, ‘Neoliberalism: Crisis, Debt and Structural Adjustment,’ 74-6.

²⁰⁷ Richard E. Baldwin and Philippe Martin, ‘Two Waves of Globalization: Superficial Similarities, Fundamental Differences’ (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 17; Pyles, Svistova, and Ahn, ‘Securitization, Racial Cleansing, and Disaster Capitalism,’ 598.

²⁰⁸ Reid, ‘The Biopolitics of the War on Terror,’ 247-9.

²⁰⁹ Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, 2-4.

equal treatment to argue against affirmative action, while foregoing the underrepresentation of minorities; 2) the naturalisation of racially unequal relations; 3) the use of cultural arguments to explain differences between populations, closely linked to racialisation; and finally, 4) minimisation of racism.²¹⁰ As I will show later, several of these resurfaced in the 1994 US foreign policy discourse, although due to its implicit character, racism is often overlooked or said to have disappeared, as for instance in Solarz's argument as discussed in the historiography.²¹¹

From 1915 to 1994: legacies of the 1915 Occupation

Here, I detail the development of Haitian-US relations throughout the twentieth century, highlighting the continuity in US involvement in Haitian issues, starting with the 1915-34 US Occupation, which placed Haiti firmly within the US sphere of influence by rendering Haiti dependent on the US.²¹² As the Occupation left Haiti with hollowed out institutions and a political environment tightly controlled by its army, the Occupation created a pattern of Haitian presidents adhering to US control, starting with US-installed president Dartiguenave.²¹³ His successors, Joseph Louis Borno (1922-30), Sténio Vincent (1930-41) and Elie Lescot (1941-6) continued this legacy.²¹⁴ The institutional, financial and military dependence created by the Occupation served to cement informally imperial US control over Haiti, and enabled the US to continue its racially structured policy towards Haiti.²¹⁵ As a result, similar to the Occupation of 1915, this period saw Haitian government controlled by the Haitian mixed race elites, further entrenching their political and economic dominance over the largely black Haitian masses, reflected in the historiographical debates on the historical roles of Haiti's black and mixed race populations.²¹⁶

Mixed race dominance sparked an upswing in black consciousness in the 1940s in Haiti, with the *Noirist* movement protesting against both mixed race and US dominance.²¹⁷ As a result, the Haitian army, strengthened by the US Occupation and largely dominated by black Haitians, started intervening. The military intervened to elect *Noirist* leader Dumarsais Estimé (1946-50) president in 1946, repeating intervention for the 1950 presidency of Paul Eugene Magloire (1950-6). Both presidents continued Haitian dependence on the US, although eventually falling out of favour with the US. The end of Magloire's reign ushered in political instability, that came to a halt in October 1957, when François Duvalier came to power.

²¹⁰ Bonilla-Silva, 53-76.

²¹¹ Solarz, 'Foreword'; Applebaum, 'White Privilege/White Complicity'.

²¹² Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 48-56; Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, 232.

²¹³ Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934*, 232; Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 102.

²¹⁴ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 36-7, 47-51.

²¹⁵ Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide,' 647.

²¹⁶ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 32-4, 55.

²¹⁷ Pamphile, 57-9.

Fellow *Noirist* Duvalier rose to power supported by the military. He consolidated his power by cleansing the army of those deemed disloyal to him, creating his personal security force, the *Tontons Macoutes*, that would violently repress the Haitian population in the decades to come.²¹⁸ Duvalier would rule until his death in 1971 and appointed his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, as succeeding president-for-life. Jean-Claude, equally supported by the *Tontons Macoutes*, would reign until 1986.

François Duvalier's relationship with the US was complex. Initially, he had been elected with US support.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, his reign saw one of the lowest levels of US control in Haiti throughout the twentieth century, although he still relied on the US.²²⁰ Due to the Cuban Revolution, Duvalier received US financial support for his repression of communism, although US financial aid was drastically cut in 1963.²²¹ Nevertheless, international financial institutions largely controlled by the US, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, continued to support Duvalier.²²²

This pragmatism was characteristic of US policy towards Haiti at the time, which increasingly preferred practical US interests, such as stability or repressing communism, over idealistic democratic values.²²³ When François Duvalier passed away, this policy led the US to support his son Jean-Claude in order to preserve stability. With Jean-Claude, the US resumed its financial and military aid, while the *Tontons Macoutes* continued their human rights violations.

As Haitians began fleeing their country to escape this repression, the Duvalier regimes gave birth to the issue of migration. Controversially, whereas Cubans who fled a tyrannical communist regime were mostly welcomed in the US, their Haitian counterparts who fled a tyrannical right-wing regime supported by the US, were mostly sent back.²²⁴ In fact, in 1982, the US signed an interdiction agreement with Duvalier, which allowed them to intercept Haitian refugees on the high seas, circumventing refugee laws, and send those without 'proper' refugee status back to Haiti. This policy was deemed a violation of the intent of US refugee laws by human rights organisations, but would continue practically unabated even after Duvalier's resignation in 1986, at least until the US intervention of 1994. Paradoxically, only one short period saw most Haitian refugees granted asylum: Aristide's presidency.²²⁵ Like US aid, the history of Haitian-American migration shows the US prioritising interests over ideals.

²¹⁸ Pamphile, 72-4.

²¹⁹ Elizabeth Abbott, *Haiti: The Duvaliers and Their Legacy* (London: Hale, 1991), 92, 100-1.

²²⁰ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 75.

²²¹ Pamphile, 76-9.

²²² Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide,' 648-9.

²²³ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 84-5.

²²⁴ Pamphile, 87-9.

²²⁵ Noah Chomsky, 'The "Noble Phase" and "Saintly Glow" of US Foreign Policy,' 5.

Post-Duvalierist years: 1986-91

Jean-Claude Duvalier's 1986 departure saw a chance for a democratic Haiti.²²⁶ However, a series of military coups saw six (provisional) presidents from 1986 to 1991, three of whom were military generals, rapidly succeed one-another. This cycle seemingly ended with the democratic elections of 1990-1, resulting in a sweeping victory for Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who defeated US-favoured candidate and former WB official Marc Bazin.²²⁷ Aristide was an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, and implemented progressive political and economic reforms. At the same time however, he failed to reject his supporters' violence towards political opponents. In September 1991, after only seven months, a military junta led by Raoul Cédras deposed Aristide. Cédras, who received training by the US and was a member of the CIA-funded Haitian Intelligence Service, became the *de facto* Haitian leader. Controversially, both Cédras's background and a CIA informant's claim that CIA agents were in Haitian Army headquarters during the coup, have triggered allegations of US involvement.²²⁸

Aristide's ouster and return: 1991-6

Despite these rumours, the coup against Aristide was immediately condemned by the US, who continued to recognise Aristide as legitimate Haitian president.²²⁹ In liaison with the OAS, the US cut foreign aid towards Haiti and issued a trade embargo.²³⁰ The embargo, however, was porous: Clinton secretly allowed the Texaco Oil Company to sell oil to the Haitian junta. As the junta survived, it became violently repressive, again stirring up Haitian migration to the US.²³¹ However, both US Presidents during this period, Bush Sr. (1989-93) and Clinton (1993-2001), by-and-large continued pushing back Haitian refugees.²³²

As there was no domestic support for a US military intervention, negotiations for a peaceful return of Aristide commenced, materialising in the Governors Island Treaty.²³³ However, Haiti's military rulers did not uphold their part of the agreement. As a response, the US intensified the embargo, in turn sparking more refugees.²³⁴ In dealing with these refugees, the US continued its previous policies, but now actively involved its Caribbean neighbours Jamaica, Turks and Cacos Islands, and Panama to interdict and

²²⁶ Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 90, 92.

²²⁷ Pamphile, 93.

²²⁸ Whitney, 'SIN, FRAPH and the CIA: U.S. Covert Action in Haiti,' 303.

²²⁹ 'White House Statement,' 1 October 1991, *Foreign Policy Bulletin Vol. 2*, no. 3 [FPB-2-3], (Cambridge University Press, November 1991), 61; 'Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) Resolution 567,' 30 September 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 61.

²³⁰ Regarding foreign aid: 'Secretary Baker's Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,' 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 61-2; 'Resolution of OAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs,' 3 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 62-3. Regarding embargo: 'State Department announces comprehensive Trade Embargo on Haiti,' 29 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 66-7.

²³¹ 'Statement on Haitian Refugees,' 29 July 1992, FPB-3-3 (1992), 12.

²³² Pamphile, *Contrary Destinies*, 98-9.

²³³ 'Agreement of Governors Island,' 3 July 1993, FPB-4-2 (1993), 69-70.

²³⁴ Regarding embargo: 'White House Statement,' 18 October 1993, FPB-4-4/5 (1993), 134; regarding migration: 'President Announces New Haiti Policy and William H. Gray III as New Special Adviser on Haiti,' 8 May 1994, FPB-5-1 (1994), 19-21.

relocate refugees.²³⁵

Human rights abuses in Haiti continued, and on 11 July 1994, the Haitian junta expelled the OAS and UN human rights monitors.²³⁶ That same month, under UN authorisation, a multinational force [MNF] led by the US was established to remove the Haitian junta from power. In building the MNF, the US had to deal with a lack of support from key OAS countries such as Mexico and Brazil.²³⁷ The US dealt with that by shifting its main alliance against the Haitian junta from the OAS to the CARICOM, the association of Caribbean nations – which Haiti at that time was not a part of.²³⁸ As the MNF reinstated Aristide, it opened the door to (foreign) private investment.²³⁹ This was the ‘price of reinstatement’: upon Aristide’s return, the former anti-capitalist now implemented the neoliberal reforms championed by the US-backed candidate he defeated in 1990-1.²⁴⁰

These reforms were meant to pay off Haitian foreign debt, 40 percent of which stemmed from the Duvalier regimes.²⁴¹ However, these informally imperial reforms obliterated the remaining Haitian economic sovereignty, benefitting foreign investors over the poor majority of Haitians.²⁴² In addition, some foreign aid was channelled to Haiti, but as it flowed through NGO’s and political opposition, it undermined Haitian government while achieving little results.²⁴³ Nevertheless, when the 1995 Haitian election resulted in a peaceful transition of government from Aristide to René Prével, who continued Aristide’s neoliberal policy despite its disappointing early results, a careful victory was claimed.²⁴⁴ This proclaimed victory marks the end of the period under analysis, although unfortunately, it has been proven premature.

To sum up, the 1994 intervention arose out of a global entanglement of international institutions with informal US imperialism, that served to impose supposedly neutral and universal, but actually particular US civilisational norms on vulnerable nations such as Haiti. Analogous to the newly dominant form of (US) colour-blind racism, this institutionalised informal imperialism served to naturalise and perpetuate imperial racial hierarchies, such as the legacy of the 1915 US Occupation. If anything, despite the rhetoric of teaching democracy and self-governance, the Occupation had left Haiti less equipped for independence, as it had weakened Haitian political institutions, reinforced the political and economic

²³⁵ Regarding interdiction: ‘Statement by Brunson McKinley, State Department,’ 28 June 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 10-1; regarding relocation: ‘Briefing by Special Advisor to the President William Gray III,’ 5 July 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 11-4.

²³⁶ ‘Statement by Nancy Ely-Raphel, State Department,’ 13 July 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 18.

²³⁷ Regarding international support: ‘Department of State Press Briefing,’ 1 August 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 21-2; regarding domestic support: ‘President Clinton’s Press Conference,’ 3 August 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 23.

²³⁸ Regarding CARICOM: ‘Press Briefing by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch,’ 31 August 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 3; regarding agreement: ‘President’s Television Address to the Nation,’ 18 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 18-9.

²³⁹ ‘Statement Ambassador Albright before the United Nations Security Council,’ 30 January 1995, FPB-5-4/5 (1995), 128-9.

²⁴⁰ Chomsky, ‘The “Noble Phase” and “Saintly Glow” of US Foreign Policy,’ 6.

²⁴¹ Paul Farmer, ‘What Happened in Haiti? Where Past Is Present’, in *Getting Haiti Right This Time: The U.S. and the Coup*, by Noah Chomsky, Paul Farmer, and Amy Goodman (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004), 18-9.

²⁴² Chomsky, ‘The “Noble Phase” and “Saintly Glow” of US Foreign Policy,’ 6.

²⁴³ Farmer, ‘What Happened in Haiti? Where Past Is Present,’ 17.

²⁴⁴ ‘Statement by Assistant Secretary of State Watson,’ 21 March 1996, FPB-7-3 (1996), 94-7.

dominance of the mixed race elite and created a powerful army. As a result, successive Haitian presidents relied on informally imperial US support, while the military started intervening through coups. Under the framework of the Cold War, the resulting dictators, such as the Duvaliers, were often supported by the US as they repressed communism. The pattern of Haitian presidential reliance on US support was broken in 1990-1, with the election of anti-capitalist Aristide. However, after only seven months in office, Aristide was deposed by a military junta, led by the US-trained Cédras. This coup was denounced by the US and several multilateral actors, who at first installed a half-hearted trade embargo. As the junta survived, the US initially tried to find a peaceful solution, but did not succeed: multilaterally approved military intervention ensued. President Aristide was reinstated, at the cost of US-ideological economic reforms, reinstating the pattern of Haitian presidential dependence on the US which he himself had broken. In the following section, the discursive legitimisations of this 1994 intervention are discussed.

3.2 Discursive legitimisations: 1991-6

The US foreign policy discourse that legitimised the 1994 US intervention in Haiti can be classified into five analytical categories: first, a civilisational dichotomy of Haiti versus the US, civilisation itself, the role of race in civilisation, and fourthly multilateralism. These discourses again cast Haiti as backwards, this time based on predominantly implicit, naturalised racial hierarchies and the supposedly neutral civilisational norms of the international community, as they continued the refiguration of black Haitian sovereignty as compatible with informal white US imperial oversight, manifested in the fifth discursive category: discourse regarding the 1994 intervention itself.

Civilisational dichotomy: Haitian dictators and US democracy

The US foreign policy discourse on the 1994 US intervention in Haiti espoused a civilisational dichotomy of dictatorial clique versus mass democracy. It posed an illegitimate, violent, human rights violating, and untrustworthy Haitian dictatorship against the legitimate, peaceful, humanitarian and patient coalition of the US, Aristide and the OAS.

To start off, immediately after the 1991 military coup in Haiti, US Secretary of State James Baker III portrayed the situation as a crisis, resulting from an assault on democracy by the Haitian military.²⁴⁵ He immediately highlighted the opposition between democracy and the Haitian military regime, who President Bill Clinton later described as dictators and tyrants who had ‘stolen democracy.’²⁴⁶ As a result, the regime was illegitimate and illegal; Secretary Baker portrayed them as ‘a small group of willful, violent men [who] have betrayed their uniform and their nation,’²⁴⁷ who according to President Clinton had deprived the Haitian public of their democracy.²⁴⁸ This small group of military officers was linked to

²⁴⁵ ‘Secretary Baker’s Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,’ 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 61.

²⁴⁶ ‘President’s Television Address,’ 15 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 12.

²⁴⁷ ‘Secretary Baker’s Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,’ 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 61.

²⁴⁸ ‘President Clinton’s Press Conference,’ 15 October 1993, FPB-4-3 (1993), 81.

violence, as Clinton labelled them ‘armed thugs’ and ‘deadly police thugs,’²⁴⁹ who ‘have trampled human rights and murdered innocent people.’²⁵⁰ The portrayal of the military regime as a small elite violating democratic wishes reinforced the dictator/democracy dichotomy, and their violent character legitimised violent action in return, and by constructing the regime as a small group of renegades, US foreign policy officials created a large Haitian public in need of protection. Moreover, progress was said to be impossible under the military regime, as Clinton constructed its leaders as untrustworthy and uncooperative after they reneged on the Governors Island Agreement.²⁵¹ He then invoked this untrustworthiness to argue for the impossibility of diplomacy, and the subsequent necessity of military intervention.²⁵² Together, these labels of crisis, assault, violence, illegitimacy and untrustworthiness created the need for a military intervention in the minds of US (and UN) foreign policy officials.

On the other side of this dichotomy were the US, Aristide and their international community allies, mainly the OAS and UN, who Secretary Baker positioned as united defenders of democracy.²⁵³ Democracy was portrayed as a superior form of political organisation as opposed to ‘totalitarian threat[s].’²⁵⁴ The Haitian regime had replaced the democratic ‘rule of law’ with the dictatorial ‘rule of brute force,’²⁵⁵ thereby ‘replacing Haitian dreams of democracy with nightmares of bloodshed.’²⁵⁶ As such, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Baker’s successor, proclaimed that the only way out of this ‘crisis’ was restoring democracy.²⁵⁷ Whereas the Haitian regime was linked to violence, the US-led coalition according to Clinton wielded peacefulness as principle, only resorting to military intervention after having ‘tried every possible way to restore Haiti’s democratic government peacefully.’²⁵⁸ As such, even US violence in the form of the military intervention was constructed as wholly thanks to the untrustworthy, violent nature of the Haitian regime; Vice-President Al Gore claimed military intervention to be inevitable, framing the ensuing degree of violence as a choice and therefore responsibility of the Haitian regime.²⁵⁹

In addition, whereas the military regime was portrayed as small group terrorising the Haitian public, the US and its actions were said to be protective of the Haitian public; US Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, in a speech to the UN Security Council fully ascribed Haitian suffering to the military regime, while she portrayed the US and allies as protecting Haitians through humanitarian aid,

²⁴⁹ ‘President’s Television Address,’ 15 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 11.

²⁵⁰ ‘President Clinton’s Press Conference,’ 3 August 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 23.

²⁵¹ ‘President’s Television Address,’ 15 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 11.

²⁵² ‘President’s Radio Address to the Nation,’ 17 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 18.

²⁵³ ‘Secretary Baker’s Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,’ 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 61.

²⁵⁴ ‘Foreign Policy Association,’ 1 April 1992, FPB-3-3 (1992), 8.

²⁵⁵ ‘White House Meeting of the Multinational Force Coalition in Haiti [Secretary Christopher],’ 16 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 13.

²⁵⁶ ‘President’s Television Address,’ 15 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 11.

²⁵⁷ ‘Secretary Christopher Announces the Six Priorities of U.S. Foreign Policy,’ 4 November 1993, FPB-4-4/5 (1993), 47.

²⁵⁸ ‘President’s Television Address,’ 15 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 13.

²⁵⁹ ‘White House Meeting of the Multinational Force Coalition in Haiti [Vice-President Gore],’ 16 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 14.

foregoing the fact that US sanctions significantly contributed to this suffering.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, the US and allies were portrayed as legitimate custodians of the Haitian public's wishes due to the involvement of President Aristide, whose call for international intervention, whilst exiled in Washington D.C., played an important role in legitimising outside intervention.²⁶¹ Aristide's involvement enabled the international solutions to be proclaimed Haitian, supported by references to Aristide's overwhelming democratic majority.²⁶² As such, as opposed to a violent, untrustworthy, illegitimate dictatorship was constructed a morally superior, peaceful coalition, rendered legitimate protector of the Haitian people through invoking Aristide's democratic legacy. This civilisational dichotomy relied on a specific conception of civilisation.

Civilisation anno 1994: market democracy and human rights

In an ironic repetition of history, the international reaction to Haiti in 1991-6 approximated the international reaction to Haitian independence: both times, Haiti was perceived to be violating international standards of civilisation and therefore excluded from international society through sanctions and embargoes.²⁶³ Nevertheless, although the norm setters still originated from the Global North, the content of these norms had shifted from the European imperial standards, to the US-model of liberal market democracy.²⁶⁴

Democracy is the first central component in the standards of civilisation espoused in the 1991-6 US foreign policy discourse on Haiti. The importance of democracy arose out of (Wilsonian) liberal internationalism, more concretely the belief that democracies are less likely to go to war, and more peaceful, reliable, and likely to observe human rights; themes that Secretary of State Christopher reaffirmed in his confirmation hearing, and that also arose in the civilisational dichotomy discussed above.²⁶⁵ This belief played a large role in President Clinton's foreign policy (rhetoric) of democracy promotion.²⁶⁶

However, civilisation was not confined to political organisation, as democracy was discursively connected to both free market economics and human rights: market democracy – highlighting the extent in which free markets and democracy were linked – supposedly was superior in protecting individual liberties and human rights, with these values also enshrined as international community values in the UN.²⁶⁷ Despite their international prominence and universal appeal as 'freedom,' in US discourse, these values were constructed as particular to the US: Clinton's National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, declared them 'America's Core Concepts' in a coordinated speech meant to set out the foreign policy of

²⁶⁰ 'Statement by Ambassador Madeleine Albright to the U.N. Security Council,' 6 May 1994, FPB-5-1, 19.

²⁶¹ 'White House Announces Haiti Reconstruction and Reconciliation Fund,' 1 July 1993, FPB-4-2, 69.

²⁶² 'Deputy Secretary of State Talbott's Statement to Special Session of the OAS Permanent Council,' 11 May 1994, FPB-5-1, 23.

²⁶³ 'Secretary Baker's Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,' 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 62.

²⁶⁴ Linklater, *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order*, 188-9.

²⁶⁵ 'Confirmation Hearing of Secretary of State Warren Christopher,' 13 January 1993, FPB-3-4/5 (1993), 10.

²⁶⁶ 'A New Covenant for American Security,' 21 December 1991, FPB-3-3 (1992), 2-8.

²⁶⁷ 'President Clinton's Address to the U.N. General Assembly,' 27 September 1993, FPB-4-3 (1993), 51.

the Clinton administration.²⁶⁸ While these concepts were more widely spread than ever, for US foreign policy officials, they remained firmly rooted in US exceptionalism. Hence, the dictator/democracy dichotomy was inherently conceived as a Self/Other, US/Haiti dichotomy, with Haiti portrayed as without any experience with the US core concept of democracy. Given the universality ascribed to democracy, this dichotomy espoused a clear (global) hierarchy. In the words of Secretary Christopher: ‘Imagine what the world would have been like without it [American leadership].’²⁶⁹ He conceived US leadership as ‘imperative’ for the world’s fate.

As such, the US had a responsibility towards the rest of the world to spread the simultaneously American and universal values of democracy and market economics – according to Christopher and US foreign policy officials more broadly, at least.²⁷⁰ This was underwritten by a conception of civilisation as learned characteristic; the US’s centuries of experience with civilised values made it the ideal tutor of civilisation around the world. As President Clinton said about Russia: ‘No one on earth can fill that [democratic] gap better than Americans.’²⁷¹ Arguably, similar sentiments were applicable to Haiti. Democracy (*ergo* civilisation) was described by several US foreign policy officials as something that new democracies would have to learn, and was conceived as some sort of plant, a tree perhaps; civilisation had to take root, be nourished and allowed to grow and flourish.²⁷² However, like a sapling, young civilisation was delicate, and therefore in need of protection.²⁷³ This prominent role in defending ‘America’s Core Concepts’ of civilisation was a pillar of Clinton’s foreign policy, in what he termed a strategy of enlargement: strengthening and spreading market democracy and civilisation around the world.²⁷⁴ Clinton himself traced this US leadership in ‘civilising’ the world back to the Wilsonian ideals of US ‘democratic leadership’ – ideals reminiscent of the Manifest Destiny, and both in 1915 and 1994 proven a fertile ground for US intervention in Haiti.²⁷⁵ Despite this prominent role of US exceptionalism, multilateralism was also important in US foreign policy discourse on the 1994 US intervention in Haiti.

Multilateralism: Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism

The role of multilateralism in the 1994 intervention in Haiti is arguably related to the contextual institutionalisation of informal US imperialism. This is reflected in US foreign policy discourse through a discursive broadening of US exceptionalism to the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless, several statements and actions suggest a rather pragmatic approach underlying this seemingly idealistic multilateralism;

²⁶⁸ ‘National Security Adviser Anthony Lake’s Speech at The Johns Hopkins University,’ 21 September 1993, FPB-4-3 (1993), 40.

²⁶⁹ ‘Statement by Secretary Christopher before the House International Relations Committee,’ 26 January 1995, FPB-5-4/5 (1994), 52.

²⁷⁰ ‘Address by Secretary of State Christopher,’ 18 January 1996, FPB-7-2 (1996), 78.

²⁷¹ ‘Foreign Policy Association,’ 1 April 1992, FPB-3-3 (1992), 11.

²⁷² Regarding learning: ‘American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal,’ 1 October 1991, FPB-3-3 (1992), 22; regarding plant (i.e.): ‘Statement by Department of State Special Haiti Coordinator Dobbins,’ 12 July 1995, FPB-6-2 (1995), 84.

²⁷³ ‘Press Briefing by Secretary Christopher,’ 12 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 4.

²⁷⁴ ‘National Security Adviser Anthony Lake’s Speech at The Johns Hopkins University,’ 21 September 1993, FPB-4-3 (1993), 42.

²⁷⁵ ‘American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal,’ 1 October 1991, FPB-3-3 (1992), 19-20.

multilateral discourse to support unilateral US interests.

First of all, this discursive multilateralism was manifested in a discourse shift in American exceptionalism, broadening US exceptionalism to a continental form I call 'Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism.' This is the belief, espoused by several US foreign policy officials, that the civilised values of market democracy are the values of the Western Hemisphere, ascribed as they are in the OAS charter.²⁷⁶ As a result, Haiti's military coup was perceived as in violation with international and regional norms, enabling international intervention as Haiti spoiled the supposedly hemispherical aspirations, articulated by Secretary Baker, 'to achieve what the world has never seen before: the fulfilment of democratic rights across two continents.'²⁷⁷ Possibly, US foreign policy officials ascribed these democratic norms, regarded as superior, to the Western Hemisphere as a whole to legitimise Western Hemispherical involvement in civilising Haiti.²⁷⁸ As, in addition to the US and UN, the OAS proclaimed market democracy the pinnacle of political organisation, it came to play an important role in (setting the scene for) the 1994 US intervention.²⁷⁹

In the final stretches of the preparation of the 1994 intervention, however, the US shifted its alliances from the OAS to CARICOM, the community of Caribbean nations. Whereas the initial diplomatic reactions and negotiations were mainly conducted via the OAS, US intervention in Haiti was not supported by key OAS members: Brazil abstained from voting when the UN Security Council approved intervention in Haiti, and Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela and Cuba had spoken out against US intervention.²⁸⁰ The US circumvented this lack of OAS support by supplanting the OAS for CARICOM, despite Haiti not being a CARICOM member at that point in time.²⁸¹ This shift suggests utilitarian grounds for multilateral involvement. In addition, despite the multilateral discourse the supposedly Western Hemispherical and universally superior values of market democracy were simultaneously grounded in US history as 'America's Core Concepts.' Therefore, the extent to which US actors regarded these values to apply to the Western Hemisphere is questionable; it appears to have been a discursive construction to multilateralise and therefore legitimise US intervention in Haiti. Or, as Secretary Christopher stated: 'Multilateralism is a means [to protect American interests], not an end.'²⁸² Nevertheless, multilateralism played an important discursive role in legitimising the 1994 US intervention, facilitated by the informally imperial entrenchment of western civilisational norms in multilateral institutions. This entrenchment is in turn connected to the nature of (US) racism.

²⁷⁶ 'National Security Adviser Anthony Lake's Speech at The Johns Hopkins University,' 21 September 1993, FPB-4-3 (1993), 42.

²⁷⁷ 'Secretary Baker's Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,' 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 62.

²⁷⁸ 'Deputy Secretary of State Talbott's Statement to Special Session of the OAS Permanent Council,' 11 May 1994, FPB-5-1 (1994), 23.

²⁷⁹ 'OAS Resolution on Support for the Democratic Government of the Republic of Venezuela,' 22 May 1992, FPB-3-1 (1992), 84; 'President's Statement on follow-up to OAS May 17 Resolution on Haiti,' 28 May 1992, FPB-3-1 (1992), 83.

²⁸⁰ 'Department of State Press Briefing,' 1 August 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 22.

²⁸¹ 'Joint U.S.-CARICOM Statement,' 30 August 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 3-4.

²⁸² 'Secretary Christopher's Speech at Columbia University,' 20 September 1994, FPB-4-3 (1993), 39.

The 1994 US intervention in Haiti relied on several implicit colour-blind discourses or strategies that naturalised the image of fundamental Haitian inability for self-government. Through portraying Haitian history as a dark pit of anti-democratic despair, whilst portraying US history as valiant two-century epoch of bringing democratic enlightenment, and through the supposedly neutral and rational universal superiority of US civilisation, the racial hierarchies underlying the 1994 intervention were naturalised and perpetuated.

First, the 1994 US intervention in Haiti relied on a certain image of Haitian history, in which Aristide emerged victorious in unprecedented elections, in a country repeatedly proclaimed to possess neither any history of democracy nor any experience with an equitable justice system since its independence 200 years ago – a claim even reinforced by exiled Aristide.²⁸³ Compared to other nations on the American continent, President Clinton portrayed Haiti as ‘left behind.’²⁸⁴ Not only were these claims reminiscent of the international reception of newborn Haiti throughout the nineteenth century and the image of Haiti that underwrote the 1915 US Occupation, but these claims facilitated constructing the civilisational dichotomy discussed above by portraying Haitian history as one filled with military dictators. This portrayal provided a clear framework for understanding the 1991-4 Haitian regime, equating it with the notorious Duvalier regimes – while failing to mention the history of US support to both Duvaliers.²⁸⁵ Instead, Clinton portrayed the US as a valiant force of democracy ever since its revolution ‘more than 200 years ago,’²⁸⁶ starkly contrasting with how Secretary Baker portrayed the Haitians as only having gained democracy after roughly 200 years of independence.²⁸⁷ These constructions, also espoused by Ambassador Albright, posited the US as 200 years ahead of Haiti, and therefore as capable restorer of Haitian sovereignty, repeating the claims of 1915, while simultaneously erasing the US’s complicity in Haitian troubles.²⁸⁸ This specific rendition of Haitian history naturalised the image of a fundamental Haitian inability for civilised self-government, in line with colour-blind racism. In addition, it conformed to colour-blindness in several other ways.

For instance, as discussed above, civilisation in 1994 was no longer seen as hereditary. Instead, civilisational norms were seen as arising out of specific US historical cultural values, and Haitian troubles were seen to result from their lack of these values. As such, cultural arguments were used to explain differences between the US and Haiti. These arguments, however, were insensitive to US (and other imperial) influences on Haitian history, such as the 1915 Occupation or continuous US support to Haitian

²⁸³ ‘Secretary Baker’s Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,’ 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 61; ‘Statement by Assistant Secretary of State Watson,’ 21 March 1996, FPB-7-3 (1996), 95; ‘President’s Press Conference with President Aristide,’ 16 March 1993, FPB-3-6 (1993), 66.

²⁸⁴ ‘President’s Television Address,’ 15 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 11.

²⁸⁵ ‘Press Briefing by Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor John Shattuck,’ 13 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 5;

²⁸⁶ ‘President’s Television Address,’ 15 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 13.

²⁸⁷ ‘Secretary Baker’s Statement at OAS Foreign Ministers Meeting,’ 2 October 1991, FPB-2-3 (1991), 61.

²⁸⁸ ‘Statement by Ambassador Madeleine Albright to the U.N. Security Council,’ 31 July 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 21.

dictators; as such, they naturalised existing racial inequalities. In addition, as these dominant standards of civilisation were presented as rational, universal ideals, their solutions were presented as neutral. This did not take into account their unequal workings, which as we saw in the historical background, resulted in racially unequal outcomes. Furthermore, as neoliberal spending cuts often caused additional problems, these problems again legitimised the idea both within international institutions and western governments that ‘African [black] countries can be helped only if they are kept under political and economic supervision.’²⁸⁹ Such blame-the-victim rhetoric, consistent with the frames of colour-blindness, ascribed subaltern failure to adapt to the competitive global market only to these subalterns themselves: neoliberal reforms worked to naturalise and perpetuate racial inequalities, such as the compatibility of black sovereignty with white oversight, while employing a supposedly neutral discourse of development.²⁹⁰ Whereas explicit mentions of race were removed from civilisational discourse, the imperial workings of the standards of civilisation entrenched in institutions still structured global relations as a racial hierarchy.

The intervention: neighbourly help and a Haitian solution

The 1994 intervention was constructed as a form of neighbourly help, offering a ‘new dawn,’ while simultaneously being legitimised through supposedly being a ‘Haitian solution,’ building on the civilisational dichotomy and implicit racist frames discussed above. At the same time, however, the presumed universality of US civilisation resulted in the prescription of certain solutions. This combination of racial-civilisational hierarchies and supposed civilisational universality continued the reconciliation of black sovereignty with informal white imperialism, as it saw US-ideological reforms imposed based on their supposed ‘Haitianness.’

First of all, Clinton cast the intervention as neighbourly care: ‘when your neighbours are in trouble, and they’re trying to do the right thing, you normally try to help them.’²⁹¹ Although his metaphor conjured up associations of friendliness and helpfulness, it was also reminiscent of two 1915 vehicles of US imperialism: the Monroe Doctrine, asserting the Western Hemisphere as a US sphere of influence, and its associated Roosevelt Corollary, proclaiming the US’s right to intervene if Latin American countries violated international standards of civilisation. These proclamations resurfaced in Clinton’s claims of ‘a particular democratic responsibility in our own hemisphere to help end the cycle of violence in Haiti; to help restore democracy to Peru, [...] to help Cuba’s repressive regime join its communist cousins [...] in the dustbin of history.’²⁹² Despite their historical imperial connotations, these proclamations gave rise to claims of helpfulness and friendship, as the US, Canada, France and Venezuela united under the banner ‘Friends of Haiti.’²⁹³

This helpfulness stemmed from a belief of beneficiality, connected to the prevailing vision of

²⁸⁹ Wengraf, ‘Neoliberalism: Crisis, Debt and Structural Adjustment,’ 81.

²⁹⁰ Wengraf, 62.

²⁹¹ ‘Address by the President,’ 6 October 1995, FPB-6-3 (1995), 46.

²⁹² ‘American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal,’ 1 October 1991, FPB-3-3 (1992), 22.

²⁹³ ‘Statement Ambassador Albright before the United Nations Security Council,’ 30 January 1995, FPB-5-4/5 (1995), 128.

Haitian post-independence history as a continuous Dark Age, and that of US history as a glorious struggle to spread enlightened values. As such, US foreign policy officials constructed the 1994 intervention as an opportunity for a restart, giving Haiti a ‘new dawn’²⁹⁴ and ‘rebirth.’²⁹⁵ There was a discourse of fixing things: as the crisis would be resolved, democracy restored, economy rebuilt and reconstructed, institutions reformed, Haiti would rejoin its democratic hemisphere and reconciliation could be started.²⁹⁶ As the US intervention gave Haiti ‘a second chance,’²⁹⁷ it was portrayed as a making right of past Haitian wrongs.

At the same time, the intervention was labelled a Haitian one. Although constructing a need for international guidance, Clinton discursively placed the ultimate responsibility for ‘rebuilding’ Haiti with Haitians themselves.²⁹⁸ The exercise of nation-building was then rendered Haitian, legitimising the intervention through calling upon Aristide’s democratic legitimacy or through claiming to protect Haitian ‘dreams of democracy.’ At the same time, the extent to which the solutions were Haitian is questionable: the belief in the rational universality of US market democratic values delineated the available solutions. Ambassador Albright for instance insisted, on behalf of the US and UN, on a (presumably neoliberal) economic recovery program involving foreign investment, while contradictorily placing the Haitian future in Haitian hands.²⁹⁹ Whereas the 1994 intervention was said not to be about installing a president ‘whose main qualification was his willingness to embrace our [US] cause,’³⁰⁰ former anti-capitalist Aristide’s embrace of US neoliberal doctrine seemingly conditioned the US’s willingness to reinstall him.³⁰¹ At the same time, when progress was achieved, it was said to be ‘due in large part to our [US] efforts,’ and not to the Haitians that were claimed to be responsible.³⁰² As such, the learned character of US-defined civilisation still prohibited the possibility of actual Haitian solutions, instead imposing US-ideological solutions obscured by a discursive veil of Haitian participation; as such, the 1994 intervention continued the reconciliation of black Haitian sovereignty with informal white imperialism.

3.3 Conclusion

The 1994 US intervention in Haiti was a continuation of historical US-Haitian relations before the 1915 Occupation, which turned Haiti structurally dependent on the US. As the US impoverished Haitian political institutions, created a powerful army and exacerbated existing class/colour-inequalities in Haiti, it laid the foundations for the military coups that resulted in the Duvalier dictatorships, who, like their

²⁹⁴ ‘Statement by Ambassador Madeleine Albright to the U.N. Security Council,’ 31 July 1994, FPB-5-2 (1994), 20.

²⁹⁵ ‘Statement by Assistant Secretary of State Watson,’ 21 March 1996, FPB-7-3 (1996), 95.

²⁹⁶ In order of mentioning: ‘Secretary Christopher’s February 9, 1993 Statement,’ 9 February 1993, FPB-3-6 (1993), 64 [resolved – rejoin]; ‘President’s Statement,’ 3 July 1993, FPB-4-2 (1993), 70 [reconciliation].

²⁹⁷ ‘Remarks by President Clinton, U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, Haitian President Aristide [Clinton],’ 31 March 1995, FPB-5-6 (1995), 78.

²⁹⁸ ‘White House Meeting of the Multinational Force Coalition in Haiti [Clinton],’ 16 September 1994, FPB-5-3 (1994), 16.

²⁹⁹ ‘Statement Ambassador Albright before the United Nations Security Council,’ 30 January 1995, FPB-5-4/5 (1994), 128-9.

³⁰⁰ Solarz, ‘Foreword,’ xi.

³⁰¹ Jefferies, ‘The United States and Haiti: An Exercise in Intervention,’ 78.

³⁰² ‘Statement by Assistant Secretary of State Watson,’ 21 March 1996, FPB-7-3 (1996), 94.

predecessors, relied on US support. This presidential reliance on the US was only broken in 1991 by Jean-Bertrand Aristide, although his deposal later forced him to rely on the US for reinstatement, therefore implementing US-favoured policies too. The intervention that saw Aristide's presidency restored strongly relied on a Self/Other-conception which constructed and contrasted a civilised, democratic American Self and an uncivilised, dictatorial Haitian Other. This civilisational dichotomy understood civilisation as market democracy, simultaneously universally superior and particular to the US. As such, the US was the capable administer of civilisation to Haiti. However, to avoid labels of imperialism, the US grounded its actions in multilateral support through a discourse of Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism, although it simultaneously reaffirmed market democracy as particular to the US; multilateralism was perhaps preferred on utilitarian grounds instead of ideological ones. This discourse of Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism resonated with an important change in the international context, which saw US values enshrined as civilisational ideals in many multilateral institutions, reinforcing imperial dynamics and hierarchies. This informal imperialism coincided with a changed form of racism: colour-blindness. Colour-blind racism relied on selective renditions of both US and Haitian history to legitimise, naturalise and perpetuate ideas of US civilisational superiority *vis-à-vis* Haiti, casting the intervention as an act of friendship and providing second chances, while enabling the informally imperial imposing of US-preferred solutions on what was discursively constructed as a Haitian project. All in all, the 1994 US intervention in Haiti was legitimised through implicit, naturalised racial hierarchies that cast Haiti as backwards and the US as civilised while relying on and making complicit the supposedly neutral norms entrenched in the international community, in effect continuing the refiguration of black sovereignty as compatible with informal white imperialism.

4. Conclusion

Before answering *how US foreign policy officials legitimised the US interventions in Haiti in 1915-34 and 1994-6, and how these legitimisations compare*, I reiterate my findings to then compare them systematically, according to the structure of the discourse analysis: civilisational dichotomy, definitions of civilisation and multilateralism, the role of race, and finally discourses on the interventions.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, the 1915 US Occupation of Haiti was the zenith of more than a century of imperial involvement in Haiti. The Occupation relied on a civilisational hierarchy rooted in the supposedly exceptionally civilised status of the US; a status that Haiti had lacked, according to the US, since its independence. This hierarchy was connected to pre-existing notions of racial inferiority, which decreed black sovereignty impossible due to the partially hereditary nature of civilisation, while civilisation's partially learned nature meant that Haiti was to be taught civilisation through US 'tutelage.' This civilisational hierarchy justified the 'remedial treatment' of liberalism, democracy and capitalism administered to Haiti, resulting in an imperial venture masked as democratic emancipation. This imperial venture was discursively constructed as act of friendship and helpfulness, although the Haitian recipients could not turn this 'help' down. As such, the US intervention went past being aid; instead, the US was administering the Haitians a civilisational cure. Unsurprisingly, the US discourse of helpfulness did not align with its sovereignty-violating actions. This was resolved through invoking the notion of US racial superiority *vis-à-vis* Haitians, and through a racialised construction of Haitian leaders as small, illegitimate group of bandits that terrorised the helpless democratic Haitian population, creating the need for simultaneous white violence and white guidance. In sum, the US Occupation of Haiti combined assumptions of Haitian backwardness, explicitly rooted in supposed racial inferiority, with notions of US moral and civilisational superiority, refiguring black Haitian sovereignty compatible with formal, white, US imperialism.

Then, as discussed in Chapter 3, out of the imperial legacies of 1915, the 1994 US intervention in Haiti arose. This intervention similarly relied on the construction of a civilisational dichotomy, with dictatorial, illegitimate, violent, and therefore uncivilised Haitians juxtaposed with democratic, legitimate, peaceful, and therefore civilised Americans. This dichotomy of civilisation wielded standards of civilisation defined in terms of market democracy and human rights. These values were regarded as US 'core concepts,' firmly rooting civilisation in US culture and moral character, while civilisation was now seen as purely learned, instead of partially hereditary. Nevertheless, this conception of civilisation still appointed the US as the pinnacle of (US-defined) civilisation, guiding Haiti out of its (US-defined) backwardness. However, in doing so, the US relied on Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism, the discursive extension of the US's exceptionally civilised status to the broader Western Hemisphere, to garner international support. This Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism corresponded to the informally imperial entrenching of US civilisational norms in multilateral governance institutions since the Second

World War, which perpetuated US hegemony. This shift to informal imperialism corresponded to a US shift to colour-blind racism, manifested through specific renditions of Haitian and US history that portrayed Haitian history as a dark pit of anti-democratic despair while portraying the US as fighter for freedom everywhere, obscuring the US's complicity in Haitian troubles. As such, these historical reductions naturalised the racially structured hierarchy between Haiti and the US, consistent with colour-blind racism. This racial-civilisational hierarchy resulted in the intervention being constructed as neighbourly help that provided Haiti with a second chance at civilisation. At the same time, the intervention was constructed as a Haitian one, while simultaneously prescribing solutions in line with the supposedly universal US civilisational norms. In sum, this intervention was legitimised through implicit, naturalised racial hierarchies that cast Haiti as backwards and the US as civilised while relying on the supposedly neutral, universal norms of the international community, continuing the refiguration of black sovereignty as in need of informal white imperialism.

As evident from the previous paragraphs, the US foreign policy discourses on the 1915 Occupation and 1994 intervention exhibit both similarities and differences. First, both interventions relied on a civilisational dichotomy of supposedly uncivilised Haitians versus civilised Americans, in both cases connected to a construction of Haitian leaders as small oppressive elite. However, the 1915 dichotomy centred on peacefulness and order, as the discourse spoke of supposedly inherently Haitian savagery, violence, anarchy and disorder. These explicitly racist stereotypes and constructions created the need for orderly, civilised US guidance, underwritten by US exceptionalism and the US's Manifest Destiny to spread civilisation. The 1994 civilisational dichotomy instead centred on seemingly neutral norms of democracy, legitimacy, human rights, and trustworthiness. While the content of these civilisational dichotomies differ, their constructions and effects are similar.

The shifts in these dichotomies are related to the definitions of civilisation in 1915 and 1994. In 1915, civilisation was largely defined in terms of order, democracy and liberalism, while constructed as both hereditary and learned: as the US was constructed as inherently orderly, it was perceived as natural tutor to gradually teach Haitians civilisation. In 1994, civilisation was instead defined as liberal market democracy, and constructed as solely learned. However, civilised values were simultaneously labelled 'America's Core Concepts,' revealing the more implicit, but still important role of US exceptionalism in 1994. Relatedly, the US was still constructed as promotor of civilisation in Haiti and throughout the world, again relying on the Manifest Destiny and Wilsonian ideals of democratic leadership. However, in 1994 these historical vehicles of US imperialism were masked through discursive Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism and the entrenchment of US civilisational ideals in international institutions. So, whereas the civilisational dichotomy of 1994 appeared to rely on neutral concepts of democracy instead of explicit sentiments of US exceptionalism, a closer inspection of the definition of civilisation in 1994 US foreign policy discourse reveals the implicit, but continued role of US exceptionalism.

Thirdly, as said before, 1914-5 US foreign policy discourse constructed Haitians as disorderly,

savage and anarchical. These constructions relied on explicitly racist stereotypes, rooted in racialised blackness and historical notions of US racial superiority. As such, the 1915 civilisational hierarchy was also explicitly a racial hierarchy. These notions of racial superiority were extrapolated to Haitian and US history, relying on explicit racism to construct the notion of fundamental Haitian inability for self-government, coupling black and Haitian sovereignty to humanitarian crises, and reconciling Haitian sovereignty with US imperialism. In 1994, this explicitly racialised blackness had disappeared, while the racial hierarchy had remained in place, although more implicit. Instead of explicitly racist stereotypes of disorder, US foreign policy officials used selective renditions of history stooled on implicit rather than explicit racism, supposed cultural differences and obscured racially unequal structures, altogether naturalising and perpetuating implicit notions of black and Haitian governmental incapability. These implicit notions nevertheless still espoused the idea of inherent Haitian disorder, although veiled with an apparently neutral discourse of market democracy.

Fourthly, building on the discourses discussed above, in both 1915 and 1994 US intervention was constructed as act of helpfulness and rehabilitation. However, the explicit racial-civilisational hierarchy in 1915 allowed the US to straightforwardly infringe upon Haitian sovereignty under a guise of helpfulness, refiguring black Haitian sovereignty compatible with formal white US imperialism. As this hierarchy had turned implicit in 1994, the US intervention was instead discursively constructed as Haitian, while solutions in line with the US's civilisational norms were still imposed, infringing upon Haitian sovereignty through a discursive veil of Haitianness. This way, the 1994 intervention reconciled black Haitian sovereignty with informal white imperialism.

To conclude, both interventions arose out of a combination of imperial legacies and racial hierarchies, that reconfigured black Haitian sovereignty compatible with white US imperialism. However, whereas the 1915 hierarchy was rooted in explicit sentiments of racial superiority and resulted in formal imperialism, the 1994 hierarchy was implicitly constructed through naturalising and perpetuating racial inequalities and resulted in informal imperialism. Although in several ways more implicit, the 1994 intervention was legitimised through notions of US racial-civilisational superiority *vis-à-vis* Haiti strongly reminiscent of the 1915 Occupation.

This thesis compared US foreign policy discourse on the 1915 US Occupation and 1994 US intervention in Haiti. From this analysis, these discourses appear similar, arising out of imperial legacies, adopting racial-civilisational hierarchies. Through this focus on discourses and discursive similarities, this thesis has several implications, primarily for racism, (rhetoric of) spreading democracy and human rights, international institutions and the importance of Haitian history.

The first implication of this research is the continued relevance of the debate on black (in)capacity for humanity. With the role racialised assumptions of inferiority played in both the 1915 and 1994 interventions, and their appearance in international institutional discourses, the advent of implicit colour-

blind racism appears to have normalised and institutionalised these notions of supposed black incapacity for self-governance. Unsurprisingly then, the historical writing on Haitian despair is – perhaps unconsciously – proliferated into the twenty-first century, as Ralph Pezzullo, son of Clinton’s former special envoy to Haiti Lawrence Pezzullo has for example written: ‘But no one who conforms to our Western way of doing things – based primarily on reason and logic – can be prepared for the Hieronymus Bosch world of Haiti,’ a quote in which the misspelled Hieronymus is arguably the least problematic aspect.³⁰³ As discussed in the introduction, contemporary news reports on Haiti exude similar perspectives, as they often fail to discuss any history of western involvement before 2004. As such, the idea of black political autonomy continues to be undercut; such colour-blind discourses serve to instantiate white ignorance: ‘a systematically supported and socially induced pattern of (mis)understanding the world that functions to sustain systemic oppression and privilege.’³⁰⁴ Whereas this thesis focuses on Haiti, research on western discourses on African civil conflicts indicate similar discourses of supposed black incapability in general.³⁰⁵

Second, these discourses call into question the integrity of contemporary liberal discourses of democracy and human rights, and their subsequent (white ignorant) promotion. Contemporary interventions aimed at promoting democracy can exhibit a colonial mindset, grounded in standards of civilisation and social inferiors, as shown by the analysis presented in this thesis and as observed by Linklater.³⁰⁶ The current notion of liberalism as product of western exceptionalism instead of broader historical developments reproduces imperial formations, even despite the conceptual shift to solely learned civilisation.³⁰⁷ As liberal civilisational norms are assumed to be universal, the liberal ‘recipe’ is copy-pasted, inattentive to local contexts, while, most problematically, this supposed universality obscures and legitimises both the violence used in spreading them and the political character of these norms as they create a paragon of statehood to be emulated.³⁰⁸ In this process, however, the difficulties in establishing market democracy go unacknowledged, instead explaining subsequent civil conflicts – be they African or Haitian – through racialised inferiority.³⁰⁹ Despite their supposed universal superiority, liberal ‘modernising’ interventions have been unsuccessful throughout Haitian history, whether in 1915 or 1994: despite its civilising mission, imperial liberalism has often only hampered development due to its

³⁰³ Dash, ‘The (Un)Kindness of Strangers: Writing Haiti in the 21st Century’, 171–75; Ralph Pezzullo, *Plunging into Haiti : Clinton, Aristide, and the Defeat of Diplomacy* (Jackson : University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 6, <http://archive.org/details/plungingintohait0000pezz>.

³⁰⁴ Applebaum, ‘White Privilege/White Complicity,’ 296; Charles W. Mills, ‘White Ignorance’, in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, by Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 13–38.

³⁰⁵ Bruce J. Berman, ‘Nationalism in Post-Colonial Africa’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 359–76.

³⁰⁶ Linklater, *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order*, 204-5.

³⁰⁷ Andrew Sartori, ‘The British Empire and Its Liberal Mission’, *The Journal of Modern History* 78 (2006): 639.

³⁰⁸ Fernández Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, ‘Trapped Between Many Worlds: A Post-Colonial Perspective on the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH),’ 378-9.

³⁰⁹ Berman, ‘Nationalism in Post-Colonial Africa’.

groundings in western exceptionalism.³¹⁰ Although their (US) perpetrators might have genuinely desired to alleviate Haitian suffering, as for instance both Admiral Caperton in 1915 and President Clinton in 1994 expressed a sincere desire to help, their ideological predispositions and white ignorance rendered them unable to take into account Haitian perspectives, producing the adverse outcomes still reverberating today.³¹¹

Third, these discourses have implications for the role of international institutions. The 1994 intervention in Haiti saw explicit involvement by the UN, OAS and CARICOM in a rhetoric of democracy promotion, showing their complicity in recreating imperial civilisational missions.³¹² These institutions bifurcated pre-existing (western) Self/Other-dichotomies of a democratic and liberal, *ergo* superior west opposed to an inferior rest, as they (further) eroded Haitian sovereignty and continued informal (US) imperialism in Haiti.³¹³ As such, this analysis highlights the entanglement of imperialism and institutions; indicating the role of institutions in informal imperialism.³¹⁴

Fourthly, within this framework of entanglement, the role of the OAS and that of Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism in universalising and enforcing US civilisational ideals has additional salience. This broadening of US exceptionalism to (almost) the entire Western Hemisphere appeared to be motivated by a US desire for legitimacy, rather than by an actual (US) belief in Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism. In a similar vein, the 2004 UN intervention in Haiti, MINUSTAH, involved military units from postcolonial nations in an effort to further its legitimacy.³¹⁵ Although such involvement can be beneficial, it runs the risk of legitimising violent civilisation offensives, as in 1994.

Finally, this thesis highlights the broader world-historical relevance of Haitian history. Whereas hallmark studies of US imperialism have used the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, to highlight for instance the entanglement of empire and institution, or how US imperialism rests on discourses of fear and hope, i.e. discourses of violence to be resolved through extending US capitalism, often through racially targeted state violence.³¹⁶ The 1994 US intervention in Haiti shows similar dynamics, as US intervention relied on UN, OAS, and CARICOM participation, while the supposedly violent Haitian dictators were to be replaced by US liberal market democracy, spread through military intervention relying on implicit racial hierarchies. Although not a full-fledged comparison, these two examples do indicate what Haitian history can tell us about broader world-historical dynamics.

Notwithstanding these scientific contributions, this thesis' main relevance is societal, as it

³¹⁰ Sartori, 'The British Empire and Its Liberal Mission,' 632.

³¹¹ Caperton: Sommers, 'The US Power Elite and the Political Economy of Haiti's Occupation,' 55; Clinton: Jacob Kushner, 'Haiti and the Failed Promise of US Aid', *The Guardian*, 11 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/11/haiti-and-the-failed-promise-of-us-aid>.

³¹² Fernández Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, 'Trapped Between Many Worlds,' 382-4.

³¹³ Chomsky, 'The "Noble Phase" and "Saintly Glow" of US Foreign Policy,' 6; Mark Weisbrot, 'Structural Adjustment in Haiti', *Monthly Review* 48, no. 8 (1997): 29-35.

³¹⁴ Reid, 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror,' 247-9.

³¹⁵ Fernández Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, 'Trapped Between Many Worlds,' 282-3.

³¹⁶ Reid, 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror'; Matthew Sparke, 'Geopolitical Fears, Geoeconomic Hopes, and the Responsibilities of Geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97, no. 2 (2007): 338-49.

highlights a continuity in the role of racist beliefs, imperial legacies and foreign involvement in making the notion of black Haitian incapacity a self-fulfilling prophecy.³¹⁷ This continuity started with Haiti's international exclusion based on racist notions of black incapacity for self-governance, and further included the 1825 indemnity payment, the 1915 US Occupation, twentieth-century US support to Haitian dictators, and arguably applies to the 1994 US intervention, as it was premised on the notion of supposed Haitian incapability and restored Aristide's presidency at the cost of Haitian economic sovereignty.

This pattern continued after 1994. In 2004, during his second term in office, Aristide was again deposed by various armed groups, again with rumours of US and French involvement or prior knowledge.³¹⁸ The ensuing instability led to the 2004 UN-mission MINUSTAH, the next 'civilising mission' with beneficial intent. This mission was embedded in similar discourses of supposed Haitian incapability as its predecessors studied here, while also being responsible for (alleged) human rights abuses, sexual offenses, and the reintroduction of cholera.³¹⁹ Although it achieved some small successes, it still 'copy-pasted' ineffective western solutions.³²⁰ MINUSTAH remained until 2017, while international beneficial intent intensified after the 2010 earthquake, still premised on these underlying discourses of Haitian incapability. In addition, the reaction of the international community further undermined the Haitian state, and has been criticised for instantiating imperial power structures.³²¹ Foreign aid and NGO's have also further prioritised international solutions over Haitian ones.³²² Clearly, international involvement in Haiti, often labelled 'aid,' has frequently missed its mark.³²³

According to J. Michael Dash, Haitian problems should however not fully be attributed to other nations, as he contends that Haiti was ill-prepared for its political autonomy in the early 1900s.³²⁴ Nevertheless, outside involvement has been a major cause of Haitian troubles; troubles that through colour-blind racism continue to be attributed to Haitians themselves in both political and popular discourses, that therefore continue to legitimise international interventions that transplant their western-centric ideological solutions, to the detriment of Haitians themselves.³²⁵

This pattern has repeatedly failed to solve, and sometimes even exacerbated Haitian problems; failure that reinforces notions of supposed Haitian incapability. As this thesis has shown, this pattern arises out of notions of racialised inability for self-governance, which are veiled in colour-blind racist discourses that serve to instantiate white ignorance and this racist paternalism. This vicious circle should be broken by reprioritising Haitian solutions through properly involving Haitian civil society actors, as

³¹⁷ Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide,' 645.

³¹⁸ Dollar, 'Haiti Is Black - Racial Essentialism and United States Involvement in the 2004 Removal of President Aristide,' 651, 659-68.

³¹⁹ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations,' 119, 135-6.

³²⁰ Fernández Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, 'Trapped Between Many Worlds,' 387.

³²¹ Pyles, Svistova, and Ahn, 'Securitization, Racial Cleansing, and Disaster Capitalism,' 594-600.

³²² Fernández Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, 'Trapped Between Many Worlds,' 386.

³²³ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations,' 122.

³²⁴ J. Michael Dash, *Literature and Ideology in Haiti: 1915-1961* (Totowa: Barnes and Noble Books, 1981), 81.

³²⁵ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations,' 145.

well as restrengthening Haitian government through (generous) international cooperation.³²⁶ This process would involve listening to Haitian actors, without prioritising white moral integrity; actually listening instead of ‘helping’ through particularly western ‘universal’ solutions that are the precise foundation of this vicious pattern.³²⁷ As such, the critical interrogation and challenging of these discourses, for example by highlighting the history of contemporary inequalities, is a crucial step in reconfiguring the relationship between Haiti and the international community.

4.1 Discussion

This study knows four main limitations. First, there was some discrepancy between the sources for the two periods under study. Whereas the 1914-5 sources were mostly private diplomatic correspondence between US foreign policy officials from the *Foreign Relations of the United States*, the 1991-6 sources were all public, often speeches or press releases, all published in the *Foreign Policy Bulletin*. While this makes the former more likely to contain personal opinions or actual motives, it makes the latter more likely to contain salient discursive constructions, meant to persuade an audience. This choice was made as neither source collection was available for both periods under study. In addition, despite their differences, the discourses were remarkably similar. Still, the public nature of the 1991-6 sources could somewhat explain their implicitness and the role of multilateralism, although these factors also correspond to world-contextual changes.

Second, as the method of discourse analysis is highly interpretive, different analytical frameworks could result in different of these US foreign policy discourses. Additionally, while this research implies the existence of certain discourses in the contexts of these interventions, it does not provide a complete survey of these discourses, as discourses cannot be studied as a whole.³²⁸ Relatedly, although the identified discourses provide interesting insights, they cannot be generalised to other contexts. Future research into discourses surrounding democratising interventions could illuminate commonalities.

Thirdly, my inability to read French or Créole has forced me to rely on English-language primary sources, leading me to centre the US in my analysis. Although this analysis has provided interesting and relevant results, it leaves little room for Haitian agency; room that French- or Créole-primary sources could provide. Relatedly, I was forced to rely on English-language secondary sources. Although these included overviews of French-language Haitian scholars’ works, most notably Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s comprehensive historiography of Haiti, it does leave me unable to fully engage with these original works. This separation of English- and French-language histories of Haiti is a wider historiographical issue.³²⁹

Finally, one problem highlighted by my analysis is the prescribing of western solutions for Haitian problems – solutions that fail(ed) to reach their desired impact. My own background as white Dutch

³²⁶ Fernández Moreno, Braga, and Gomes, ‘Trapped Between Many Worlds,’ 387-8.

³²⁷ Applebaum, ‘White Privilege/White Complicity,’ 297-8.

³²⁸ Phillips and Hardy, *Discourse Analysis*, p. 13 in Ch. 4.

³²⁹ Smith, ‘Footprints on the Sea: Finding Haiti in Caribbean Historiography,’ 68.

scholar will not break that pattern. Instead, there is a need for both greater engagement between non-Haitian and Haitian scholars, and truly Haitian solutions, to end the legacy of racist paternalism.³³⁰ At the same time, given the continued writings on Haitian despair and the limited attention that the role of imperial legacies in present-day Haitian turmoil receive in present-day news articles, analyses such as mine do contribute to tracing and undermining racist discourses and legacies of imperialism through Haitian history.

4.2 Concluding remarks

This thesis identifies several possible areas for future research. First, it has shown the need for continued deconstruction of civilisational narratives pervasive in contemporary human rights and governance discourses. Additionally, the concept of Western Hemispherical Exceptionalism and its relation with US imperialism through the OAS warrants further investigation. Whereas international institutions were explicitly involved in the 1994 intervention, they were less so in 1915. In this light, the significance of Haiti's entrance to the League of Nations during its Occupation by the US as indicator of international institutional involvement in 1915 could be explored.³³¹ In addition, the Bulletin of the Pan-American Union, the OAS's predecessor, might have been important in levying public support for the 1915 Occupation.³³² The role of international institutions in the 1915 US Occupation therefore warrants further research. Fourth, the concept of 'disaster capitalism' might provide fruitful insights into the 1915, 1994 and 2004 international interventions in Haiti. This concept denotes the 'use of disasters to capitalise on vulnerability and push for policies that would unlikely be approved of in times of social and moral order' and has been applied to 2010 post-earthquake reconstructions to uncover dynamics of racialisation, imperial power structures and capitalist expansion; dynamics that also emerged in this analysis of the 1915 and 1994 interventions.³³³ Finally, given the lack of Haitian voices in solving Haitian problems, especially ethnographic or participatory research focusing on these voices would prove valuable – again, without prioritising white moral self-images.³³⁴

Finally, this thesis leads to some societal recommendations. It is time to recognise 'white complicity' in international relations; acknowledge global structural racial inequalities, for instance in racially-targeted practices of intervention caused by racist discourses' permeation of global governance institutions. Contemporary standards of civilisation embedded in these institutions should be reappraised to eliminate their current (imperial) political and racial implications. To properly improve Haitian livelihoods, it is high time to start listening to and empowering Haitians themselves, and include their

³³⁰ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations,' 145.

³³¹ Knox, 'Haiti at the League of Nations,' 271-4.

³³² Jeffrey Sommers, 'Haiti and the Hemispheric Imperative to Invest: The Bulletin of the Pan American Union', *Journal of Haitian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2003): 68-94.

³³³ Pyles, Svistova, and Ahn, 'Securitization, Racial Cleansing, and Disaster Capitalism,' 586.

³³⁴ Applebaum, 'White Privilege/White Complicity,' 297-8.

voices in devising solutions.³³⁵ Relatedly, the weakening of the Haitian government through aid privatisation should be reversed through rechanneling foreign aid through the government, creating accountability.³³⁶ In addition, this aid has to be cut loose from ideologically-informed conditions, transforming the relationship between Haiti and the international community from one of paternalism to one of cooperation.³³⁷ Through acknowledging international complicity in Haitian troubles, through listening to and empowering both Haitian democratic subjects and a Haitian democratic government, it is time to end the imperial legacies still perpetuating in Haiti; for instance through repaying Haiti's independence debt.³³⁸ It is time to right past wrongs: time to end the imperially-created self-fulfilling prophecy of Haitian governmental incapability.

³³⁵ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations,' 145.

³³⁶ Pyles, Svistova, and Ahn, 'Securitization, Racial Cleansing, and Disaster Capitalism,' 598-600.

³³⁷ Pressley-Sanon, 'Haitian (Pre)Occupations,' 145.

³³⁸ Reuters, 'France Urged to Repay Billions of Dollars to Haiti for Independence "Ransom".'

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