Haitian revolution was a shock to many slave-holding nations
Shock for collective/social imagination of Europe and America

Racialism, modernism
  • Postmodernism: grand theories no longer apply because of globalization, making push for universalism, universal moral code more complex
  • Republican/Democratic Administrations:
    ▪ Republicans generally focused on trade relations
    ▪ Democrats generally focused on issues of democracy, rights

Modernism: influences from colonial time still present and active
Neomodernism: contemporary endeavor to transform societies that is reminiscent of colonial and imperial models of governance

In colonial times there was a pervasive fear of slave revolts/rebellions
Therefore Haitian Independence was a shock in that it succeeded
Reverberated across the world as an event that could not be understood

Race:
Systematic effort to codify and quantify race
Research methods, methodology all attempt to ‘scientifically’ study race and establish differences between them
Foucault: theory of biopolitics. Biopolitics is the systematic categorization of populations, gathering information about them with the intent to use knowledge created to control these populations and to promote economic productivity
  • In Haitian history – colonial era: there were rampant fears about slaves, the threat of poisoning, Vodou.
  • There were stereotypes of women and men as hypersexualized, almost feminized
  • All stereotypes linked to notions of economic productivity
Medicalization of racial characteristics
Torture methods, discipline structures used to enforce discipline in colonies
  • These were meant to dehumanize and humiliate
Universalism vs. Particularism in analyzing differences (ie Why are Haitians different?)
US foreign policy towards Haiti during the 1991-1994 coup period:
  • Was rape really part of Haitian culture?
  • Should Haitians conform to world model?
    • Political theory: women can be objects in state policy. Relationships between nations have kinship/gender patterns of relationships
Sexual violence was way to prevent acting out:
  • Gendered forms of preventing resistance
  • Political motivation for rape
  • Why do questions of appropriate sexuality begin to come up in the 1980s - 1990s?
• Foucault’s theory: there is increasing focus on family as a site of power. More
  attention paid to sexuality in Victorian era as a means to secure family stability
  and populations
• Anxieties about women’s reproduction is considered an issue of state, national
  security
  o Example: Illinois court ruled that an embryo is a human being, meaning
    that termination means wrongful death
  o Thus, issues of reproduction become part of the state’s jurisdiction as way
    to ensure safety of citizens
• Chapter 4 of manuscript: “Political Cleansing”
• Chapter 5 of manuscript discusses issues of embodiment in Haiti
  o Explores notions of self, especially in Vodou contexts
  o How do people experience and express stress?
  o Stereotype of hysteria
  o How to historicize colonial, post-colonial discourse
  o How valid are the statistics available? What tools were used to measure?
  o Looking at the type of data produced and the political functions they
    served, which could have affected how they were developed
  o Concerned with understanding radical differences in perceiving
  o Worked with people and interviews
  o Explores Haitian psychology, unintended consequences of poverty and
    public policy
• Chapter 6: Crafting of Democracy
  o Foucauldian notions of power
  o Competition for NGO help
  o Local politics manipulated to try to gain funds, gain access to international
    trauma resources
• Chapter 8: We’re not Bank, State, God
  o Frustration about limited amount of help available
  o On some level help organizations can reproduce class/economic differences, even when trying to help or remove these same differences
• Chapter 9: What was the cycle to make victims murderers and led to members of
  organizations getting killed
• General Issues
  o What are types of stereotypes?
  o How do they arise?
    ▪ Sander Gilman’s theories
    ▪ Ecstasis (Fabian) can help prevent
  o Ecstasis: initial culture shock when person from one culture is immersed
    in another. Understanding developed as visceral experiences are lived
    through
  o What is the process that tension, fear builds in a social setting
    ▪ Ex. After 9/11, rumors spread about fears of anthrax – these
      rumors are attempt to work through fears and anxieties, make
      sense of what happened
The forms through which people express these fears are different across cultures

After catastrophic events people make attempts to rationalize – trying to make sense when experience is beyond normal categories of experience

- Type of trauma may not fit conventional categories available to deal with different types of phenomena
- Origin and explanation of trauma could not be explained by or helped with use of sorcery, witchcraft, herbal doctors – traditional modes of resolution did not work
- Category of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) helped categorize people, moving them from other forms of explanation to specific biomedical models of symptoms. Created a different form of identity for the afflicted
- Pietz describes what emerged (notion of fetish) in the space of encounter between Europeans and Africans when they met
- Instructing about rights a type of therapy – it creates a certain identity based on self as autonomous individual with power and rights with access to methods of recourse. Process is a form of making identity, shaping discourse about cross-cultural exchange, much like Pietz’s theory of the fetish