Call for papers

“Haiti: An Earthquake for Gender”

Editors

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Contextualization

The mental representations associated with Haiti in Northern societies are too often influenced by images of economic, geographic, and human devastation spread by the mainstream media. Of course, such representations are not entirely wrong. Yet, the reality of life in Haiti does not boil down merely to poverty, underdeveloped infrastructures, an unequalled earthquake, and devastating hurricanes. These features are nonetheless grounds for a western discourse which resonates strongly in foreign intervention on Haitian soil.
After the 2010 earthquake, western media theatricalized extreme suffering, justifying the heavy presence of humanitarian aid workers (Corbet, 2010) and the colossal funding devoted to aid (Ramachandran, 2012). In so doing, they reinforced an ethnotype according to which the continent’s only black nation would be constantly subjected to violence and conflict, and the idea that reconstruction would provide a welcomed opportunity to implement in-depth reforms. A sexist stereotype about Haitian women has also become ingrained in people’s minds outside Haiti: these women are supposedly powerless victims in need of the West’s help and protection (Corbet, 2011). This is far from the truth: solidarity amongst Haitians was front and center after the earthquake, and most victims were helped by their own neighbors (Peck, 2013). And in spite of all the resources allocated, humanitarian aid has failed to put an end to the country’s chronic underdevelopment. It has even made it worse on several counts (Côté, 2014).

These blinkered views of Haiti, which confine it to a stereotype, ignore the numerous keen analyses produced by Haitian researchers, international organizations (IOs), and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). In this respect, works on the epistemology of injustice (Fricker, 2007) and on the epistemology of ignorance (Alcoff, 2017; Mills, 2007) shed light on the mechanisms through which Haitians’ views have been sidelined, a Western vision structured, Haitian knowledge obliterated, and privileged access to positions of epistemic, political, and economic authority (Alcoff, 2017) granted to the international community intervening in Haiti.

This special issue aims at bringing to light scientific knowledge which counterbalances the stereotyping of Haitian and Caribbean women’s rights. For centuries, Haitian women have been deeply marked by the geostrategic interests of various world powers, and they are still the object of narratives whose androcentrism is explicit. While they have always been part of the workforce, they have often been silenced, or relegated to the potomitan\footnote{The creole word \textit{potomitan} refers to support for the family, generally generated by the mother, who, at the heart of the household organizes everything around her and on who every member of the family relies.} stereotype. An emerging generation of researchers has been conceptualizing these relationships (Lamour, 2017), questioning presuppositions rooted in social hierarchies both national and
international, and exploring Haitian women’s differentiated – or not – access to material resources. There are greatly varied analyses of inequalities, and also of the strategies to put an end to them. Some examine social, cultural, economic, and political facts, intervention practices, and public policies, while others focus on the range of experiences, or on the multifactorial entanglement of gender relations. Racial, class, and gender power relationships have survived the founding violence of slavery and are thus reflected in specific Creole identities, labels, and precise legal and political mechanisms which, in turn, influence relationships, identity negotiation, and race and gender categories.

This special issue will provide an opportunity to debate Haitian women’s varied experiences through new epistemic and political postures, questioning western perceptions of Haiti. Thus, it will contribute to developing research largely based on practices, experiences, ideas, and theories produced in the Caribbean with an awareness for the logics of coloniality. The aim will be to bring to light an emerging literature in Haiti and, more broadly, in the French-speaking Caribbean. It will also place recent changes in the context of structural historicity, what took place since 2010 also being explained by structural mutations which began prior to the earthquake.

1. **The 2010 Earthquake, Hurricanes Matthew, Irma, and Maria, and their Aftermath**

In the past few years, the Caribbean have suffered greatly from natural disasters. Women have been hit hard: numerous infrastructures and homes have been destroyed. There have been significant internal displacements and shortages. Yet the impact of these phenomena on women has scarcely been studied. And in spite of calls by some to do so, physical, economic, and political reconstruction has taken place without taking into consideration women’s needs, well-being, and rights. Even though since the 2004 tsunami (in the Indian Ocean), it has been well known within governments, IOs, and INGOs that the mortality rate of women is higher than that of men during natural disasters, that the gap widens with the severity of the disaster
(Neumayer and Plumper, 2007), and that gender-based social and economic discrimination then tends to increase (UN, 2009; Enarson, 1998).

What is more, for over a decade, women’s empowerment has been put at the center of interventions by IOs, INGOs, international institutions, and national governments. And after the 2010 earthquake, the multinational and humanitarian forces implemented a gender approach. Western-based empowerment and gender approaches were implemented even though they were unsuitable to the specific situations of the population, aimed at reconstructing Haiti, identifying at risk and vulnerable populations, and prioritizing distribution of aid, this logic substituting itself to national priorities in terms of equality and women’s rights.

We welcome articles on the aftermath of this acknowledgement (Dandoy, 2017), on the experience of Haitian and Caribbean women who have lived through a disaster (in terms of income-generating work, relocation, unwanted pregnancies, maternal and child health, food aid distribution, and domestic and sexual violence, in other words, every aspect of their lives). We also welcome articles on discrimination and how it is overcome. How can the paradoxical positioning of women in the reconstruction process be described? Do hegemonic mental representations of femininity and masculinity still legitimate continental, foreign, and international policies implemented in Caribbean territories (Tiessen and Baranyi, 2017)?

2 A gender approach aims at promoting gender equality in public policies by taking into account differences and socially constructed hierarchies.
dozens of different countries who are scarcely familiar with the local contexts, the abuse of minors or unpunished sexual transactions, the cholera epidemic, etc. Women's organizations and feminist Haitian organizations have had to deal with these new obstacles, which have been weighing heavily on social, political, and economic dynamics in Haiti: the disorganized intervention of such a great number of foreigners in the field of equality has indeed reshaped the political landscape of women's rights. And Haitian women have too often been described by the Western press as victims of unbridled Haitian men (Côté, 2014; Corbet, 2010). Besides its fallacious nature, this image has allowed to obscure and stop the expansion of awareness, prevention, and support campaigns by women's groups and the Haitian feminist movement (Fortin, 2015). Humanitarian aid workers have thus positioned themselves as the white saviors of helpless Haitian women (Bex and Craps, 2016), a neocolonial perception par excellence. Social and feminist movements in Haiti are still being rebuilt after this humanitarian influx. The gender regime in Haiti been transformed by these events, and this has impacted public and civil society interventions with women. How have these movements fared eight years after the earthquake and two years after Hurricane Matthew? Articles on the impact of the inclusion, exclusion, and instrumentalization of Haitian women's organizations by foreign organizations in the reconstruction process (Magloire and Joachim, 2011) are also welcome, on how women's and feminist organizations still need to fight for the recognition of their views, recognition of their professional knowledge, and of their interventions. Nationally recognized Haitian women's organizations still lack funding, and are they scarcely acknowledged by international actors. Have public policies and international cooperation been adapted accordingly?

3. The Situation of Women and their Rights in Haiti and the Caribbean

In spite of these many economic, sanitary, and social structural vulnerabilities, there have been several breakthroughs for women’s rights in the past few years. The earthquake has crystallized the process of structural changes, and this special issue will not eschew bringing to light
preexisting or subsequent dynamics; on the contrary, this special issue calls for papers which explain the current dynamics.

Let us briefly remind the reader of the passing of the law on paternity, maternity, and filiation (2014), the constitutional principle of a 30% quota of women in public life (2013), and the adoption of a policy promoting gender equality. This special issue welcomes analyses and research concerning these breakthroughs and any other relevant aspects related to women. It welcomes analyses on the general or specific situation of Haitian and Caribbean women from the perspective of various scientific fields: matrifocality, the role of families with respect to food and social safety, access to healthcare, income-generating work, domesticity, subcontracting industries, and life expectancy.

Framework / Participation in n°239 (2019–3) of the Journal

This issue will favor an interdisciplinary, multi-angled approach. Authors from all social and human sciences may submit papers, including but not limited to: sociology, demography, history, geography, political science, economics, anthropology, etc.

Authors should explore these themes based on an understanding of international, national, and local trajectories. The contextualization of empirical studies and original corpuses and the combination of a sound theoretical approach and fieldwork are expected.

The articles (40,000 characters, excluding abstract and references) in French, English, or Spanish may tackle some of the questions or themes mentioned, and may do so through specific case studies. The articles proposed must be original works. They may however have been presented at a conference (with proceedings), as long as they are adapted to the format required by the Revue internationale des études du développement (see the guidelines for authors on the blog for the publications of the IEDES).
Proposals in French, English, or Spanish must comprise approximately 4,000 characters (with spaces), 500 words or one page.

These proposals must include:

- a title of 70 characters (with the possibility of adding a subtitle),
- an abstract detailing research question, theoretical framework, fieldwork, and main results,
- bibliographical references (not included in the character count).

Each proposal must also include the authors’ first and last names, their status, their institutional affiliation, as well as the author’s email address.

Publication Calendar

The article proposals must be submitted on July 25th 2018 at the latest by email:
- To the editorial office: revdev@univ-paris1.fr
- To one of the editors of this issue:
  o Denyse Côté, denyse.cote@uqo.ca

- The authors preselected by the editors and the editorial committee will be notified by July 27th 2018.
- The first draft, following the journal’s guidelines for authors, must be submitted to the two aforementioned email addresses before October 5th 2018.
- The evaluation process will take a few months – each article will be submitted anonymously to a external double blind peer review. Publication: n°239 (2019–3) is expected to be published at the end of July 2019.