Florida International University
University Graduate School

Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Abstract

“New” Haitian Social Movements: Alternative Modernities, (Trans)local Nationalisms, and Solidarity Economonies

by

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My dissertation is the first project on the Haitian Platform for Advocacy for an Alternative Development-PAPDA, a nation-building coalition founded by activists from varying sectors to coordinate one comprehensive nationalist movement against what they are calling an “Occupation.” My work not only provides information on this under-theorized popular movement but also situates it within the broader literature on the postcolonial nation-state as well as Latin American and Caribbean social movements. My dissertation analyzes the contentious relationship between local and global discourses and practices of citizenship. Furthermore, my research draws on transnational feminist theory to underline the scattered hegemonies that intersect to produce varied spaces and practices of sovereignty within the Haitian postcolonial nation-state. My dissertation highlights how race and class, gender and sexuality, education and language, and religion have been imagined and co-constituted by Haitian social movements in constructing ‘new’ collective identities that collapse the private and the public, the rural and the urban, the traditional and the modern. This project complements the scholarship on social movements and the postcolonial nation-state and pushes it forward by emphasizing its spatial dimensions. Moreover, the dissertation de-centers the state to underline the movement of capital, goods, resources, and populations that shape the “postcolonial” experience. I re-define the postcolonial nation-state as a network of local, regional, international, and transnational arrangements between different political agents, including social movement actors. To conduct this interdisciplinary research project, I employed ethnographic methods, discourse and textual analysis, as well as basic mapping and statistical descriptions in order to present a historically-rooted interpretation of individual and organizational negotiations for community-based autonomy and regional development.

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