

Space and Power:
A postcolonial feminist geographic critique of disaster reconstruction in Haiti

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Abstract

Geography enjoys complex theories of space. Feminist geographer Doreen Massey (2005) argues space is relational and multiple, a product and producer of social relations. By comparison, disaster scholars and the field of disaster studies engage with space minimally. Often, space is simply viewed as the static container within which things happen. This thesis aims to extend disasters' spatiality beyond floodplain boundaries and seismic mapping to reimagine space as a logic of power. Here, I locate the popular disaster response slogan *build back better* which reframes disasters as an opportunity to bring about positive change (Cheek & Chmutina, 2024) and follow this phrase to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. *Build back better* frames Haiti's official response and recovery through two key documents (what I term master disaster texts): the Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA) and the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH).

I use a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) supported by a feminist geographic and postcolonial theoretical framework to examine the discursive role of space in Haiti's disaster response texts and to unpack the power bound up in the *better* world they propose. I engage with material response and recovery phases as well as imagined, possible futures which shape but also exceed the disaster management cycle. I refer to these dimensions collectively as Haiti's *refondation*. Through my FCDA of Haiti's master disaster texts, space emerges both as key tool in Haiti's *refondation* and as a site of negotiation. Six spatial themes are visible in the PDNA and PARDH, identified through coding. Analyzing their use in context, I find that Haitian space is reimaged through the productive rationalities and relations of neoliberalism, most likely at the instruction of foreign forces. Here, I trace the PDNA and PARDH's rescaling of the disaster from local to national levels where the myth of the modern state is invoked. Once there, a new (old) problem emerges: concentration and centralization around Port-au-Prince or the Haitian State's incomplete relationship with population and territory. A spatial solution is proposed: development hubs evenly spaced out across the country and connected to remake Haiti into the right order of things and governable in neoliberal terms and relations. I also locate a response from the Haitian State in which it carves out a space for itself in *refondation*, not by challenging the so-called rules of the game but rather its own position within be in relation to them.

This research demonstrates that space matters to disasters. In the case of Haiti's *refondation*, space is at the heart of reconstructing Haiti materially and producing desirable relations (for some) within an unequal international system. These findings reaffirm that the way we think and write about disasters is important, including their spatiality. Doing so works to bring into being a certain future amongst many and to define what actions are rendered imaginable and by whom. Feminist geographies and postcolonial studies provide an apt framework to uncover the gendered and raced dimensions of *building back better* accounting for the structural inequalities perpetuated by patriarchy and colonialism. This theoretical pairing should be considered beyond the case of the 2010 Haiti earthquake as should more investigations into the space and spatiality of disasters more broadly.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The Republic of Haiti sits on the western third of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, bordered to the east by the Dominican Republic. Haiti was once Saint-Domingue, the “Pearl of the Antilles,” a French colony where slave-fueled plantations produced three quarters of the world’s sugar (Steckley & Steckley, 2019, p. 48). Today, Haiti is better known as “the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere” (Bell, 2010, p. 28). Following decades of political, economic, and social turmoil, Haiti was once again thrust into the spotlight when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck on January 12, 2010. The epicentre was mere kilometres away from the capital Port-au-Prince, leaving upwards of 200,000 casualties and US\$8 billion in damages (Cavallo et al., 2010).

International actors quickly mobilized. Supplies, security personnel, and US\$14 billion in relief assistance were sent to Haiti yet efforts to “build back better” have not led to the recovery initially envisioned (Bell, 2010, p. 162). More than ten years later, 90% of the population remains vulnerable to natural hazards. Exceptionally high rates of poverty and food insecurity persist (World Bank, 2019).

What is a disaster? Where does it begin and end? These everyday questions are as simple as they are complex. On one level, the answer is a straightforward definitional one. On another, it is a contest over discursive construction of material and social worlds. The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) defines disaster as: “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts” (n.d., online). This reflects the common view that hazards (environmental phenomena) are natural, whereas disasters (their intersection with society) are not. At the same, this definition obscures diverging approaches within the field of disaster studies. Tensions persist between those who privilege a hazards first reading and technical solutions, and those concerned with social processes that make people vulnerable and put them at risk (Gaillard, 2019).

Drawing on Foucault’s (1972) notion of discourse, how we think and talk about disaster matters. For Foucault, knowledge is bound up in language. Discursive frameworks render the world intelligible and actionable, in certain ways. It follows that the ways in which disasters are conceptualized and managed are linked to discursive processes. That is, the logic bound up in disaster definitions determine, in Bondesson’s (2019) words, the “horizons of possibility” and “rules that govern the game” (p. 49). Put another way still, how we define disaster defines the types of interventions imaginable and who may pursue them.

Important but limited investigations into discursive constructions of disasters exist. Hewitt (1983), Bankoff (2001), Oliver-Smith (2004), and Klein (2007) identify a dominant contemporary view wherein disasters are positioned as a “natural calamity” in a “technocratic society” (Hewitt, 1983, p. 4). That is, disasters are viewed as an exceptional violation of ordinary (ordered) life and a natural expression of some people or place’s inferiority. A combination of

geophysicists, crisis capitalists, and security forces, therefore, hold the solutions. Other research locates the role of media in constructing gendered, racialized meanings of disaster (Gavin, 2008; Joye, 2014). Feminist contributions from Bondesson (2019) and Bradshaw (2015) also uncover masculinist logics at play in the conceptualization of disaster risk reduction.

A review of this and wider literature reveals that whether disaster is viewed as exogenous or endogenous, whether it is linked to the exceptional or everyday, scholars and practitioners look to natural and social processes operating at various scales to make sense of disasters. But in doing so, the *space* and *spatiality* of disasters are not systematically or sufficiently unattended. Indeed, as Chapter Two: Literature Review will reveal, a static view of space simply as a backdrop dominates the field (Merilainen & Koro, 2021). Where more complex spatial processes are considered by disasters scholars, their spatial theorizing is often left implicit (Boano, 2011). Finally, important findings from the relatively few explicit spatial investigations remain poorly incorporated into so-called mainstream disaster studies. This is especially true for the popular disaster slogan *build back better* which reframes disaster as an opportunity to improve on what was there before.

As feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994) argues, far from static, space is a continuous product and producer of interrelations, linked to people, power, and politics. It is the dimension of multiplicity full of contingencies and possibilities. The analytical depth of space acknowledged by geographers suggests a rich opportunity to examine the role of space in disaster studies and its material and ideological function vis-à-vis recovery and reconstruction with power relations in mind.

Research Questions & Contributions

This thesis aims to advance understanding of disaster's spatiality beyond floodplain boundaries and seismic mapping to reimagine space as a logic of power. I follow the popular slogan *build back better* to Haiti's 2010 earthquake to unearth the discursive roles of space in its recovery and reconstruction and to unpack the power bound up in the world it reimagines. I argue that space, far from simply being where something happens, is produced materially and ideologically with profound implications.

Accordingly, this thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How is space conceptualised in Haiti's recovery and reconstruction following the 2010 earthquake?
- 2) What are the roles of spatial discourses in Haiti's disaster *refondation*?
- 3) How can feminist geographies and postcolonial studies contribute to enhancing knowledge and theory in disaster studies?

This research responds to calls to move away from technocratic disasters responses and towards more complex understandings of social processes and the power relations that underpin them (Gaillard, 2019). To do so, I aim to address an important gap in disaster studies where few discursive readings exist and where even fewer scholars have attempted to systematically unpack the spatiality of disaster. As my findings will show, space very much matters to disaster recovery

and reconstruction. How space is conceptualized has important implications for what types of actions are rendered imaginable and by whom. Moreover, in the current era of *build back better*, there is increasing potential for disasters to reframe space as a blank slate but the *better* which follows may not be good for all (Cheek & Chmutina, 2022). With the frequency and intensity of disasters expected to rise, the urgency to continue to refine our disaster tools is clear. New findings will contribute to more nuanced considerations of the power of space in disasters and in an increasingly interconnected and precarious world.

During my writing of this thesis, the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, the “biggest disaster in living memory” (IFRC, 2022, p. 3). In 2021, southwestern Haiti was hit by a devastating 7.2 magnitude earthquake and on 7 July, then President of Haiti Jovenel Moïse was assassinated. At present, political control has disintegrated and the newly arrived UN Multinational Security Support Mission is struggling to combat gang violence (UN, 2023, online). Discursive similarities to a decade ago are striking. Photos of destruction and devastation are routinely plastered online, calls for aid coupled with reminders of the country’s enduring poverty (perhaps a curse?) continue. The same seemingly unanswerable question is asked once again: can Haiti ever truly recover? While this thesis focuses primarily on the 2010 earthquake, current events demonstrate the timeliness and continued relevance of this research.

Research Design and Rationale

This research undertakes a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) of what it calls Haiti’s ‘master disaster texts’ linked to the 2010 earthquake: the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH). Analysis is guided by a feminist geographic and postcolonial theoretical framework. The following sections provide a brief overview of this methodology and theory but first, a word topic selection and terms.

I selected the 2010 Haiti earthquake as an empirical anchor to a predominately theoretical inquiry for three reasons. First, it remains a defining event in Haiti’s history and thus a valid site of academic research. More than a decade later, it is rare to encounter any writing on Haiti which does not reference the earthquake (Glover, 2012). Second, the earthquake stands out the world over for its relative toll. No disaster, earthquake or otherwise, has surpassed or even come close to the estimated 200,000 lives lost on January 12, 2010 (Lake, n.d.). Lastly, recovery and reconstruction from the earthquake remain incomplete such that scholars continue to debate where exactly disaster begins and ends in Haiti (Polyne, 2013).

Borrowing Hewitt’s (2015) terminology, master texts are documents linked to standardized toolsets and processes in a coordinated international system. This system includes the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the broader international disaster management architecture. Wisner et al. (2004) insist that international locales of dialogue and decision making are influential in establishing “internationally agreed yardsticks” and quantifiable targets against which progress is assessed (p. 325). The World Bank (n.d.) affirms the Post Disaster Needs Assessment tool is an internationally accepted methodology that serves as a powerful communication device and priority setting exercise, as well as a necessity to unlock international

funding. It follows that Haiti's master disaster texts would prove to be highly influential in directing recovery and reconstruction (or *refondation*) thought and action.

I use the term *refondation* (rebuilding, loosely translated from French) throughout this thesis to capture the entirety of Haiti's post-earthquake phases from the moment of impact to beyond. Doing so helps me to push past the pre-determined and often static disaster management cycle sequence (discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review) which assumes linear progression from recovery to reconstruction. *Refondation* also provides conceptual flexibility to explore alternative sequence-phases not captured by the disaster management cycle. For example, possible or imagined futures articulated by Haiti's master disaster texts become important sites of inquiry with material consequences. Finally, I use *refondation* more simply as a place-based reminder to centre Haiti's context and circumstance as international processes forcefully enter the picture.

Overview of Methodology

This research applies a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) following Dianna Mullet's (2018) guiding parameters for discourse analyse. It is further substantiated by tactics recommended for human geographers by Waitt (2005) and Rose (2001). Language is a powerful mediator between thought and action. According to Foucault (1972), what we can say and what can be said by whom is not simply a matter of self-determination. Language, subjectivity, and action are shaped by the discursive frameworks that order and arrange the world and bring reality as it is conceived into being. In other words, discourse is the organizing framework that gives statements their coherence and status. At the same time, discourse is a continually contested social process and site of struggle over truth and knowledge.

According to Lazar (2005), complex workings of power become taken for granted assumptions that sustain unequal social arrangements in turn. For example, asymmetric values assigned to men and women sustain a patriarchal world order and reproduce oppressive power relations. An FCDA empowers the researcher to identify discursive structures and strategies at work in talk and text in order to unpack and challenge that which is unjust. FCDA builds on rich legacies of linguistic studies, the humanities, and social sciences. Contributions from gender and women's studies, in particular, provide this methodology with the tools necessary to address distinctly feminist concerns and to pursue an emancipatory, intersectional agenda including but beyond gender (Lazar, 2007).

An FCDA applied to Haiti's master disaster texts will respond to this thesis' research questions. It will help to reveal how normative constructions of space function in disaster recovery narratives. It will identify 'space at work' beyond its often-static interpretation in order to understand spatial rationalities and their objectives. This includes revealing which actors and which sets of power relations are legitimated through related discourses. Ultimately, applying an FCDA will offer a glimpse into disaster worldview negotiation and analyse the PDNA and PARDH as moments in power geometries within the broader discursive struggle for hegemony.

Overview of Theoretical Frameworks

This research employs a feminist geographic theoretical framework anchored in postcolonial theory. The study of geography is concerned with the social and natural worlds and their intersection (Agnew & Livingstone, 2011). As Jones (2012) states, “everything in human life has to happen somewhere, and that somewhere (along with its relations to a lot of somewhere elses) matters a lot in terms of what actually happens” (p. 3). Feminist geography is a critical branch of human geography that applies feminist theories and methodologies to the study of space and place. It is a multidisciplinary and cross-fertilized field that employs a diverse range of popular approaches. Thus, it is more apt to speak of feminist *geographies* in the plural (Aitken & Valentine, 2015).

This thesis embraces a relational view of space, aligning with theoretical contributions of feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994; 2005). Space is a social and material product and producer, charged with meaning and filled with power. Place, Massey (2005) argues, is a particular “moment in power geometries” where spatial relations and processes come to ground (p. 131). Moreover, gender matters immensely to space and place. All are mutually constituted, transformed, and connected by social relations (Nelson & Seager, 2005). Thus, I heed Massey’s warning against the de-politicization of these concepts and reaffirm that each must be viewed through a prism of power where unequal structures mediate social relations across scales. For this reason, I now turn to the choice of *feminist* in feminist geographies used in this research.

Postcolonial theory contends that legacies of imperialism and colonialism continue to render the world, places, and the people in them unequal (Jazeel, 2019). Postcolonial scholars identify and dismantle harmful material and social realities that remain today. Postcolonial theory benefits from a robust literary tradition, including attention to the power of talk and text. From its early proponents such as Edward Said (1978) to contemporary feminist thinkers like Gayatri Spivak (2006) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003), postcolonial theory confronts the unequal production and consumption of (knowledge about) the world.

This thesis extends the work of above-mentioned theories with particular attention to their geographical and gendered engagements. Here, I employ a critical view of the modern state and its political spatial manifestation: territory (Brenner & Elden, 2009). Michel Foucault’s post-structuralist power theorizing is used to unpack sovereignty and governmentality. Finally, I engage with the concept of nation following Anderson’s (2006) definition of an “imagined political community” (p. 6), substantiated by Nina Yuval Davis’ (2011) politics of belonging or “the messy business of boundary negotiation” (p. 205). A more detailed explanation follows in Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework.

Statement on Positionality

I am a white, middle class, cisgender woman born and raised in Canada. This thesis is written on unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin territory in a nation enmeshed in a settler colonial past and present. My position impacts the way I understand and interact with the world. I am explicit in assuming a staunch feminist and postcolonial position, and commitment to transnational solidarity. But however well intended, I recognize a declaration does not absolve or resolve all tensions bound up in academic research. Elsewhere, the *problematique* of Western scholarship on the Third World/Global South will be articulated. Likewise, the essentializing

tendencies of white feminism do not escape me. Thus, I approach this research with care and conscious of participation and visibility. I do not claim or aim to speak for others or all women. My voice is one among many that I hope will do a small part in making the world a better place.

Chapter Outline

This chapter establishes the objectives and contours of this thesis and previews its constituent parts. The **second chapter** overviews relevant literature in disaster studies and disaster risk reduction (DRR). I engage the field through discussion of two paradigms: the hazards approach and the vulnerability approach, and identify the (limited) role of space in disaster studies, including via maps and mapping. **Chapter Three** presents the theoretical foundation of this research and key concepts used to support its analysis. I employ feminist geographies anchored by postcolonial theory. The intersection of these two theories is taken up with an exploration of space, the modern territorial state, and nation. I use Foucault's power analytics to unpack sovereignty and governmentality. **Chapter Four** outlines and justifies research design and methodology: feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA). It further addresses critiques and limitations of this research. An expanded statement on positionality is included. **Chapter Five** introduces this research's case study on the 2010 Haiti earthquake and the two documents selected for analysis: the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH). **Chapters Six and Seven** comprise its analysis. Chapter Six presents the results of thematic coding where six spatial themes identified. Themes are interpreted and extrapolated in Chapter Seven where two parallel narratives are identified demonstrating the spatial negotiation over Haiti's future between actors. This research concludes with **Chapter Eight**, a discussion of this thesis' research questions and findings, as well as implications for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of existing literature relevant to this research at the intersection of disaster and space. I engage primarily with mainstream disaster studies: the field of scholarship that systematically studies disasters. I also engage fluidly with the wider Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) arena. Per Bondesson (2019), DRR is a “global field of policy planning and practice” anchored by the UN system and the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (p. 50). I locate DRR in the broad international disaster management architecture that addresses the complex lifecycle of disasters from mitigation, preparedness, and response to recovery. In view of the multidisciplinary of this thesis, every effort is made to avoid duplication between content covered here and in subsequent chapters.

To survey how disaster studies engages with space, I begin with an overview of the field’s conceptual origins. I trace disaster studies’ development through two central paradigms: the hazards and vulnerability approaches. I engage with key concepts of risk, vulnerability, and resilience and how different narratives shape “what is a disaster” (Carrigan, 2015). Risk can mean the potential for losses and damages or a function of vulnerability and exposure. Vulnerability can refer to the state of a person or an outcome of a calamitous event. Resilience reflects a range of views on ability to cope and build back better. I then turn to gender in disaster studies before addressing the (limited) role of time and space. A review of the literature reveals three findings. First, the majority of disaster studies does not engage with complex theories of space. Second, there are some who engage with spatial processes, but still their spatial theory remains implicit or lacklustre. Finally, explicit outside of disaster studies that remain unknown to mainstream disaster studies or unincorporated (and technical urban planning). This chapter concludes with specific attention to maps and mapping, the most prominent example of ‘space AND disaster’ found in this literature review.

Disaster Studies

Disasters have a long history in the archeological record and mythologies of civilizations. From ‘acts of the gods’ to natural processes, there is considerable diversity in understanding disasters over time (Dominey-Howes, 2018; Svensen, 2009). As Dynes (1999) contends, meaning always comes from the cultural context in which it is interpreted. Today, most scholars agree that there is no such thing as a *natural* disaster (Gaillard, 2019). To qualify disasters as natural ascribes them with a sense of ahistorical inevitability and overlooks key questions related to their social production. The genesis of this view and of disaster studies as an area of social science inquiry is most appropriately located in the mid-twentieth century. That said, natural and even supernatural thinking remain present even in the most contemporary disaster discussions.

Following the Second World War, Quarantelli (1987) recalls U.S. military interest in studying so-called “peacetime disasters” (p. 289). It was assumed that earthquakes and airplane crashes might produce similar conditions to an atomic attack. Sociologists set out to elaborate theories of social change: what happens when society’s equilibrium is ruptured, what sorts of behaviour follows, and how they can be managed (Tierney, 2007). The applied orientation of early disaster research is highlighted by some as the genesis of disaster’s present-day ambiguity. Conceptualizing disaster was largely overlooked by researchers (Perry, 2018) and certainly not

demanding by institutional funders (McConnel, 1998). Nevertheless, early definitions such as that offered by Fritz (1961) were developed:

...an event, concentrated in time and space, in which a society, or a relatively self-sufficient subdivision of a society, undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented. (p. 655)

As disaster eked out its own space academically, its study ossified around a finite number of academics such as E.L. Quarantelli, Russel Dynes, and Gilbert White. Tierney (2007) asserts that high-profile researchers at new disaster research centres determined what was acceptable to study and how. And it was in those centres that disaster studies evolved into its present-day configuration, often defined as a confrontation between the hazards and vulnerability paradigms (Quarantelli 1998, p. xiii).

Evolution of Two Paradigms: Hazards and Vulnerability

The hazards paradigm views disaster as an extreme, abnormal event caused by an external agent. It focuses primarily on the trigger role of hazards in disasters (Wisner et al., 2004). In this case, hazard refers to the “process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation” (UNDRR, n.d., online). More plainly, this means earthquakes, tsunamis, flood, etc. Human-made or anthropogenic hazards count, too.

The hazards paradigm prioritizes scientific explanation and intervention (Dominey-Howes, 2018). Through measurement, modelling, and forecasting, hazards can be understood and technical interventions developed to mitigate or overcome (Sillmann et al., 2017). Risk is also an important calculation: the probability of loss or damage owing to hazard exposure (Chapman, 1999). It is objectively measurable (most often in economic loss or loss of human life) and is a direct function of the hazard. Thus, the hazards paradigm elevates a specific niche of “scientific expertise and technological solutions” and institutional arrangements in kind (Gibb, 2018, p. 328).

The hazards paradigm is critiqued for conflating hazards with disaster (Perry, 2018). As Hewitt (1995) describes, this approach “classifies, explains and responds to disasters as if they were wholly or essentially a function of the agency that impinges upon a vulnerable society” (p. 74). Social dimensions become impossible to locate in nature and the role of humanity in creating vulnerability disappears (Chmutina & von Meding, 2019). Its insistence on technocratic solutions delimits possible responses and the types of actors who can implement them.

In response, the vulnerability paradigm emerged with an emphasis on how society creates conditions in which disasters arise (O’Keefe et al., 1976). While hazards remain important, vulnerability scholars invert the causality of disaster. Far from abnormal, disasters are a manifestation of social conditions and processes that underpin vulnerability (Hewitt, 1995). Wisner et al. (2004) define vulnerability as “the characteristics of a person or group and their

situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard” (p. 11). This includes human-centred variables such as class, ethnicity, disability, and gender among others, and is linked to power relations.

The vulnerability paradigm challenges the prevailing view of risk. Risk is not simply the probability of loss but depends on the presence of people that can be considered at risk or vulnerable. Again, Wisner et al. (2004) are notable for their development of the pseudo-equation $R = H \times V$: “the risk (R) of disaster is a compound function of the natural hazard (H) and the number of people, characterised by their varying degrees of vulnerability (V) to that specific hazard, who occupy the space and time of exposure to the hazard event” (p. 49). Scholars have since put forward various practical models to articulate vulnerability, emphasizing disasters’ relational nature (Gibb, 2018).

Critics of the vulnerability paradigm point to its complexity and tendency for passive application (Gaillard, 2010). Worry that the latter removes agency prompted the inclusion of capacity thinking (Frerks et al., 2011). Capacity refers to “the resources and assets people possess to resist, cope with and recover from disaster shocks they experience” (Gaillard, 2010, p. 219). In other words, it is the ability to employ or access strengths, resources, and assets. Capacity coupled (not contrasted) with vulnerability provides a more accurate understanding of who is most at risk and disrupts top-down assessment processes.

The notion of resilience emerges from ecology to describe the ability of ecosystems to persist in the face of perturbances (Holling, 1973). Its application to disaster studies is heterogeneous. Timmerman (1981) defines resilience as those elements in society that are fundamental to its regeneration, those “concerned with the continuation of the possibility of coping” (p. 21-23). Tierney (2015) prefers a broader use: “incorporating both the capacity to resist and absorb disturbance and the capacity to adapt and bounce back” (p. 1331). Parker (2020) argues resilience should not be bouncing back to status quo but to improve. A return to pre-disaster conditions would mean “the pre-event state of vulnerability” which led to disaster in the first place (Gaillard, 2010, p. 221).

Resilience thinking has proven powerful. The global field of DRR and international agreements like the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 now include a disaster resilience agenda alongside risk reduction objectives and activities. The Framework’s global commitment to *build back better* champions the use of post-disaster activities to increase the resilience of nations and communities (UNDRR, no date). Increasingly, it connects disaster reconstruction to a constellation of global efforts, opening up a continuum of relief and recovery between disaster, development, livelihoods and the environment. Some appreciate resilience’s malleability (McEntire et al., 2002). Others see this feature as naturalizing a society continually at risk and shifting responsibility from institutions to individuals (Tierney, 2015). Specific critiques of the *build back better* concept will be addressed in later sections.

While the above has traced disaster studies along two tracks, I turn to consideration of both paradigms as variants of the same hegemonic discourse. Analysing discursive frameworks around disasters, Bankoff (2001) argues that new terminology like vulnerability or resilience is just the latest in a long line of Western techniques to construct geographies of risk and render

certain parts of the world “unsafe” (p. 19). The Global South, he demonstrates, was first ascribed with tropicality, then poverty, then underdevelopment all to justify imperial intervention by Western powers. Today, Western technocratic disaster solutions and humanitarian relief are no different. Scholarly reviews of the UN Sendai Framework compared to its predecessor the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 by Wisner (2020), Pineros (2020), and Chmutina et al. (2021) find more commonality than difference between the documents in that both “fail to deal with root causes of disaster” (p. 239).

Thus, while key concepts in disaster studies have evolved remarkably from hazards to vulnerability to resilience, there is disagreement whether our understanding of disaster has evolved in step. The current UNDRR definition of disaster reflects the above evolution but also bears similarities to that offered by Fritz sixty-five years ago: “a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with the conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts” (n.d., online).

Engendering Disaster

As scholars reorient disaster studies towards socio-political processes, a shift in epistemologies and methodologies is called for. New theories are needed to facilitate new ways of thinking (Gaillard, 2019). The utility of feminist thought is recognized, as Enarson & Phillips (2000) state, to explore “new angles of vision on the complex interactions of people with hazardous environments” (p. 2). However, the incorporation of feminist perspectives in disaster studies is decades behind advances in other social sciences. As Bradshaw & Linneker (2017) find, technocratic framings render disaster’s agenda particularly resistant to change. Nevertheless, important inroads have been made.

Chapter Three will provide more theoretical detail but suffice it to say, gender shapes how individuals and societies engage with the world (Enarson and Pease, 2016), including experiences of disaster, risk, vulnerability, and resilience to it (Enarson & Phillips, 2000). Studies show that women experience increased risk, morbidity, and mortality due to higher levels of poverty, relative lack of resources, and restricted mobility (Fothergill, 1996). Women also experience disproportionate post-disaster hardships. They often face an increase in unpaid labour and childcare responsibilities, higher losses of formal employment, and an increase in domestic violence. Further, women are more often excluded from formal response and recovery efforts, and experience reduced access to long term recovery entitlements (Gaillard et al., 2017).

An emphasis on vulnerability, however, can lead to women’s framing as mere victims and overlook their agency and participation in decision making processes (Bradshaw, 2015). Discursively, women are painted as either vulnerable or virtuous victims (Arora-Jonsson, 2011). Poorly informed gender analyses can also perpetuate other harmful stereotypes (Gaillard et al., 2017). Cupples (2007) points to the Western tendency “to homogenise and essentialize women, and ethnocentrically treat them as victims of their culture” (p. 156). In other words, all women are put into the same category no matter their difference where Western women/culture is the gendered ideal and norm.

That said, progress has been made in integrating women and girls into disaster decision making (Kimber & Steele, 2021; Zaidi & Fordham, 2021) and to disrupt the structural causes of gender inequality (Centre for Gender and Disaster, 2021; Gaillard et al., 2017). Fuchs et al. (2017) and others identify an increase in practitioners promoting gender equality before and after disasters. Similarly, gender is on the rise in the UN Sendai Framework with 21 references as a “perspective on policy”, “equitable response” and requirement (2015, p. 29). Ten years earlier, its predecessor, the UN Hyogo Framework for Action, contained only a few passing references to women and gender. A budding scholarship on masculinities is also disrupting women-only tendencies in disaster studies (Enarson & Pease, 2016). Finally, a slow but steady expansion of non-Western perspectives and intersectional analyses are helping to complicate problematic and essentializing use of gender by scholars and practitioners (Andharia, 2020; Bradshaw, 2012; Chaplin et al., 2019; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2019).

A Time and Space for Disaster?

Time and space are evident in disaster definitions but their meanings are often left implicit or altogether unexplored (Merilainen & Koro, 2021). While the latter receives less attention as an explicit point of investigation, disaster’s temporality has a somewhat richer scholarship. It is for this reason that I begin with time.

Before disaster studies proper, Samuel Henry Prince’s (1920) and Lowell Julliard Carr (1932) studied social change brought about by calamity. Three distinct phases emerged: the pre-existing period, the onset of catastrophic forces, and the readjustment or reorganization of society into a new equilibrium. Simultaneously, the geophysical study of natural hazards rendered disaster along a time sequence albeit with attention to hazards’ physical properties of onset, duration, and recession (Bankoff, 2001). The institutionalization of disaster’s sequences underwent several iterations, extending early models into the contemporary disaster management cycle of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery (Bankoff, 2001).

Reflections on the disaster management cycle are multiple. Verlin (2021) finds the static disaster sequence ill-fitted to temporal realities on the ground which ebb, flow, and loop back in non-order. Similarly, cascading disasters, the domino effect that compounds disasters, complicate the pre-established management cycle (Cutter, 2018). Others argue neatly divisible time segments privilege linear thinking and reinforce hazards as the ultimate culprit (Bankoff, 2001). The complexity and multiplicity of disasters’ root causes are rendered invisible. Risk and vulnerability must be rethought in relation to time. As Oliver-Smith (1998) asserts, “the life-history of a disaster” can begin centuries before its manifestation (p. 29 – 30). One must trace the historical construction of inequality in order to fully understand the cause of disaster (Enarson et al., 2007).

Disaster temporality is also taken up via typologies that classify according to speed. Slow onset disasters unfold gradually, such as droughts or famines. Rapid-onset disasters are abrupt triggering events like volcanoes or earthquakes. Quarantelli (1998) argues slow onset disasters are not real disasters because they do not disrupt social functioning. He continues conventional disaster tools are therefore not applicable and make their study futile. Others are less convinced

by this argument and remain determined to study both spectacular and the mundane disasters, and upset rigid temporal lines of disaster inquiry (Nixon, 2011; Staupe-Delgado & Rubin, 2022).

Social memory (or in some cases amnesia) also matters in disasters' temporality (Bankoff, 2004). Cultures, institutions, and worldviews are important mediating factors (Jigyasu, 2005). For example, technocratic definitions of famine can conflict with culturally normalized periods of food insecurity or represent a time when "outsiders" take notice of otherwise "forgotten lands" (Jackson, 2021, p. 8). From another perspective, Alexander (2006) and Joye (2014) point to the impact of media in determining the longevity of disasters. Finite public attention span ascribes a shelf-life to disasters, on average one-week of coverage according to Yeo & Knox (2019). Thus, understanding disaster cannot be disconnected from how its temporality is constructed, often in relation to a "dominant Western liberal consciousness" (Gibb, 2018, p. 333).

Disaster studies' attention to theories of space¹ is comparably limited. Fortunately, this does not hold true for all scholarship. The concept of absolute space finds its origins in the disciplines of physics and philosophy. It holds that space is "a neutral container of things and events" within which objective location is determinable (Couclelis, 1999, p. 32). The properties of space thus allow for the application of geometry and X, Y coordinates and supporting epistemologies (Warf & Sui, 2010). As Brown & Knopp (2008) conclude, absolute space dominates contemporary understandings with its "Cartesian rationality, Euclidean spatial ontologies, and the often norming fixity inherent in cartographic representation" (p. 41).

Two key figures and geography's 'spatial turn' made way for alternative modes of spatial thinking in the second half of the twentieth century, according to Soja (2009). Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault began to interrogate the power of urban spatiality on human behaviour each in their own ways. Their pioneering work rejected a centuries old "ontological privileging" of time over space and revealed the need for spatial thinking to catch up and diversify (ibid, p. 19). While human geographers heeded the call in the decades that followed, new disciplines also took notice of space. By the mid-1990s, Soja (ibid) recounts, the spatial turn had "burst onto the academic scene" and creative clusters of spatial thinking emerged across the arts and sciences (p. 23).

Relational space emerges as a paradigm shift in geography (Jones, 2009). Relational thinkers argue that space is a product and process of relations, filled with heterogeneity and contradiction (Anderson, 2008). Unlike the absolute version, there is no space by itself nor can it be bounded. Relational space is open and constantly remade, and thus is a matter of power and politics. Chapter Three will explore this concept further, but for now this literature review returns to disaster studies.

Just how far the spatial turn made it into disaster studies can be debated. This review of the literature finds three trends. First, on the balance and accounting for the hazards and vulnerability paradigms, absolute views of space tend to dominate the field. That is, space is primarily conceived of as a physical object with identifiable features on which human activities are carried out. Of disaster scholars to consider the discipline's attention to space explicitly,

¹ Space refers to the science of mechanics/motion and matter, not *outer* space.

Merilainen & Koro (2021), Aryanti & Muhlis (2020), and Zetter & Boano (2009) confirm that absolute views tend to prevail. For example, in their investigation into disaster data, Merilainen & Koro (2021) find that static views of space seep into and shape empirical research, producing findings that may reinforce the hazard as the event rather than disasters as a socially embedded process. More recently, Cheek & Chmutina (2024) continue to find the problem with a “good deal of disaster research is that a static understanding of space is assumed”, even in well-intentioned strands (p. 73). Absolute space is particularly evident in the proliferation of technical maps linked to disasters, the most common example of ‘space AND disaster’ found through this review of the literature. A detailed section on mapping follows but suffice it to say, while disaster’s spatiality can appear quite animated with technological tricks, its dynamism often remains within the confines of positivism or as Aryanti and Muhlis (2020) conclude, in a way that “has nothing to do with the social realm” (p. 2).

Second, that is not to say that space is absent. Indeed, absolute investigations into space are still investigations into space (even if problematic). Beyond maps for example, definitions of disaster scale exist but the uncritical application of small, medium, and large scale labels provides only for surface level engagement (Tennakoon et al., 2021). Some disaster scholars and especially those within the vulnerability paradigm engage substantively with spatial processes yet their spatial *theory* and theorizing is often limited or left implicit. This is evident, for example, with disaster scholars who study the spectrum of human mobility from displacement to migration to resettlement.

According to Chumky et al.’s (2022) review of the disaster movement literature, studies tend to seek answers to simple *where* related questions but in doing so, space as a concept is an unexplained given. Scholars search for common spatial patterns like rural to urban migration (ibid, 2022), popular points or climatic zones of origin (Gosh & Orchiston, 2022), and movement duration from temporary to permanent (Paul et al., 2023). International displacement is also a possibility. Esnard and Sapat (2014) review formal (dis)placement definitions and designations as they engender legal rights, expectations, and obligations in international and national laws. Most often, those displaced by disaster internationally cannot qualify as refugees and enjoy no corresponding pathways to legal immigration. Institutional arrangements put in place to deal with disaster reflect the dominant way of organizing the world and the people in it: the international state system (Turton, 2011). Thus, it is governments who decide “who is a victim and to what extent, how much state compensation is owed, between ‘fake’ and ‘real’ suffering, and even whether to declare incidences calamitous or not” (Nair, 1997, p. 536).

Other scholars focus on *why* questions and understanding what factors into individuals leaving their homes and/or returning. Here physical damage to the built environment is often a primary factor in household decision making (Paul et al., 2023). Indeed, much has been written on housing in post-disaster contexts specifically: the provision, design and construction of temporary dwellings (Hany Abulnour, 2014), the (in)security of displacement camps (Gorman-Murray et al., 2018), and narrowly or ill-conceived bricks and mortar outputs pursued by disaster organizations (Zetter & Boano, 2009). However, and notwithstanding the variation in spatial complexity of such investigations, a discussion of space itself or theories of space are hardly ever featured.

The third finding of this literature review is that there are a small number of explicit spatial inquiries into disasters but comparatively they are limited, and their findings remain outside of the so-called mainstream disaster studies field. In addition to Cheek & Chmutina (2024), Merilainen & Koro (2021), Aryanti & Muhlis (2020), and Zetter & Boano (2009) already discussed, Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg's (2014) *Crisis Cities: Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans* is another exceptional example. Here, the authors explore how processes of free market induced uneven development led to spatial inequalities before, during, and after the 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina disasters, respectively. As they term it, the phenomenon of "crisis driven urbanization" is becoming the disaster recovery norm not dissimilar to Naomi Klein's (2007) disaster capitalism thesis. Here, Klein argues that disasters have become the free market's latest opportunity for capitalist accumulation by dispossession. She finds that public disorientation following disasters provides the opportunity for powerful actors to push through pro-capitalist policies which otherwise would be unjustified and/or resisted. In particular, *build back better* spells opportunity for capitalist accumulation, physically according to the growing literature on dispossession linked to post-disaster land grabs (Lightman, 2020).

The popular slogan build back better (or BBB) first emerges as a rallying cry from NGOs following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami only to be picked up and popularized by Bill Clinton (2006) in his subsequent report. As mentioned, BBB has now become the widely accepted belief that disasters are an opportunity to improve on what was there and to incorporate resilience into recovery (Fernandez & Ahmed, 2019). More precisely, the UN Sendai Framework defines build back better as:

The use of recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and community through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies, and the environment (no date, online).

Notwithstanding BBB's good intentions, Cheek & Chmutina (2022) assert that *better* does not always mean good for all, especially in the context of neoliberalism. They argue that BBB is often limited to market-based approaches and the built environment but does not address structural inequalities and injustices. The measures which follow – deregulation, privatization and pro-market restructuring – do more to reinforce and exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities than lead to more equitable outcomes for all. Indeed, there are few examples of BBB living up to espoused expectations (Fernandez & Ahmed, 2019) but a growing list of record profits made by a few in the wake of disasters.

Maps, Mapping, Mapped

As mentioned, maps emerged as the most common example of 'space AND disaster' found through this review of the literature. Maps are commonly viewed as technical products of a scientific endeavour. Simply put, they are graphic representations or data made visual, capable of astounding precision and granularity (Dodge, 2015). Maps convey information: the location of and between objects, activities, and processes on the earth. They are also a way of understanding how individuals, communities, and nations fit into the world (Dodge et al., 2011). Today, maps employ a variety of visual registers in their design. Technological advances make maps come

alive and place the entire world in an individual's hand (so long as it holds a smartphone). And while nearly every inch of the earth's surface is mapped, new spatial techniques continue to reveal new domains in need of charting (Hall, 1992).

Cartography is the science of map making with important links to geography (Crampton, 2010). A complete history is out of scope for this research but as Harley (1989) helpfully distills, the present day "rules of cartography" are traceable through two trends: the technical and the cultural production of maps (p. 2). The former, Harley explains, relates to a progressive uptake of the scientific model that assumes independent objects in an objective reality. It employs complex practices of measurement, presentation, and verification, and produces maps that are "mirror[s] of nature", not subjective representations of space (Harley, 1989, p. 4).

Cultural production speaks to the "related ... values" in between the lines of technical production (Harley, 1989, p. 3). Here, maps do much more than capture reality – they help to create it. Maps are an art of persuasive communication. Whether it is the assumptions or desires of the cartographer or the patron, making maps involves choosing truths about the world and its right natural order (Dodge, 2015). Mapping becomes a powerful form of knowledge creation, making available and legitimizing certain ways of knowing the world. As Harley (1989) concludes, "Once embedded in the published text the lines on the map acquire an authority that may be hard to dislodge ... Sometimes agents of change, they can equally become conservative documents. But in either case the map is never neutral" (p. 18).

The rules of cartography remain contested, particularly as technological advances and the rise of tools like Google Earth and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) open up new possibilities for making, accessing, and using maps. Important debates unfold over what exactly is a map, who can or should participate in its making, and the place of technology in map making processes. For Crampton (2010), these questions lie at the heart of a messy relationship between those who 'do' maps (geospatial technologists) and those who study them (geographers). For others, they are a critical call to action to examine maps as texts, artefacts, processes and practices.

Mapping Disaster

Mapping disaster is taken up in literal and figurative forms. That is, mapping just as often refers to normative cartographic practices as it does a general idea of rendering non-spatial ideas spatially thinkable. For some, mapping's popularity as a buzzword has gone too far. For others, radical rethinking of what mapping means is necessary and urgent.

The majority of disaster mapping remains a technical endeavour along one of three lines. First, maps are used to understand risk or vulnerability of people and places (Sherbinin et al., 2019). Adaptive capacity or resiliency are sometimes the focus, too. Here, maps can capture natural risk features like population proximity to hazard. Second, maps can correspond to a stage of the disaster management cycle (Tomaszewski, 2020). Here, vulnerability mapping is a popular mitigation exercise to inform preventive measures. After a disaster, maps may use remote spatial or satellite data to analyze impacts and target response efforts.

Finally, maps can focus on a hazard or disaster itself. As Bandrova and Konecny (2006) assert, there are a lot of important “where?” questions tied to disaster and maps can provide quick and effective information to a range of end users. For example, familiar maps appear on the nightly news, tracking the approach of a hurricane and forecasting its future route. The epicentre of an earthquake, the spread of wildfires, or the extent of evacuation orders are increasingly accessible in real time.

For Tomaszewski (2020), technological developments like GIS enable maps and spatial data to go beyond “where?”, to understand the who, what, why, and how behind disasters. Thanks to GIS capabilities maps are now implicated in nearly all aspects of disaster management. For others, it is new patterns of user generated data and engagement is shaking up what it means to make and use a map (Neis & Zielstra, 2014). A proliferation of “volunteer information systems” and “wikification of the map” enabled by open source and end user control captures this approach (Sui, 2008, p. 69). Participatory approaches find new ways to develop, gather, and disseminate information and, in doing so, change the relationship between people, power, and disaster decisions (Plantin, 2015).

Conclusion

Disaster studies is a dynamic field and as this review of the literature has shown, certain trends and turn have been particularly impactful. The discipline’s origins as an applied science as earlier disaster studies an insular label (Tierney, 2007). Indeed, disaster studies is markedly slower in engaging other disciplines and theoretical developments outside its walls. The rise of the vulnerability paradigm, however, has produced significant theoretical developments as well as a call to continue to expand critical work on disasters. Here, this review of the literature identifies the *space* and *spatiality* of disasters as one such critical gap in need of addressing. As this chapter as shown, a static view of space simply as a backdrop dominates the field (Merilainen & Koro, 2021). Where more complex spatial processes are considered by disasters scholars, their spatial theorizing is often left implicit (Boano, 2011). Finally, important findings from the relatively few explicit spatial investigations remain poorly incorporated into so-called mainstream disaster studies. This is especially true for the popular expression ‘build back better’ which transforms disaster into an opportunity to improve but what may be better for some is not necessarily good for all (Cheek & Chmutina, 2022).

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework: Feminist Geography and Postcolonial Theory

This chapter establishes this research's theoretical foundation and presents key concepts used to support its analysis. As noted previously, I employ feminist geography anchored by postcolonial theory. The tools and correctives this pairing bring are apt for the investigation of how gendered space and spatiality are constructed in contexts of colonial past and present. As with other chapters, I limit content to that which is relevant to this research and place common or repeated concepts where their impact is most significant.

I begin with brief introductions of feminist geography and postcolonial theory. Feminist geographers study the intersection and production of gender and space. Postcolonial theory identifies and addresses present day legacies of colonialism and imperialism. The intersection of these two theories is taken up through engagement with: space, the modern state, territory, and nation. I employ Doreen Massey's (2005) relational view of space whereby space is socially and materially constructed and constitutes and transforms social and material worlds. I take a critical view of the modern state: that its normative construction is built atop a Westphalian myth. Here, territory is a historically specific "political form of space produced by and associated with the modern state" (Brenner and Elden, 2009, p. 362-363), and use Michel Foucault's power analytics to unpack two forms of related power: sovereignty and governmentality. Finally, I draw on Benedict Anderson's (2006) definition of the nation as an "imagined political community" substantiated by Nina Yuval-Davis' (2011) politics of belonging or the messy business of boundary maintenance.

Feminist Geographies

Geography is concerned with the social and natural worlds and the ways in which they intersect (Agnew & Livingstone, 2011). Put differently, everything happens somewhere "and that somewhere (along with its relations to a lot of somewhere else) matters a lot" (Jones, 2012, p. 3). The discipline spans the natural sciences of physical geography and the social sciences of human geography. Scholars have spilled much ink on the distinction between the two but what geographers do and how they do it has always been a bit complex (Murphy, 2018).

Feminist geography is rooted in the study of gender, power, place, and space (Johnston et al., 2020). It connects human geography with feminist scholarship to explore social relations and spatial processes across multiple scales (Gregory et al., 2009). In doing so, feminist geography seeks to uncover and also to redress inequalities and injustices. In other words, it is both resistant and reconstitutive (Gregson & Rose, 2013).

Feminist geography is multiple. Its range of approaches are based on differing views of what is important and why. Indeed, it is more aptly referred to as feminist *geographies* in the plural (Johnston et al., 2020). Feminist geographies' diversity makes establishing disciplinary boundaries difficult, although this has not stopped a canonical history from developing. Anglo-American scholars dominate the field and greatly shape how the discipline writes about itself (Garcia Ramon & Monk, 2007). Later, postcolonial theory will help to reveal and challenge the politics of this knowledge production.

Feminist geographies emerge in the 1960s during feminism's second wave (in the West). According to Warf (2010), the fight for equal rights resonated with scholars dissatisfied with geography's male hegemony. Feminists demanded the missing half of the population be included as producers of geographic knowledge and subjects of research (Gregory et al., 2009). Next, the geography of women gave way to a focus on the structural origins of oppression (Nelson & Seager, 2005). For radical feminists, patriarchy was the dominant antagonist (Dixon & Jones, 2006). For Marxist and social feminists, class analysis revealed inequalities at the intersection of capitalism and patriarchy. In both instances, feminist geographers found that the development of gendered relations take on and shape manifestly spatial forms (Warf, 2010).

By the 1990s, feminism's third wave expanded feminist geographies' focus from gender to inequalities associated with race and sexuality. Postcolonial, post-structural, and queer theories contributed to more complex and dynamic theorizing. For example, the assumption of the universal or essential "woman" was challenged by Black, Latina and Third World feminists (Gregory et al., 2009, p. 498). Critiques were similarly launched against the assumed heteronormativity of interventions. Post-structural approaches helped to destabilize the very category of gender. Today, feminist geographers continue to diversify, exploring geographies of the body, affect, and the performative nature of gender identity (Johnston & Longhurst, 2010).

Although a chronological retelling suggests uniformity, feminist geographers can think about gender quite differently. Three approaches are common: gender as identity/difference, gender as a social relation, and gender as a social construction. This thesis aligns itself with the third approach – gender as a social construction – but in doing so, agrees with Dixon & Jones: "in practice there is quite a bit of overlap among each of these [approaches]" (2006, p. 50).

Gender as identity/difference takes gender as an axis of differentiation between men and women (Dixon & Jones, 2006). It is an ill-explored marker yet an empirical given (McDowell & Sharp, 2014). Researchers measure variables for men and women separately to understand their unique spatial experiences (Dixon & Jones, 2006). Gender as a social relation works to understand "the social relations that link men and women in complex ways" (Dixon and Jones, 2006, p. 49). Structural frameworks like patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism normalize certain masculinities and femininities in relation to each other. Kimberle Crenshaw's (1991) notion of intersectionality is infamous. It serves to analyze how multiple power structures overlap and converge to produce unique forms of oppression, ushering in an analytic shift "from addition ... toward a multiplication and thus transformation " (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 4).

Finally, gender can also be conceptualized as social construction that is as a process. Gender identity is continuously created and re-created out of human (inter)actions. As McDowell (1999) contends "The subject ... rather than being a fixed and stable entity which enters into social relations with its gender in place, is always fluid and provisional, in the process of becoming" (p. 22). Judith Butler's (1999) notion of performativity is highly influential: gender is something that is done not something one can be. For gender to make sense, it relies on a further matrix: "relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire" (Butler, 1999, p. 17). In other words, sex and gender are intertwined in the hegemonic, binary model of gender intelligibility (Callis, 2009).

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is a critical approach that unpacks and counters legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Its name does not imply a time after colonialism, rather a desire to push past and beyond the conceptual primacy of colonialism (Jazeel, 2019). Unequal encounters between the West and non-West continue to shape present day cultural, political, economic, and social structures. As Bhabha (1994) sums up, postcolonialism intervenes in that which continues to “give hegemonic “normality” to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities and peoples” (p. 245-246).

Postcolonial theory’s intellectual background is contested. Some locate its antecedents in early twentieth century anti-colonial movements (Sidaway, 2017). Others tie its origins to more recent literary and linguistic studies (Loomba, 1998). Still further, scholars like Gandhi (2019) place postcolonialism at the intersection of Marxist and post-structuralist thought where critiques of European capitalism collide with Foucault’s notion of discourse. Its heterogeneity signals rich inter-disciplinary engagement and internal tensions as postcolonial theory sits uncomfortably inside of and working against the academy (Williams and Chrisman, 2020).

Notwithstanding these debates, Edward Said’s 1978 book *Orientalism* is viewed as one key text for what would become the field of postcolonial studies and sparking in particular a disciplinary focus on discourse and the relationship between power and knowledge (Mongia, 2021). Said (1978) argues that the thing we think of as the Orient did not exist before the colonial era but was created through it, discursively. He demonstrates how a constellation of colonial literature, geography, art, and exploration produced supposed knowledge about far away people and places and, intertwined with moral judgements, substantiated a worldview in which the Orient emerges with a slew of negative traits and as the Other, in contrast to the West as superior and the Self. It is the production and dissemination of knowledge, Said contends, that has the power to bring a certain reality into being and which allows for the deployment of specific forms of control over Others.

While spatially articulated, it is important to clarify here that the terms West or Western are not geographic statements, *per se*. The reverse is also true (East or Eastern). Postcolonial scholars use this term to capture a myriad of actors that embody a common set of power-laden values (like reason, science, and modernity) and claim them to be universal, ahistorical, and positively true (Mongia, 2021). It is a Eurocentric term in the sense that it emerges from European colonial powers of the last five hundred years but is also sufficiently flexible to capture their evolution over time and space. Today, countries and geopolitical networks have replaced empires, globalization has reshuffled civilizations, and new norms like development and liberalism have emerged from their civilizing ancestors. Postcolonial scholars will locate their inquiries within specific contexts but as a framing concept, the West ensures connection with the past always remains visible.

Indeed, an Orientalist framework continues to shape contemporary power relations and how the West understands, comes to know, and exercise power over the Other (Mongia, *ibid*). Postcolonial critiques provide an opportunity to ‘write back’, an act of resistance from the

margins or the subaltern to dismantle and remake modes of knowledge production. Many influential works such as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin's (1989) *The Empire Writes Back* and Homi Bhaba's (1994) concept of Third Space focus on finding new frameworks to produce new histories from new locations. However, others are less convinced that the same forms of knowledge production can truly capture or speak for the subaltern (Spivak, 1988) or "native" (Dirlik, 1994), particularly when done overwhelmingly within Western academies.

Here, postcolonial feminism has been particularly helpful in further complicating the gendered and racial power relations bound up in colonialism and postcolonialism. As explained previously, mainstream white Western feminism is guilty at times of reducing Third World Women into a monolithic non-white collective that shares homogenous oppression despite vast diversity and experiences. In her two iterations of *Under Western Eyes* (1984; 2003), Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that Western feminisms are re-imperialising the non-Western world by contrasting the oppressed Third World Woman to liberated First World Women. Postcolonial feminists must work to disrupt the imposed coherence of categories such as woman and Third World Woman in favour of more nuanced scholarship and to forge solidarity through difference.

Rich postcolonial and feminist traditions are anchored in the Caribbean, including Haiti. These contributions will be highlighted in the sections that follow.

Bringing it all Together: Feminist Geographies and Postcolonial Theory

With the broad contours of feminist geographies and postcolonial theory established, I now turn to their engagement with space, the modern sovereign territorial state, and the nation. Foucault's (1978) sovereignty and governmentality feature throughout. Doing so draws together the necessary conceptual materials to develop my analytical framework. It is also worth noting that feminist geographies and postcolonial theory do not always appear equally. That is, sometimes one has more to offer than the other to a particular section.

Space

Space is fundamental to geography but as with all good concepts, means "different things to different people at different times and in different places" (Livingstone, 1992, p. 7). Previously, I introduced the two main spatial perspectives: absolute and relational space. Absolute perspectives view space as a static container within which objects have a discernable (and absolute) location (Hubbard & Kitchin, 2010). By contrast, scholars such as Doreen Massey, Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Edward Soja advocate for a relational view of space as relative, contingent, and active. While absolute space dominates most disciplines, the important rise of relational views is largely thanks to the spatial turn of geography outlined previously (Soja, 2009).

This thesis aligns its view of space with relational scholars, in particular feminist geographer Doreen Massey. As Christophers et al. (2018) state at the opening one collection of her influential essays "Doreen Massey changed geography" (p. 1). Indeed, many of her spatial insights developed over five decades of theorising are now mainstays of geographic thought. Their common-sense-ness today however, should not erase just how much they reshaped the

ways in which scholars think about space and their continued utility (Featherstone & Painter, 2013).

Massey (2005) contends that space is a product and producer of interrelations, always in the process of being made. She argues that space is made through interactions between people and processes and in turn, space shapes them back. Put another way, people and things make space and space makes people and things. This plurality of actors, influences, and experiences makes space political and multiple or, as Massey terms it, the “dimension of multiplicity” (Edmonds & Warburton, 2013, 4:15). Diverse trajectories are constantly coming together and intersecting in various formations. Multiplicity makes space heterogeneous, unstable, and inherently open, and therefore full of “contingencies” (Peck, 2013, p. 102). That is, there are always alternate possible formations.

Massey (1992) famously took issue with scholars (notably Laclau) who argued that time is dynamic and political, while space is separate and neither. Massey (*ibid*) writes of this view:

Here, then, any postulated causal structure which is complete and self-determining is labelled ‘spatial’ ... In contrast to the closed and self-determining systems of the spatial, Time (or temporality) for Laclau takes the form of dislocation, a dynamic which disrupts the predefined terms of any system of causality. The spatial, because it lacks dislocation, is devoid of the possibility of politics (p. 68).

By contrast, when space is viewed as constituted by multiple (infinite) interactions simultaneously, it also takes on disruptive possibilities. That is, multiplicity provides an opening to reimagine space in more equal ways (Fortuijn et al., 2004). Much of Massey’s work applied this political critique to hegemonic ideologies (such as neoliberalism) and their spatial relations, (1999). In doing so, she critiques their supposed universal application and the mantra of an absence of alternatives. Relatedly, Massey (2005) encourages thinking beyond dualisms and dichotomies, pushing past the Western ontological tendency to couple things in simple, A/not-A terms. Dominance/resistance, centre/margin, space/time are undone not to deny inequality but to radically rethink power in terms of “entanglements” and the ways in which it can be (re)ordered (Massey, 1999, p. 279).

It may not come as a surprise then that Massey’s theory of space is explicitly feminist. From her pioneering works like *Spatial Divisions of Labour* (1984), *A Woman’s Place* (1984), and *Flexible Sexism* (1991), Massey rejects the masculinist gaze cast upon spatial relations, overlooking gender relations or dismissing them in essentialist terms. Her concept of power-geometries further centres an analysis of difference. Building on the multiplicity of interrelations and identities, Massey’s power geometries (1993) acknowledges different social groups’ different positioning in relation to power. She argues that understanding and experience of space is defined not only by capital or even by gender but by all axes of differentiation: race, ethnicity, ability, citizenship, and so on. As feminist praxis compels, theory must also continue into action. Thus, Massey’s theory of space and power-geometries is a political commitment or as Kitchen (2016) writes, she wasn’t “just thinking about a progressive politics but also to trying to create and enact such politics” (p. 815).

Doreen Massey provided inspiration for the next generations of geographers as well as a wider audience across the social sciences and beyond. So as not to overstate her influence however, it is worthwhile to clarify that not everything in the discipline of geography nor everything space related outside of geography flows from her work (obviously). Instead, I, like many, others use Doreen Massey's theory of space as an analytical starting point and a theoretical framework through which to understand and reimagine space. As previously stated, my focus on three specific concepts (the modern, territory, and nation) should not be read as an attempt to overview all of geography's spatial theorizing let alone Doreen Massey's legacy. Rather, my decision to do so is driven only by the need to establish the necessary conceptual foundation to support this particular research's analysis.

The Modern State

Countries, or states², are a familiar feature of today's world. Generally, they are accepted as sovereign territorial political entities. Maps with neat territorial blocks coloured in give the impression of an objective thing with natural and even eternal configurations. However, this present-day international political ordering is far from a given (El-Gendi, 2015).

Political theorists celebrate the 1648 Treaties of Westphalia for ushering the era of the modern state. Before, politics in Europe were a continuous struggle of dynastic ambition, religious dominance, and territorial conquest (El-Gendi, 2015). The signing at Westphalia codified three norms: the notion of equal sovereignty, internal competence for domestic jurisdiction, and territorial preservation of existing boundaries (Elden, 2006, p. 11). These features make up the foundation of the present-day inter-state or international system and the ideal model which any existing or aspiration political community is expected to embrace (Axtmann, 2004).

However, it turns out that the history of the modern state is a myth. As Osiander (2001) famously found, there were never any Westphalian norms in the treaties signed at Westphalia. They emerge centuries later in writings canonized by international relations scholars. According to Skinner (2010), an actual genealogy of the state instead reveals "the contingent and contestable character of the concept" (p. 27). Its meaning today is a feat of deciding history and writing it in hindsight (Kantola, 2015). As Haitian scholar Michel Rolph-Trouillot (1995) argues, power plays a fundamental role in the production of this history. What facts are recorded, how narratives are arranged, and whose voices are heard or silenced are matters of power relations, not so-called objectivity. It is necessary then to look critically at histories and with an eye to the power structures a particular (his)story serves to uphold.

This thesis shares a critical perspective on the myth of the modern state. That is not to say that no states exist but rather, to destabilize the taken-for-grantedness of its normative construction. Identifying the myth of the modern state enables the productive unpacking of its sustaining discursive structures and gendered and raced relations of power it produces.

² I use the terms state and country interchangeably but recognize this approach is not accepted by all. This is distinct from the use of nation which refers to a group of people that perceive themselves to be part of a shared community.

Three postcolonial findings on the modern state are relevant to this research, as well as feminist commentary. First, as Osiander (2001) underscores, it is no mere coincidence that the classical European system is conveniently the prototype. It is a function of the Eurocentrism of the concept and its creators. On the one hand, the myth of the modern state relies on a woefully deficient historical record which omits huge parts of the history and the globe. On the other, it serves to delegitimize other political arrangements and erase these possibilities from future view (Bauder & Mueller, 2023). Second, the modern state system emerges at precisely the same time as colonialism rages, putting Europe's so-called principled Westphalian nature side by side with brutal imperial conquests. By accounting for rather than ignoring this history, Bhambra (2018) argues that external domination becomes a constitutive aspect of the so-called modern state which in turn opens up new ways of thinking through the present day international system, politically.

Third, and returning to Trouillot (1995), the case of 'exceptional' Haiti demonstrates the strategic mis/use of the myth of the modern state. That is, the status of modern state is not equally or always available to all, even if Others mirror European counterparts or otherwise meet Westphalian criteria. As Trouillot (ibid) explains, the black slave-led Haitian Revolution of 1804 is a continuation of the oft-celebrated French and American revolutionary triumphs. However, Haiti's self-determination defied the colonial and racial hierarchies *du jure*, thus the growing list of modern states ostracized rather than welcomed Haiti into their budding international system. Today, Haiti's exceptional status remains intact and racialized tropes of black inferiority are used to justify it as an ungovernable anomaly, obscuring the role of foreign forces in Haiti's challenges while ensuring the sanctity of the myth of the modern state remains unscathed.

Finally, as MacKinnon (1989) argues plainly, "the state is male in the feminist sense" (p. 162). This is not simply a comment on women's participation (although gender representation in politics is woefully unbalanced), it is about privileging norms associated with masculinity and setting up all sorts of institutions on such logics. The gendered division of public and private realms is one such example, but Froc (2020) extends her critique much further to masculine-coded phenomena deemed modern-state worthy like "boundaries, militarism and 'toughness', or rationality and economic efficiency" (p. 122). Repeated enough times the logics appear neutral and objective and normalize the devaluing of that which is feminine.

Sovereignty and Territory

Sovereignty, in its traditional political form, is the heart of the modern state. According to Storey (2017), sovereignty is the legitimate "authority of a state to rule over its territory and the people within its borders, without external interference" (p. 118). However, Foucault took issue with political obsession for sovereignty and its simplistic conception of power. According to Foucault (1978), power is not a thing that one has or does not have. Rather, power is defined by how it is exercised (techniques) and its effects.

A classic reading of Foucault (1978) defines sovereignty as the power over death or the right to kill. Such arrangements command obedience and punishment is intentionally violent,

excessive, and spectacular. Foucault (ibid) continues that over time, power disperses from the monarch to a prohibitive juridical form that makes and enforces rules, and holds a monopoly on legitimate violence. Subsequently, power gives way to disciplinary forms that construct internal obedience and control of individuals. Finally, biopower (later governmentality) that shifts focus completely from power over death to power over life (Foucault, 2009).

This thesis aligns itself with Foucault's conceptualization of power and in particular, his notion of governmentality will prove crucial. However, it disagrees with Foucault's hasty abandonment of political sovereignty for more contemporary forms of power. Whether real or myth, the modern state remains a hegemonic actor in domestic contexts and the current international system and what it says about sovereignty matters. Put another way, Foucault may be more *right* in his definition of sovereign power but what functions as truth is not merely an exercise in objectivity. The modern state's continued belief in the idea of political sovereignty is enough to make it real and keep it alive, in some sense. Further, as geographers Rose-Redwood (2006) and Agnew (1994) lament, abandoning political sovereignty means territory is easily overlooked, too.

The myth of the modern state is profoundly spatial, even if sometimes left implicit. Max Weber, for example, defines a state as, among other things "... a compulsory organization with a territorial basis" (1968, p. 56). Here, territory is bounded and homogenous, a requirement for existence (Storey, 2017). The territorial form of the state is so often assumed that Painter (2010) identifies its use as "an expression of human nature" and a "right" (p. 1093).

Geographer John Agnew (1994) famously calls this view the territorial trap. It takes for granted a number of problematic assumptions: that states are fixed and natural units of space, that their boundaries are clear, and that control is absolute, among others. Most egregious, it prevents inquiries into processes through which territory as state space is produced and transformed (Brenner & Elden, 2009). Although this trapped view of territory is acknowledged as an ideal rather than reality, it remains the basis of the international system. As Painter (2010) affirms, "Such assumptions underpin many of the official doctrines of international relations as they have been generally understood by state elites and frequently enshrined in international law" (p. 1095).

This thesis, indebted to the work of Henri Lefebvre, views territory as a particular kind of state space: "territory is a [historically specific] political form of space produced by and associated with the modern state" (quoted in Brenner & Elden, 2009, p. 362 - 263). Territory is not a discrete object, but a process and product indivisible from the modern state (Elden, 2013). I extend this definition through Foucault's notion of governmentality and assert that territory is also a political strategy. Space must be constructed and rendered visible if power is to be exercised over and through it.

Building on definitions of Foucault's distinct forms of power offered previously, governmentality is defined as the conduct of conduct. In Foucault's (2009) words, it is that "which has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument" (p. 107-108). Distinct from repressive or individual forms of power, governmentality (and biopower) is productive and

concerned with fostering life at the level of the population. It works from a distance to arrange the right order of things so that people behave as they ought to and maximize the well-being of the population. Self-interest and self-government converge in a matrix of the right conditions.

This thesis contends that territory is one such condition and must be constructed at a distance, continually. Political techniques rationalize space into something manageable and consumable, in particular through cartographic perspectives. In other words, space is measured, directed, and standardized to enable its government and of men and things (Elden, 2013a). Space becomes places, public and private realms are defined and their appropriate use. For Lefebvre (1974), motorways, canals, railroads, commercial and financial circuits, knit territory and government together. Within and between, "... movements and flows are regulated in ways which enable authorities [and individuals] to act" (O'Tuathail & Toal, 1996, p. 83).

Much like the modern state, sovereignty and territory are appear objective by design but again, postcolonial scholars problematize this assumption (Mahmud, 2007). A full account of colonial rationale is outside the scope of this research but suffice it to say, to justify colonization, Western powers defined a series of pre-requisites for statehood, from civilization to productive land use (Nuzzo, 2017). In its absence, the rest of the world could have no claim to territory or self-determination. It wouldn't be until the twentieth century that then-colonies would be allowed to make territorial and sovereign claims however, decolonization has not fundamentally reversed the global power dynamics at play. The international system remains hierarchical and contingent.

As Agnew (2019) states "States are neither born equal nor can a dominant position relative to others be equally available to all" (p. 263). Colonial powers cum Western states continue to claim exclusivity for the international system's normative interpretation (Nuzzo, 2017). Territory, it turns out, is fickle. Once Westphalian, bounded and homogenous, territory is no longer immutable – but only for some unlucky states. The same can be said for sovereignty. New international norms like the responsibility to protect and failed state justify the suspension of traditional Westphalian principles and legitimize intervention.

While perhaps an oversimplification of complex changes, the pattern of intervention takes on a familiar dynamic in which the old colonial powers assign themselves as the guardian over and arbitrator of all Others. Indeed, Gordon (1997) does not find the evolution of Westphalian norms surprising. Saving failed states, she argues, is just a neocolonial project. The same Western powers rely on old colonial assumptions to legitimize new forms of conservatorship. So long as non-Europeans remain the Other, "It then becomes not only possible, but also perfectly reasonable, to prescribe solutions that "we," the civilized West,' perceive will best address problems." (p. 910).

Nation and Identity (Nationalism)

A nation refers to a group of people who perceive themselves as part of a shared community. This thesis draws on Benedict Anderson's (2006) definition "imagined political community – and imagined as inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). Most members of a nation do not actually know and will never meet but remain connected by a mental "horizontal

comradeship” (Anderson, 2006, p. 7). Today, nation is often combined with state to form the term nation-state. This denotes the whole overlap or congruent fitting of the two terms. Although this is far from a practical reality, this “fiction” has been highly successful (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 11). Nationalism is the cultural and political process by which such fiction is realized.

Scholars are divided on what constitutes a nation and, by extension, which common characteristics should count. German political theorist Johann Gottfried Herder (ref) identifies three categories: Volknation (the myth of common descent), the Kulturnation (common culture, religion, or language), and Staatnation (loyalty and solidarity based on common values) (Yuval-Davis, 1997). More often, defining a nation boils down to a civic versus ethnic debate. The former conceives of the nation in civic terms as a “political-legal community of citizens” (Antonsich, 2015, p. 300). The latter views nation through a lens of ethnicity and defines as a “community of common descent” (Antonsich, 2015, p. 300).

This thesis contends that nation is a relative and malleable concept, produced and reproduced by its constituent parts. I acknowledge the state is but one actor in a relational process that is, as Antonsich (2015) summarizes, “an intermittent and contingent phenomenon ... reconceptualized as a category of practice activated in daily contexts, the nation thus becomes an object of analysis in discursive terms” (p. 301-302). Nevertheless, I maintain a substantive focus on the role of the state due to material selected for analysis (explained in Chapter 4).

The state is often central to producing the nation. States make national symbols like flags, craft national myths in the form histories and dictate the all-important curriculum for educational systems. These top-down nationalist strategies rely on the ability to effectively deploy state power and to turn history into a sort of exceptionalism. In his 2021 publication *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, Haitian scholar Robert Fatton adds the internal production of Haiti’s exceptionalism to Trouillot’s (1995) external analysis by examining Haiti’s national mythology. Among his findings is that *the first black republic in the world* was once a powerful rallying cry but now is used by political elites to legitimize their rule and mask inequalities. He writes:

These appeals are now falling on the deaf ears of the majority of the population, which is no longer prepared to accept vain claims of black independence and resistance. Haitian exceptionalism has become nothing more than a symbolic invocation of the revolutionary past hiding the country’s [current] dependence on foreign actors (ibid, p. 6).

Moreover, state-centric views of the nation tend to leave some, like women, on the outside. Feminists show how women are called on to reproduce the nation biologically and culturally but simultaneously omitted from traditional public realms. In their influential book *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, Rena Lewis and Sara Mills (2003) also identify the problematic use of femininity, the female body, and women in anti-colonial mobilizations, where the non-existent *she* comes to symbolize a pre-colonial ideal to be returned to and upon which to build/defend a new nation. What often follows, however, are postcolonial states with familiar sets of unequal gendered power relations. Here, feminist critiques add to a rich body of work on the complexity of postcolonial state building and identity formation, including the re-production of and struggle against imperialist ideology in new hybrid forms (Fanon, 2008).

This thesis builds on feminist approaches to the nation through the concept of politics of belonging. Most simply defined, this is “the dirty work of boundary maintenance” (Crowley, 1999, p. 16). But I turn to Nira Yuval-Davis’ (2011) framework for further comment. The politics of belonging is the collective construction of identity-based inclusion and exclusion for a specific political project. She summarizes:

[it] involves not only the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers but also their contestation and challenge by other political agents ... such political agents struggle both for the promotion of their specific projects in the construction of their collectivity and its boundaries and, at the same time, use these ideologies and projects in order to promote their own power positions within and outside the collectivity (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 205).

The concept of citizenship rests at the heart of the politics of belonging. A classic definition is offered by Marshall (1950) “full membership of the community, with all its rights and responsibilities” (p. 8). As mentioned, whether this should be understood primarily in relation to the nation-state or other political communities like ethnic, religious, or regional groups is up for debate. Here, Yuval-Davis (2011) prefers to ask the question “what is required of an individual to belong?” (p. 3). Depending on the political project *du jure* this could be common birthplace, common culture, or common values. Whatever the marker, the divide between us and them is necessary for mythical and material unity, who is in and out of place (Yuval-Davis, 2006). At the same time, migration, displacement, and diaspora fundamentally complicate the spatiality of the politics of belonging.

Chapter Four: Methodology: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

This chapter outlines and justifies my research design and methodology: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). I agree with Mullet (2018) that, in general, all discourse analyses follow a seven-step structure but differ in the tools applied to analyze the data in the “middle steps” (p. 123). Therefore, this chapter focuses in particular on the so-called middle steps.

I begin by introducing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a group of hermeneutic qualitative research methodologies that examine the relationship between language and power (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). I then present the specific methodology selected for this research: Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) which brings feminist perspectives and praxis to critical discourse analysis and an explicitly political agenda. Waitt (2005) and Rose (2001) help to translate FCDA into the realm of geography, specifically.

I present four reasons which justify my choice of FCDA for this research. First, it enables analysis of talk and text beyond the level of language. Second, it mobilizes nuanced engagement with power, including gender analysis where the gendered operation of power is not visible from the surface. Third, by design, FCDA is interdisciplinary and applicable to disaster studies, feminist geographies, and postcolonial theory. Finally, it aligns with the emancipatory objectives of this feminist research.

I apply this FCDA approach to the following research questions and preview how this thesis will progress through Mullet’s (2018) seven-step structure to answer them:

- 1) How is space conceptualised in Haiti’s recovery and reconstruction following the 2010 earthquake?
- 2) What are the roles of spatial discourses in Haiti’s disaster *refondation*?
- 3) How can feminist geographies and postcolonial studies contribute to enhancing knowledge and theory in disaster studies?

In closing, this chapter addresses common critiques of discourse analysis and the limitations of this research, namely around language and data availability. In closing, I offer an expanded statement on positionality.

Introducing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a cluster of hermeneutic qualitative research approaches that aim to make visible what is taken for granted in everyday talk and text. Meaning, CDA contends, is tied to power and manifested in language (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In other words, communicative events offer glimpses into and behind structural relationships. By analyzing talk and text, CDA identifies forces at play behind their creation. As Bryman and Bell (2019) explain, CDA is both critical and transformative, it is “a commitment to social change and empowerment of the oppressed” (p. 298).

What discourse analysis aims to do is perhaps more straightforward than how it is done (Mullet 2018; Tenorio 2011). Nearly all key authors in the field have put forward distinct methodological approaches (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). For example, Fairclough's (2010) four-step Dialectical-Relational Approach draws on the Marxist tradition and Halliday's system functional linguistics, while Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) reflects rigorous attention to discourses' temporal formations and context (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). Further, Tuen van Dijk's (2017) Socio-Cognitive Discourse Analysis adds dimensions of psychology and cognition. This array of approaches is further complicated by the cohort of authors who prefer to leave guidelines implicit or as something one should learn by doing (Waitt, 2005).

To help make sense, Mullet (2018) clarifies the difference between approaches is concentrated in the middle steps and the tools use to scrutinize data. The majority of discourse analyses adhere to a generalized seven-step structure: select topic, locate then contextualize materials, code themes, analyse discourse (internally), analyse discourse (externally), and draw conclusions. This thesis takes Mullet's (2018) generalized structure as its starting point and will turn to feminism to guide the selection of tools for its middle steps.

Before doing so, it is helpful to re-clarify this thesis' use of the term *discourse*, as each discipline (and discourse analysis) can come with its own interpretation (Cummings, 2020). A common differentiation is made between linguists' discourse and social sciences' discourse. The former treat language as a "system of systems" and are interested in the "abstract form and structure of language" whereas the latter are concerned with language as a means to investigate social phenomenon. (Cameron, 2001, p. 13). This thesis adheres to the social sciences tradition and specifically, a Foucauldian interpretation of discourse.

According to Foucault, discourse is a "group of statements that belong to a single system of formation" (1972, p. 107). It is the structure and pattern that makes language meaningful. Put another way, it is the framework which determines what can be said and understood and by whom. Discourse is indivisible from power and knowledge. Foucault continues, "Knowledge is that of which one can speak in a discursive practice, and which is specified by that fact" (1972, p. 182). Together, power and knowledge make a truth possible – the accepted, the norm, common sense – over other possibilities. (Waitt, 2005). Thus, discourse makes the world thinkable and knowable and in doing so, brings into being that of which is speaks.

Selecting a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

Gender is an important factor in power relations. Hegemonic social orders are built atop the unequal and binary construction of men and women which privilege the former and disempower the latter. Difference within these so-called categories intertwine gender within a myriad of oppressive social orders. For Michelle Lazar (2007), CDA must attend to the links between gender and power and how "taken-for granted gender assumptions" are discursively constructed across time and place (p. 142). A distinct feminist critical discourse analysis is warranted.

This thesis employs Michelle Lazar's (2005) Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). Put simply, FCDA brings feminist perspectives to critical discourse analysis. Lazar (2013) explains more fully, FCDA "seeks to examine the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and power asymmetries get discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and contested in specific communities and discourse contexts" (p. 182). In doing so, it embraces the critical leanings of feminism to advance an overtly political agenda and challenge that which sustains a patriarchal social order.

I selected a FCDA for four primary reasons. First, because it enables analysis of talk and text beyond the level of language. Discourses operate subtly, as Foucault (1972) has demonstrated. FCDA offers a sophisticated framework within which to interrogate communicative events and the relationship between language and ideology. Because my research questions are concerned with ideas and beliefs about space (not just its material forms), I must be able to locate and engage with nuanced references to space, whether implicit or explicit. FCDA facilitates such scrutiny of data, including discursive representations and discursive strategies employed subtly in texts.

Second, I selected a FCDA because it mobilizes nuanced engagement with power. FCDA accepts a wide variety of institutional and non-institutional actors as imbued with power and therefore enmeshed in power relations (Lazar, 2014). From this vantage point, FCDA facilitates analysis of power as something in motion not simply in terms of presence or absence. Therefore, it enables texts to be viewed as active and in action. My approach to Haiti's master disaster texts requires a framework that understands policy documents as a type of claim, both to the present reality and a particular vision of the future. A FCDA enables engagement with the PDNA and PARDH as acts of discursive negotiation.

Extending this rationale, FCDA also excels in bringing feminist perspectives to what may appear to be a gender-neutral question like space in Haiti's master disaster texts. FCDA views gender as an ideological structure. It looks within but also beyond the categories of men and women to locate the social and material practices which sustain gendered hierarchies (Lazar, *ibid*). Images, speech and text which do not visibly include gender issues or focus on male and female experiences may otherwise be difficult to analyse. Put another way, FCDA is decidedly applicable beyond so-called women's issues and precisely in texts where some might argue there is no need for a gender analysis because the gendered workings of power are not visible from the surface.

Third, by design, FCDA is interdisciplinary. This includes, on one hand, benefiting from the theoretical inspirations of poststructuralism, postcolonial, and critical discourse analysis in its creation. On the other, Lazar (*ibid*) encourages scholars to apply FCDA in a range of wider endeavours and to draw on supplementary analytical tools to bridge the disciplinary divides, as needed. Unequal and gendered structures manifest across contexts. To understand the full picture, investigation and collaboration is needed between disciplines. As Lazar (*ibid*) states, "Only by working together can parts of the complex problem be understood and considered interventions proposed" (p. 183).

Thus, in applying its FCDA this thesis considers strategies recommended by Waitt (2005) and Rose (2001) for human geographers. Doing so helps to translate FCDA to the realm of geography, specifically, and to locate the operation of discourse in shaping the relations between people and places. Waitt (2005) and Rose (2001) encourage geographers to look for the effects of truth or mechanisms of persuasion whereby truth claims are enabled. This includes the use of science-back statements or quantifiable methods like statistics and mapping. Even photographs are used as convincing reflections of reality. For example, postcards can provide a seemingly true reflection of a tourist destination, but hide a myriad of interventions (lighting, retouching, cropping, etc.) that work to shape a particular image and feeling of a place.

What is not said or who is rendered silent is equally important. Continuing the postcard example, when non-tourist attractions are excluded from the image of what a country or city is all about, it can justify their marginalization in other contexts. Governments may consider them less important in budget and planning exercises or completely excluded from the future envisioned. As Waitt (2005) summarizes, the “active presence of the invisible” offers insight into who or what does not belong, and by extension, the conception of the world as it ought to be according to the author (p. 181). Lastly, Waitt (2005) and Rose (2001) view inconsistencies as significant for geographers because no discourse is totalizing in practice. That is, talk and text are an act of discursive negotiation amongst multiple actors and ideologies for hegemony (what is true or mainstream). Inconsistencies are cracks in armour where marginal, opposed, or alternative discourses can peak through. In other words, incoherence points to competing visions of reality and the future.

Finally, I selected a FCDA because it aligns with the emancipatory objectives of this feminist research. FCDA is openly committed, as Lazar (2005) explains, to the “achievement of a just social order through the critique of discourse” (p. 5). It is not enough to simply point out problems or inequalities, feminist researchers have an obligation to do something about it. The transformation of feminist theory into action is called *praxis* and it is considered one of the five tenants of feminism (Hesse-Biber, 2013). This FCDA is therefore a form of “analytical resistance” that contributes to the ongoing communities of struggle for a more just and equitable world (Lazar 2014, p. 184).

In sum, applying a FCDA to Haiti’s master disaster texts supported by Waitt (2005) and Rose (2011) will enable me to show how space operates discursively in *refondation* and help to unpack the power bound up in the world it reimagines. These new insights I generate will help to raise “critical awareness” which underpins feminist strategies for resistance and change (Lazar, 2013, p. 184).

Applying a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA)

In line with Mullet’s (2018) framework, this FCDA begins with the selection of its topic. I embrace the tangled nature of the personal and political in feminist research, and the power of writing personally. As Gregson & Rose (2013) argue:

if we are to challenge the dispassionate, disembodied, distant, masculine voice
and to contest the ways in which this marginalises and trivialises the personal

as feminine, then we have to both expose the former and reclaim the latter, for writing personally is central to notions of situated knowledge and to fully contextual versions of writing history (p. 24)

I was introduced to Sidney Mintz during my undergraduate degree. His book *Sweetness and Power* (1985) traces the production and consumption of sugar across continents and centuries. Sugar, it turns out, was at the heart of the colonial project. Sugar brought slavery to Haiti, then revolution and the first independent black republic in the world. It is also at the heart of a centuries long rift between the Haitian State and its nation explored in Chapter Five (Trouillot, 1990).

Mintz' work has stayed with me, as has an interest in Haiti. I have watched troubling headlines roll by from botched elections, rampant poverty and disaster to gang violence and failed democracy. While Haiti's "bad press" is unfortunately no new phenomenon, its perpetuity motivated me to revisit my interest (Mason, 2011).

I have outlined previously the three reasons why the 2010 earthquake is a valuable entry point for academic inquiry, but they are worth restating here. In sum, it is because the earthquake still matters. It remains a defining and active issue in research and in the national and international consciousnesses (Glover, 2012). Further, the scale and impact of the earthquake are unmatched. Even the deadliest disasters in the years since have not come close to the more than 200,000 lives lost on January 12, 2010. Finally, the reconstruction envisioned by the build back better slogan adopted in its wake is far from complete. In fact, the intervening decade has seen more – not less – calamitous unfoldings in Haiti.

Intrigued by the added complexity and passage of time, I turned to disaster studies for answers. Instead, I found more questions. The ideological and material production of disaster are hotly contested and diverging views propose differing solutions (Quarantelli, 1998). A review of the literature identified siloed tendencies and a lack of engagement with theoretical advances in the wider social sciences. As outlined in Chapter Two: Literature Review, this includes elements of space and spatiality, as well as power from explicitly postcolonial and feminist lenses. Research questions were developed accordingly, completing Mullet's (2018) first step.

Next, I proceeded to Mullet's (2018) second step: locating data sources. This research's concern with discourse demands documents that capture dominant ideologies that shape what disaster and recovery mean. On one hand, this is a highly localized and individualized experience. On the other, the growing influence and reach of the international disaster management architecture is homogenizing responses. Wisner et al. (2004) argue multilateral forums and processes are highly influential in disaster thinking and action. International commitments, decisions, agendas and objectives are now the "internationally agreed yardsticks" and set out "numerical targets and quantifiable indicators to assess progress" (Wisner et al, 2004, p. 325). It follows that documents produced within this international system, and which seek to direct, govern, or otherwise coordinate responses would be of particular relevance.

Three inter-related documents were located. Two were ultimately selected for analysis: Haiti's Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and the Action Plan for National Recovery and

Development of Haiti: Key initiatives for the future (PARDH). Although a continuation, the third document, the Strategic Plan for the Development of Haiti: Emerging country by 2030 (PSDH), was excluded because it was published two years after the PDNA and PARDH, only available in French, and is more than 400 pages, exceeding the scope of feasibility for this research.

The PDNA and PARDH represent the official Government of Haiti recovery and reconstruction narrative. At the same time are complex national articulations of an internationalized process. That is, they are country specific outputs of an agreed international framework within which disasters in all their facets are managed. PDNAs are a standardized post-disaster tool that provides “an objective, comprehensive and government-led assessment [of damages and needs], paving the way for a consolidated recovery framework” (EU, GRDRR & UNDP, 2013, p. 3). Action Plans (since renamed Disaster Recovery Frameworks or DFRs) follow within 45 days and articulate a vision, strategy, priorities, and actions, as well as financing and monitoring mechanisms. The importance of agreed strategies, mechanisms, and tools for cooperation is enshrined in the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 - 2030).

Once selected, the PDNA and PARDH were read several times for familiarity. I established basic information including authorship, intended audience, and distribution. Contents, structure, and make-up of the documents were likewise noted, completing Mullet’s (2018) third step. Next, I performed preliminary coding whereby pen and highlighter was used to identify instances and invocations of space and spatiality in the text. Non-textual elements such as pictures and design were also considered. Through this initial and internal coding, I identified six themes (presented in Chapter Six). Although not required by Mullet’s (2018) fourth step, a second, closer read was performed in qualitative research software NVivo to refine initial themes. Given time constraints, only the PARDH was re-visited. Saturation was achieved when review of the data revealed no new findings.

Subsequent rounds of internal and external analysis, Mullet’s (2018) fifth and sixth steps, were iterative. Outcomes are presented in Chapter Seven. FCDA techniques and a Foucauldian discursive lens were again applied to disentangle the common sense-ness of *refondation* and its spatial dimensions. Feminist geography and postcolonial theory guided analysis of the logic and worldview underpinning findings, and associated actors. Conclusions on implications of space in Haiti’s discursive reconstruction are offered in the discussion chapter of this research, concluding Mullet’s (2018) seven-step process.

Limitations & Positionality

Discourse analysis is in receipt of several critiques. To begin, discourse analysis is reduced by some to a normative judgement, failing to produce valid knowledge (Breeze, 2011; Hammersley, 1997). This research’s detailed and step by step explanation of its analysis is an attempt to write back against such claims and to demonstrate the robustness of its academic inquiry. Political commitments are made known to supports its analytical rigour.

Discourse analysis is also faulted for its lack of methodological consistency or clear epistemological underpinning. I agree, in part, with this point. As outlined previously, the number of diverse methodologies abounds. However, no sensible researcher would attempt to use all available. Instead, this research has consciously surveyed and selected a complementary and tested group of tools to form its methodology as outlined above.

Finally, discourse analysis is critiqued as a focus on just words, overlooking or unable to access the materiality of the world (Loomba, 1998; Slembrouck, 2001). As demonstrated, the two are in fact intertwined. A focus on discourse is to take a particular analytical entry point into the intersecting material and ideological complexity of our world, not to cut one off from the other.

A number of constraints and limitations also impact this research. First, that discourse analysis relies on close reading of text, my non-native speaker of French status meant that French texts could not be considered as data. French is one of Haiti's two official languages. Haitian Creole is the other. The availability of Government of Haiti documents in English depends on a complex mix of authorship and audience. That the PSDH, for example, was only available in French facilitated its exclusion, at least in part. Nevertheless, every effort was made to include French-language scholarship as part of this research's wider analysis, with the additional value-add that Anglophone research on Haiti does not systematically engage its French counterpart, usually.

Data availability posed further challenges. Many Government of Haiti websites do not work and country specific information is not routinely made available online. Where available, consistency remains a challenge. For example, if statistics were collected one year or an annual report fulfilled, it could not be guaranteed for the next year and so on. As a result, non-Government of Haiti sources were frequently used to supplement the analytical rigour of this research.

Finally, it is important to turn on a critical eye inward and acknowledge that the researcher is not separate from the research. As Donna Haraway (1988) asserts, no knowledge is objective. There is always a relationship between the subject and object of inquiry. Feminist scholars have gone to great lengths to demonstrate the significance of situated knowledge and I intend to continue in this tradition. Foregrounding my positionality is a conscious critical approach to work with and through assumptions and values tied to my own identity and location within the world.

As stated, I am a white, middle class cisgender woman born and raised in Canada, writing this thesis on unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin territory. I come from a place of certain privilege and power that shapes how I view the world. My identity and location also make me part of larger processes and dynamics, including white academics from the Global North writing on or about the Global South. I have never been to Haiti let alone Port-au-Prince and I am conscious of its long, continued history of foreign intervention. I acknowledge the all too close relationship between outsiders looking to help and the processes by which voices of Haitians are silenced and their so-called best interests determined in Washington, New York or elsewhere.

I understand my endeavor as located in as opposed to observing the discursive practices this thesis seeks to uncover and examine. In writing, I am required to grasp some version of reality, and to do so with scholarly authority. It has been a conscious choice to select theories and methods that consider power along racial, gendered, and classed lines. Moreover, it is a deliberate choice to focus on the production of truth as opposed to discovering truth itself. When speaking of reality and fact therefore, I am acutely interested in the discursive formations of what functions as true around Haiti, and more so, the ways in which and the mechanisms through which such normative contexts are generated and the activities they sanction.

Finally, I approach this research with humility. I do not expect these efforts will result in completely unbiased research – I do not believe that is possible – nor that it will be without mistakes. I do not speak on behalf of Haiti, the so-called oppressed or all women, and I do not assume that my understanding of inequality and power relations is the same as that those impacted personally by such issues. I do not expect to ever fully resolve these tensions, nor do I believe that is the point. Instead, as a feminist researcher, it is my responsibility to acknowledge, reflect on, and work within these contradictions in completing my thesis.

This acknowledgement rests at the heart of this research's endeavour.

Chapter Five: Introduction to Case Study

This chapter introduces the material and historical foundation for this thesis' case study on the 2010 Haiti earthquake. In other words, I locate and contextualise the data sources used for this research's analysis, Mullet's (2018) second and third steps. The earthquake struck Haiti on January 12 just before 5:00 p.m. local time however, its antecedents began nearly two centuries before.

I begin with reflections on the power of discursive construction and Haiti's long history of foreign meddling. I then trace individual and collective responses to the earthquake and the kicking-in of the international disaster management system. I present Haiti's master disaster texts which followed: the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH). Here, I describe and examine their visual and substantive content. The PDNA and PARDH are joint Haitian and international endeavours, destined for the International Donor Coordination Conference "Towards a New Future for Haiti" on March 31, 2010, in New York. Although different in some ways, they mirror each other in structure and strategy. That is, the PDNA and PARDH combine the "pressing need to act now" with a long-term vision of reconstruction, achievable by proposed solutions to identified problems across various sectors (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 9). The total cost for *refondation* is an estimated USD\$3,864,000,000.

Prelude to the Earthquake

Official statistics paint a grim picture of life in Haiti. Two thirds of the population live on less than US\$4 a day while food insecurity, unemployment, and infant mortality run high (World Bank, 2019). Discourse often characterizes Haiti and Haitians by poverty, victimhood, and criminality, governed by an inept or corrupt state (Balaji, 2011; Mason, 2011; Ulysse, 2015). Lawless (1992) summarizes Haiti's "bad press" as a history of cannibalism, then communism, then zombies, Tonton Macoutes and AIDS, followed by a fraught transition from despotism to democracy (p. 1). Alternatively, Haiti is framed as 200 years of failure (Potter, 2009).

Talk and text are powerful tools. There is no shortage of problematic constructions of Haiti which rationalise and blame the country for its own demise. In fact, Dubois (2017) argues no other country receives such obsessive and negative critiques. Quoting Jean Casimir (2001), he states "Haiti disturbs" because it refuses its prescribed place in the world system and defies whatever the latest logic imposed by foreign forces (p. 17). Stories about Haiti help explain away its exceptionalism without upsetting the convention wisdom that upholds the rest of the international system. They also obscure, as Freeman & MagGuire (2017) put it, "the overwhelming evidence that the root of the country's contemporary ... dilemma is ultimately related not just to its own internal rumbling but also to roles foreign actors played" (p. 2). While a complete retelling of Haiti's history beyond this research's scope, a brief historical overview is provided to inform the following chapters and analysis.

Haiti was once Saint Domingue, a French colony where slave-fuelled plantations produced two thirds of the world's sugar. Its population was roughly 90% black slaves and 10% whites (rich and poor) and free *gens du couleur* (Steckley & Steckley, 2019). In 1804, Haiti

became the first black republic and only successful slave-led revolution in history. Its independence was poorly received by most of the rest of the world. According to Trouillot (1990), Haiti's new leaders believed a return to the plantation system was needed to fend off reinvasion. This, coupled with Haiti's highly stratified society, led to a rift between new urban elites in Port-au-Prince and the rural masses elsewhere. The former were intent to continue a fiscal policy where the peasantry financed the state without having control over it. For several reasons, the rift has been prevented from healing so that as Trouillot (1990) argues, centuries later Haiti remains a state against its own nation.

U.S. Marines invaded Haiti on July 28, 1915, under the official pretext of ending anarchy (Trouillot, 1990). For nineteen brutal years, the military occupation exercised complete control and set about restructuring Haiti to consolidate power around Port-au-Prince (Scheffer, 2020). Among activities, the Marines created a new army (the Haitian Garde) to enforce their plans, which later became a popular pathway to power itself (Dubois, 2017). Leaders trained up through the Garde seized control post-occupation and paved the way for the despotic Duvalier Regime that followed.

Father and son dictator duo Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier ruled Haiti from 1957 – 1986. Papa Doc entertained a fraught relationship with the U.S. Nevertheless, his staunch anti-communist position was enough to keep intervention at bay. Independence did not mean that Haiti boded well (Trouillot, 1990). Duvalier *père's* violent regime brought Haiti to the brink of ruin. The only possibility for survival was through his personal and fickle patronage. Duvalier *fils'* rise in 1971 was a welcome turn for the U.S. and others who found him more cooperative. Preferring the fruits of his father's and peasant's labour over governing, Jean-Claude was content to implement pro-U.S. policies and open up Haiti so long as his pillaging of state coffers was not impacted. Governance was largely left in the hands of outsiders, unregulated, and unaccountable.

The end of the Duvalier reign in 1986 did not heal the rift between the Haitian State and its nation (Fatton Jr., 2017). Instead, Haiti's first democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted by military coup in 1991 (Dupuy, 2006). Following Aristide's return and prompt second ouster in 2004, the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) descended on Haiti and would remain until 2017, to be replaced by the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) until 2019. Under MINUSTAH's watchful eye, René Préval was elected in 2006 and was nearing the end of his term when the earthquake struck.

The Earthquake

On January 12, 2010 at 4:53 p.m., a 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck the town of Léogâne, Haiti roughly 17 kilometers southwest of the capital Port-au-Prince (Camelbeeck et al., 2010). The earthquake physically impacted three administrative divisions as shown in Figure 1: the Departments of Ouest, Sud-est, and Nippes. However, it was the Metropolitan Area of Port-au-Prince that sustained the greatest intensity and concentration of damage. Nearly all hospitals, schools and government buildings were damaged or destroyed (Daniell et al., 2013; Kirsch et al., 2013). Although estimates vary, official Government of Haiti statistics counted 220,000 dead, 300,000 injured and 1.3 million displaced (Government of Haiti, 2010b). The value of damages

and losses was US\$8 billion and US\$12 billion would be required for reconstruction (Government of Haiti, 2010b).

First person accounts of the earthquake abound. The heavy presence of international organizations meant foreigners' stories were first to be heard (Popkin, 2016). The quick arrival of thousands more missionaries, volunteers, and journalists swelled the number of English language publications. Coincidentally, the *crème* of French language writers (including of the Haitian diaspora) were in Port-au-Prince for a literary festival. Popkin (2016) contrasts the resulting "meditative

[francophone] *memoire[s]*" by Dany Laferrière, Yanick Lahens, and Rodney Saint-Éloi with the "active autobiographical protagonists" of the anglophone response (p. 105).

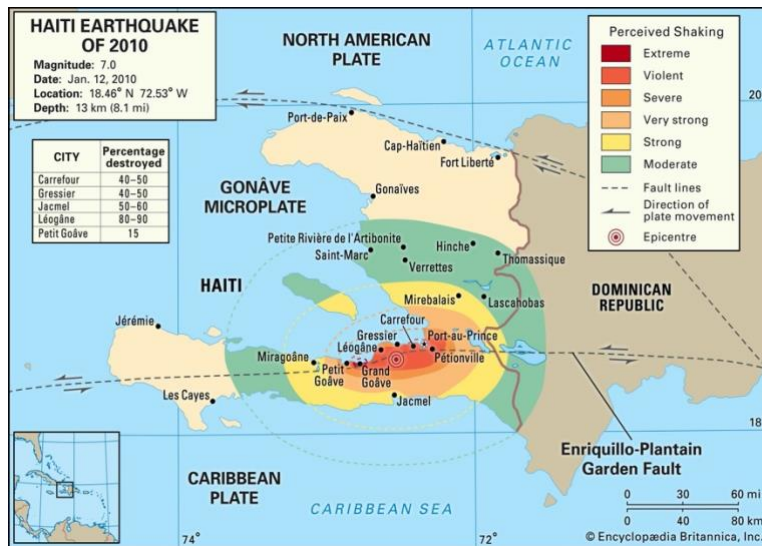


Figure 1 Haiti Earthquake of 2010. Source: Britannica (n.d.).

First person accounts are an intimate interpretation of personal experience and memory. They are also imbedded a contest to determine collective meaning and the historical record (Munro, 2015). As Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) argues, Haitian history has been silenced for centuries. The written word (in English and French) captures only the voices of the elites, outsiders, and colonizers at the expense of the oral traditions and voices of Creole-speaking population. Payton (2013) And Cote (2014) affirm that first-person Creole testimonies are overlooked and the efforts of everyday Haitians do not make it into official reports. When found, they continue, they reveal different perspectives on and priorities for the future. Thus, it is necessary to remember the multiplicity of lived experiences and omissions against the speed and scale of the international response which follows.

Despite downed communications, word of the earthquake spread quickly. Associated Press correspondent Jonathan Katz (2013), the only American journalist in Haiti at the time, managed to send out a news alert almost immediately. The US Geologic Survey (USGS) reported the earthquake within 30 minutes and by 6:00 p.m., Paul Farmer (2012) recalls the wheels in Washington were turning. On January 13, humanitarian personnel began to pour in. UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon unlocked US\$10 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the World Bank signed a US\$100 million emergency grant. Before nightfall, the first international search and rescue teams arrived (Margesson & Taft-Morales, 2010). By the week's end, the U.S. pledged \$100 million in assistance, a second CERF package of US\$15 million was released, and the UN launched a flash appeal for US\$575 million.

The complexity of international relief and recovery efforts is well documented. Local infrastructure can often be overwhelmed and in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, *de facto* replaced or taken over (Stumpfenhorst et al., 2011). An array of actors and activities arrive including state-affiliated actors via bilateral, multilateral, and regional mechanisms and non-governmental, voluntary and private actors (Margesson & Taft-Morales, 2010). The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is mandated to coordinate a multisectoral and multi-actor international response to complex emergencies and natural disasters. With a diverse portfolio, OCHA activities are best captured by its cluster approach:

clusters are groups of humanitarian organizations, both UN and non-UN, in each of the main sectors of humanitarian action, e.g., water, health and logistics. They are designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and have clear responsibilities for coordination. The Resident Coordinator and/or Humanitarian Coordination and the Humanitarian Country Team manage a humanitarian response through the clusters. (OCHA, n.d., online).

According to Kirsch et al. (2013), clusters got off to a rocky start in Haiti. The number of humanitarian organizations overwhelmed the structure, up to 10,000 by some estimates (Kristoff & Panarelli, 2010). Further, the earthquake fatally impacted existing leadership (Kirsch et al., 2013). UN headquarters collapsed during the earthquake killing 101 UN personnel, including most in charge of the pre-existing MINUSTAH. The Government of Haiti faced similar challenges. Fourteen of 16 government ministry buildings were destroyed and one third of the country's civil servants lost their lives (Kirsch et al., 2013). Haiti's President René Préval was initially feared dead when the National Palace and his private residence collapsed but was later found to have narrowly avoided death.

The emergency response unfolded under a chaotic mix of the UN, U.S., and Government of Haiti (in)action. *In situ* efforts focused on humanitarian and emergency services while high-level donor coordination began with a longer-term view towards recovery and reconstruction. After meetings in Santo Domingo and Montreal, the International Donor Coordination Conference was held on March 31, 2010, at UN headquarters in New York under the slogan "Towards a New Future for Haiti". The meeting was chaired by Brazil, Canada, the European Union, France, and Spain. Fifty-nine countries pledged nearly US\$10 billion and Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive debuted the plan for reconstruction: the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and Haiti's Action Plan for National Recovery (UN, 2010). These joint Government of Haiti and international documents outline a long-term vision not just to rebuild the country, but to "build back better" (UN, 2010, online).

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)

The Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) is a 115-page Government of Haiti document presented as an annex to the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH). The Republic of Haiti emblem decorates its cover page along with two pictures:

the destroyed National Palace in downtown Port-au-Prince and Haitian children standing hand-in-hand in a circle (Figure 2). Colourful borders frame the text throughout.

The PDNA forward penned by Prime Minister Bellerive describes the objectives of the PDNA as threefold: “lay[ing] the foundation for a fresh start in the country’s development efforts, as well as to reconstruct the damaged areas and contribute to a long-term national strategic development plan, in order to begin rebuilding Haiti” (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 1). According to the text, the PDNA is the result of a 35-day assessment from carried out “at the direction of the Government of Haiti” and with assistance of 200 national and international experts (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 5). Its development was also managed by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the UN, the European Commission and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, three G11 representatives, and the European Union Head of Delegation.

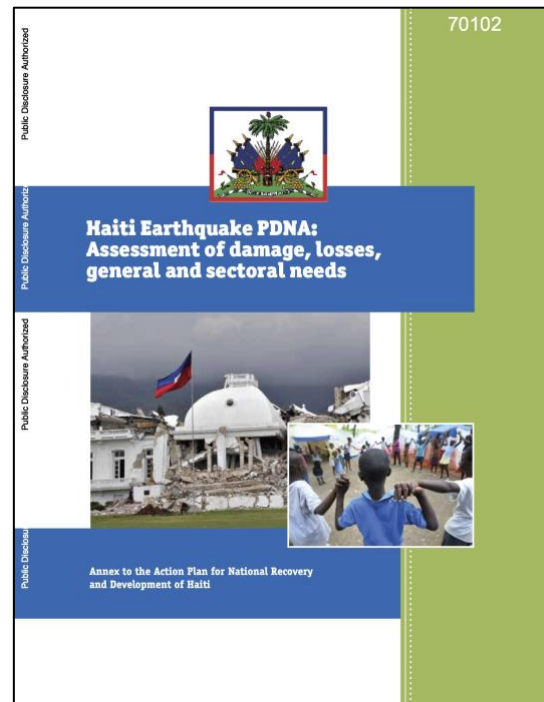


Figure 2 PDNA Cover page. Source: Government of Haiti, 2010.

The narrative voice of the PDNA reflects its authorship. First person and statements are largely limited to the forward and the remainder of the pages are written in an objective, unattributed, expert voice. The PDNA does not explicitly identify its intended audience. However, its debut at the International Donor Coordination Conference and availability in English and French only suggests it is primarily intended for an international audience. Further, the Prime Minister acknowledges that the PDNA is required to kickstart international coordination to “guarantee that the needs in Haiti are fully covered” (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 1). Throughout, its analysis reinforces the following timelines: 6 months (very short term), 18 months (short term), 3 years (medium term) and 10 years (long term).

The PDNA contains three chapters. Chapter I outlines the disaster, Chapter II presents the overall socio-economic impact of the earthquake and needs, and Chapter III assesses the macroeconomic and social impact. The PDNA’s most substantive chapter (Chapter II) totals 66 pages and is anchored by eight themes: governance, the environment, disaster risk management, social sectors, infrastructure-related sectors, the production sector, a macro-economic analysis, and cross-cutting sectors (youth, gender, vulnerable persons, special needs, and social welfare). Each theme is broken down into various sub-sectors and assessed for damages (value of material assets destroyed), losses (variation in economic flow), recovery needs (resources required in the short term to stabilize), and reconstruction (resource required to build, renovate, or repair damages). Informed by “build back better”, estimates go beyond a return to pre-existing conditions and instead, aim for improvement (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 32).

The PDNA's use of statistics and financial data is particularly prominent. In Chapter II, each theme and sub-sector are filled with calculations and 45 tables across its 66 pages. By contrast, it features only one low quality map of “damaged or destroyed infrastructure” at the end of the introduction (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 21) (Figure 3). Tables include the so-called “cross-cutting sectors” committed to in the PDNA's introduction. The final four lines of each thematic summary table reads: youth, gender, vulnerable persons and social welfare, and information management, or some similar combination. In total, the PDNA contains 92 references to gender, women, and girls, 48 mentions of youth or young people, 40 of vulnerable persons, and 11 of disability or disabled persons. References to special needs and social welfare are 4 and 11 respectively, but almost always and only appear as titles rather than substantively in the text.

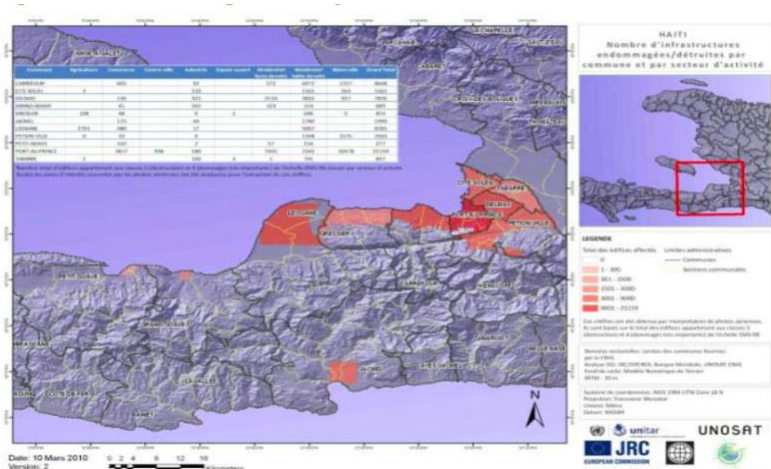


Figure 3 Map depicting damaged and destroyed infrastructure. Source: PDNA, 2010.

The Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti: Key initiatives for the future (PARDH)

The Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti (PARDH) is the principal document PDNA and at 57-pages, is roughly half the length. The documents share a colourful template and inclusion of bold visuals. The PARDH cover page in bright yellow is stamped with the national emblem and features clusters of photos contrasting the earthquake's destruction with a recovered future (Figure 4). The PARDH features a subtitle: immediate key initiatives for the future.

Like the PDNA, the PARDH is “inspired by a vision that goes beyond a response to the losses and damage caused by the earthquake” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 5). Citing a Presidential vision, a speaker makes clear that the PARDH is vehicle for fundamental national change however, no attributing information is explicitly included in the document. Its narrative voice oscillates between a

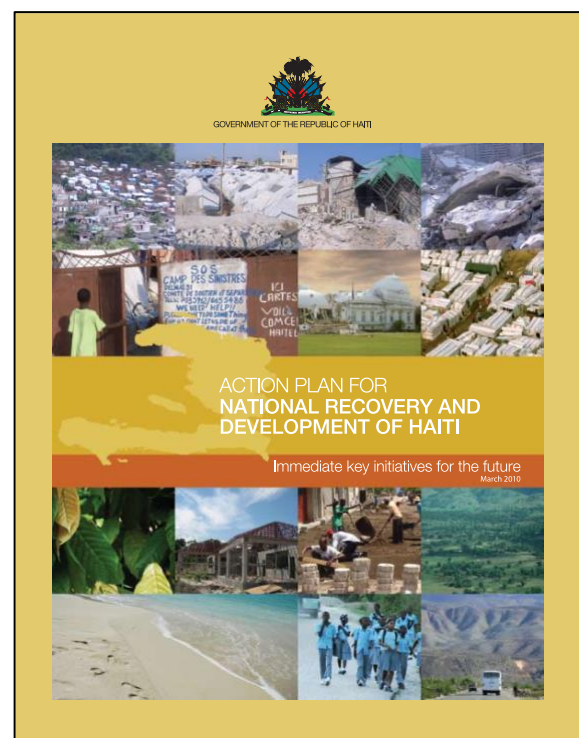


Figure 4 PARDH Cover page. Source: Government of Haiti, 2010.

nebulous governmental “we” and a pan-Haitian voice, and at times, quoting but not naming the Head of State, René Préval.

The development of the PARDH is described in different, sometimes conflicting ways. For example, its preface states the PARDH is a Haitian proposal based on “a joint effort of reflection and consultation” including key sectors of Haitian society at home and abroad. Later it is “the outcome of the meeting held by donors” likely referring to those held in Santo Domingo and Montreal (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 5). Nevertheless, the intended audience of the PARDH is abundantly clear. The preface states that the PARDH is Haiti’s proposal “to the international community” and their agreement is required to enable implementation of projects contained therein (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 9). The PARDH is subject to the same comments as the PDNA with respect to its availability in English and French, only.

The PARDH contains seven chapters:

1. Introduction
2. The Situation: PDNA Summary
3. Vision and Approach for Haiti’s Rebuilding
4. Immediate Actions for the Future (Territorial, Economic, Social and Institutional Rebuilding)
5. The Macroeconomic Framework 2009-2015
6. Funding Mechanisms
7. Management and Reconstruction Structures

Its “pressing need to act now” and “the structural growth conditions required in the long term” span four time periods (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 9). The chapters cover “the emergency period (undefined), the implementation period (18 months), “the period during which the reconstruction of Haiti will become a reality” (10 years), and “another ten years to make meet the goal of becoming an emerging country by 2030” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 9).

The bulk of the document comes to ground in Chapter 4 where four major lines of effort or themes are identified: territorial, economic, social, and institutional rebuilding. The PDNA’s original eight thematic sectors are reworked into this new framework. Gender equality, youth and disabled persons are again listed as cross cutting issues, however, appear much less frequently than in the PDNA (even accounting for page number difference). Gender, women, or girls are referenced only 9 times in the PARDH, disability or disabled persons appear 5 times, and youth or young people just 3 times.

The PARDH’s four lines of effort (territorial, economic, social, and institutional rebuilding) are broken down into sub-themes and identify within them specific problems and proposed high-level solutions. Whereas the PDNA relied on statistics and tables, the PARDH presents narrative summaries rather than technical calculations, although still includes the total anticipated cost for each solution. In total, the PARDH contains four themes, 20 subthemes, and 61 problems. The total cost for PARDH solutions is an estimated USD\$3,864,000,000. Each of the PARDH’s four lines of effort is accompanied by a national-scale map, depicting the implementation of its solutions (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Maps depicting territorial, social, economic, and institutional rebuilding.

The PARDH concludes with Funding Mechanisms and Management and Reconstruction Structures, respectively. Put simply, they articulate the proposed uses and allocations of resource commitments requested at the New York Conference and frameworks through which they will be handled. On the part of donors, flexible and fast support is requested while the Government of Haiti commits to mechanisms for the transparent and accountable management of funds. Here, the PARDH crescendos with a commitment toward the introduction of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Fund and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund. In brief, the former is a decision-making structure comprised of high-level national and international representatives with voting power and a quasi-governmental mandate established through state of emergency measures. The latter is a funding mechanism envisioned to pool pledged resources and enable strategic, coordinated, and large-scale allocation, quickly.

Chapter Six: Spatial Themes as Coding Results

This chapter presents the thematic coding results of this research's FCDA, Mullet's (2018) fourth step. In doing so, it answers this research's first research question: how is space conceptualized in Haiti's recovery and reconstruction following the 2010 earthquake? At the outset, it is important to distinguish between this chapter's use of the term theme and the concept of discourse. The two are related but not the same. Recalling Chapter Three and Foucault's definition, discourse is the organizing framework which gives statements their coherence and status. Discourse is above the level of language. By contrast, themes are patterns within language. They are common communicative events that can offer glimpses or entry points into the organizing framework and logic of a discourse. I will consider discourses further in subsequent chapters. This chapter, however, remains focused on themes.

I begin with a detailed account of the coding process and development of themes, building on the methodology and application previewed in Chapter Four. Coding results quickly move beyond questions of "where?" to identify six spatial themes in the PDNA and PARDH:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sovereign Territory | 4. Flow State |
| 2. Nation and Identity | 5. The Natural World |
| 3. Geographies of Risk | 6. Public Private Divide |

Table 1 presents the six themes, related code words, and illustrative excerpts drawn from the texts. I then consider the six themes against the findings of this research's literature review on space and disaster (discussed in Chapter Two). The six themes invoke absolute and relative constructions of space, equally. Five of the six themes bear similarities to the ways in which disaster studies has already engaged with space. One theme (territory) emerges unexpectedly. This suggests other spatial themes could also be waiting to be uncovered. In general, thematic coding results reaffirm that space is an important yet overlooked element of disasters.

The Coding Process

I approached coding from an inductive standpoint. That is, I used the data (text) to develop codes and categories rather than looking to the documents to validate or invalidate a pre-existing schema (deductive coding). An inductive approach is well suited to respond to research questions which aim to describe a phenomenon and where the existing theorizing is limited (Hsieh et al., 2005). As established in Chapter Two: Literature Review, disaster studies' theorizing of space is incomplete. Therefore, existing conclusions would be an insufficient basis from which to develop a working hypothesis that could be properly tested. However, the findings of the research's review of the literature as well as its theoretical framework did help inform what I consider broadly to count as *spatial*. That is, both its absolute and relational constructions.

I used pen and highlighter to conduct initial coding on paper copies of the PDNA and PARDH. I read through each text line by line to identify instances and invocations of space, including visual elements. Space-specific words like "zone" (n=31) and "country" (n=82) or space-related concepts or processes like "environment" (n=19) and "sovereignty" (n=1) triggered highlighting. Excerpts coded ranged from three words up to a sentence. Coding only at the level

of the word would be too granular to effectively capture meaning, especially where words had multiple like “home” (n=5) as a sense of place or a physical shelter. For simplicity, codes and their derivatives were captured together – that is “country” (n=82) includes countries, “environment” (n=19) includes environmental, and so on. During coding, I disqualified 3 codes on the basis of non-relevancy: human resources, timescale, and non-spatial population numbers. In total, relevant codes linked to space appear 965 times in Haiti’s master disaster texts including five maps.

As previously introduced, the PARDH contains four maps and the PDNA contains only one (Figures 3 and 5). The PARDH maps are four versions of the same aesthetic template, locked in at the national level and depicting different layers of Haiti’s *refondation*. By contrast, the PDNA map is a smaller, more technical template capturing the number of damaged or destroyed infrastructure as a result of the earthquake. While their significance will be discussed in subsequent chapters, I offer brief comments on their quality and coding.

All five maps are of rather poor digital quality. They contain some details too small to see at the size they are included in the documents. Zooming in only results in an illegible, pixelated jumble. At first, I thought this might pose a problem for discursive analysis and the data considered by this FCDA. However, recalling that the use of maps is never neutral, I concluded that the maps – in their precise low quality and size – do not serve the primary purpose of conveying purported technical or minute detail in Haiti’s master disaster texts. If that were the case, care would have been taken to ensure they were legible. Instead, the value and purpose of the maps are in their entirety, the overall picture they present, and which is visible at the size they are included. With this in mind, I elected to retain the maps as part of my coding process.

Once I was satisfied that all instances and invocations of space across the PDNA and PARDH were captured on paper, I switched to Nvivo software to process codes into themes. Due to time constraints, only the PARDH was analysed in Nvivo. At this stage, I considered codes (and excerpts) in relation to one another in order to establish patterns and commonalities, and to link codes together into larger ideas. In doing so, I reviewed code frequency to understand which codes might be the driving or unifying force within a theme. Frequency was not the sole determining factor of themes, however. Indeed, as Waitt (2005) and Rose (2001) advised human geographers, it is not only what is said the loudest or most often that is the most important. It is for that reason I decided not to remove codes with less than n=5.

Some similarities and patterns emerged obviously, for example related to the natural world. Features like reservoirs, soil, and fish could rationally be tied together through the environment and further connected via their productive use by humans as resources. Here nature and society are distinctly separate but co-exist necessarily and tenuously. That is, humans need natural resources in a myriad of ways, but their presence or abundance does not always lead to envisioned outcomes. Like the development literature which explores whether resources are a blessing or a curse (van der Ploeg, 2010), nature is a sphere of dualisms hanging in balance: close but far from humans, can lift up or devastate the population, controlled and out of our control at the same time. On this basis, Theme Three: The Natural World emerged.

Others required more substantive reflection and I drew on feminist geographies and postcolonial theory to develop and finalize such themes. For example, Theme Five benefited in particular from a combination of Nigel Thrift (2009) and more recent geographic critiques of neoliberalism. The former in his spatial contribution to *Key Concepts in Geography* describes one common view of space through flows. Thrift writes, “[flow state] is a series of carefully worked up connections ... which bind unlike things together, usually on a routine, circulating basis” (ibid, p. 88). Here, space is made up of and through movement and interactions, sped up and spaced out by globalization. Such an idea can be extended in neoliberal terms where space is freed from its material conditions, becoming technique for and ideology of growth. That is, the compression of space-time at a global level untethers space making way for new logics of inculcation and for systems free to find their own balance and full growth potential.

Other scholars were particularly helpful, for example, in making meaningful sense of state-related concepts such as nation (n=140), country (n=82), the State (n=52), and territory (n=26), among others. As established in Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework, the modern state is a powerful myth with distinctly spatial dimensions: territory (Elden, 2013). It embodies so-called values and norms which serve to uphold the supremacy of the myth of the modern state and certain sets of unequal relations. This includes, as MacKinnon (1989) and Froc (2020) demonstrate, privileging and normalizing the masculine over the feminine. On this basis, state-related concepts can be tied together under the theme of sovereign territory which captures Haiti as a modern territorial state within the international state system and the assumptions and power bound up in such spatial forms.

Saturation was achieved when each code was accounted for, and review of the themes revealed no new findings. Like the initial coding steps, this process was iterative. I considered different clusters of code and variations on themes. This included, for example, combining *sovereign territory* and *nation and identity* into one theme *modern state* theme. However, the code total n=368 suggested this theme could be further refined and the range of ideas contained in the excerpts supported this decision. In general, and overall, I was careful not to attempt to force codes into any existing themes or ignore what may have appeared like outliers in early clusters of themes. As needed, I returned to my theoretical framework to investigate potential connections between codes and substantiate the conceptualization of categories.

Finally, it is important to note that some excerpts contain multiple codes and up to three codes could emerge side by side in a sentence. This connectivity does not undermine the codes ultimately identified by this research or suggest they should have been merged. On one hand, a relational view of space pre-empts connectivity and a degree of cross over should be expected. On the other, no two (or three) themes appeared together in a statistically significant way. Code proximity was not the determining factor in the development of themes.

The six themes are presented in Table 1 in order of code *n* prominence. The PARDH’s four maps were coded as Theme 1: Sovereign Territory and Theme 5: Flow State for their repeated use of scale and connectivity. The PDNA map was coded as Theme 4: Geographies of Risk for its divvying up of space into new landscapes of damage and de/reconstruction.

Table 1: Coding Results

Coding Results	
Themes	Example Excerpts
<u>1. Sovereign Territory:</u> Space is territory belonging to the Haitian State. The national level is privileged as a frame of reference, casting Haitian space in monopolizing terms. The Head of State plays a paternal role as leader with legitimate authority over the defined national geographic area. Externally, Haiti exists within a wider international system of like sovereign territories governed by states (<i>absolute space</i>). Code Words: national (n=140), country (n=82), the State (n=52), territory (n=26), international players or partners (n=4), sovereignty (n=1)	“In the head of State’s words’ the country can be reconstructed” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3) “... but also calls for structural changes affecting the entire national territory.” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3) “These environmental impacts threaten the very viability of the Haitian national space” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 22).
<u>2. Public-Private Divide:</u> A new landscape of responsibility, access and governance is required. The physical and social contours of the everyday will be transformed by political sensibilities du jour. Services, administration, funds, land, and use will be reimagined, largely from public to private. The ideal type is adequate, suited, equitable yet encroached, policed, expropriated at the same time. New, better partnership is necessary – donors, business, private sectors and NGOs are essential (equal?) players (<i>relational space</i>). Code Words: Sector (n=89), public (n=57), private (n=51), regional (n=31), urban (n=29), rural (n=10), operators (n=8), cooperation (n=4)	“... call for new types of action, a new form of cooperation and joint responsibility between Haiti and the international community” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 9). “The MSPP is planning to enter into innovative partnerships with the private sector, to consolidate what was already achieved before the earthquake and to maximize the delivery capacity of private operators through new programmes via organized health services delivery networks.” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 37). “That is why the plan being put forward is not exclusively a state, Government or Parliament plan. It is a plan for all sectors of Haitian society where everyone is called up to play a role ...” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 5).
<u>3. The Natural World:</u> The environment is blessing and curse, and is distinct from the human sphere. The properties of Haiti’s physical environment make it vulnerable to all types of disasters. Soil erosion and deforestation threaten people and their	“The earthquake has put further pressure on the environment and natural resources, thus increasing the extreme vulnerability of the Haitian people” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 7).

livelihoods. Natural resources also hold the key to social and economic rebuilding. The productive use of the natural environment - agriculture, farming, fishing and tourism - are an imperative for growth and resilience (<i>absolute space</i>). Code Words: agriculture (n=35), (natural) resource (n=29), disaster (n=32), water (n=26), environment (n=19), fishing (n=12)	“... challenges to agriculture, livestock farming, fishing and food weigh heavily on the social and economic situation and the country’s future” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 22). “... we must reverse the spiral of vulnerability by protecting our people from natural disasters, manage our water catchment areas to make them safe and productive in a sustainable way ...” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3).
4. Geographies of Risk: Prisms of safety and security produce new spatial configurations of humans and the environment. Locales and natural features are transformed into demarcated zones and affected areas. Unmanaged river basins, unregulated urban planning, and spontaneous camps alike pose risks. The entirety of Haiti is subjected to risk assessment by professionals and reconfiguration into risk managed or controlled space (<i>absolute space</i>). Code Words: affected (n=49) or damaged (n=7), risk zones (n=31), safety and well-being (n=6), scale (n=5)	“...so as to limit the harmful effects of a major housing crisis in the affected zones and the rest of the country, considering the trend towards decentralisation of the population” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 25). “... some 250,000 people live in 21 of the spontaneous camps presenting major risks for the well-being and safety of their inhabitants” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 32). “The scale of the problems to be solved and the means to be mobilised call for new types of action ... ” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 9).
5. Flow State: Space renders Haiti in motion - it connects, facilitates and transforms. The future rests on new logics of circulation, supported by infrastructure and ideas. The country must be opened up and tied together at once by centripetal force. Access to people and territory is networked. As electricity, population, goods and services move around and through, in and out of Haiti, the country moves forward into the future (<i>relational space</i>). Code Words: network (n=40), development centres or hubs (n=19), transport (n=9), export (n=4), connect (n=4), maps (n=3)	“We need to connect these regions using not only a network of roads but also adequate port and airport facilities and a range of public services” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3). “The main development areas are associated with urban centres that have a key role to play in the economic and social development of their regions ... The map opposite shows the development centres identified” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 17). “The in-clusion of all citizens also implies access to all geographic regions of the country” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 13).

6. Nation and Identity: Shared identity is tied to the country. Geographic space unites and unifies; Haiti and Haitians are one and the same. It also transcends borders so that diaspora and those abroad remain fundamentally inside the national imagination. Identity relates to people and population but actions, proposals, sectors of society, and systems can also be deemed quintessentially Haitian (<i>relational space</i>). Code Words: Haitian(s) (n=38), diaspora (n=10), at home (n=5), the people of (n=5), men and women (n=3), our people (n=2)	“All agree that the diaspora has an important role to play in the reconstruction of the country and that one must find the means to put the skills of Haitian men and women living abroad to the service of this call for rebuilding” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 29). “In many ways it is an opportunity to unite Haitians of all classes and origins in a shared project to rebuild the country on new foundations” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 5).
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New or Known? Comparing Results to the Existing Role of Space in Disaster

Disasters have a physical manifestation most often delineated by impact and/or needs assessments (Wisner et al., 2004). At their outset, Haiti’s master disaster texts identify the town of Léogâne as the earthquake’s epicentre. Throughout, they quantify how far and how severe the damage is elsewhere. On the surface, this may make disaster’s spatiality seem straight forward or simply a matter of where the hazard struck. However, coding results reveal more complexity in the construction of space and spatiality in the documents.

As mentioned, coding results respond this research’s first question: how is space conceptualized in Haiti’s recovery and reconstruction following the 2010 earthquake? It is important to reiterate that the PDNA and PARDH are a case study to this large theoretical question. That is, these two texts do not represent all of disaster studies. Rather their close reading provides important, context-specific insights to consider as part of the discipline’s wider relationship to space.

Therefore, I will now compare the coding results of Haiti’s master disaster texts (the six themes) to the findings of this research’s review of the literature, which took stock of disaster studies’ engagement with space and spatiality. While Chapter Two ultimately identified a spatial shortcoming in need of addressing, nascent and explicit trends were discernible and guide the section which follows.

Recalling Chapter Two, the literature review showed that absolute views dominate disaster studies’ attention to space. The spatial themes identified through coding Haiti’s master disaster texts do not fit these findings, completely. Half of the six themes found adhere to an abstract construction of space while the other half align with relative constructions of space. Theme 1: Sovereign Territory, Theme 2: the Natural World, and Theme 4: Geographies of Risk invoke an abstract view of space. That is, they conceive of space as a neutral container within

which events unfold in objectively determinable locations (Couclelis, 1999, p. 32). This supports Merilainen & Koro's (2021) claim that disaster studies is rife with such conceptions. However, Theme 2: Public-Private Divide, Theme 5: Flow State, and Theme 6: Nation and Identity either reflect or incorporate strong dimensions of relative space. That is, they contend that space is malleable and changing, something which must become rather than something which is.

The equal use of absolute and relational space is a new finding this research contributes to disaster studies. It is not necessarily to deny claims like those put forward by Merilainen & Koro (2021) above. Rather, it suggests there is much more to uncover about disaster's spatiality; and discursive studies are a powerful way to do so. Indeed, that six spatial themes were identified in Haiti's master disaster texts shows that space does matter to this field and is deserving of further study.

Some similarities can also be found between coding results and nascent or discrete trends identified by this research's literature review. For example, Theme 4: Geographies of Risk is consistent with Hewitt's (1987) critique of the hazards approach and its creation of zones of exclusion. Both produce spaces which are so abnormal that only technocrats and scientists can rectify them. Likewise, Theme 2: the Natural World mirrors the preoccupation of some disaster researchers with physical elements of the environment and, although used by humans, positions nature as ultimately an inherently separate sphere (Gibb, 2018).

In less direct ways, Theme 5: Flow State bears similarity to the complexity of disaster's spatiality captured by investigations into cascading disasters and displacement (Cutter, 2018). Here, static stages are replaced by circuits and circuitous connections. Theme 2: Public-Private Divide could be viewed as similar to Klein's (2007) critique that disasters spell opportunity for capitalist rewrites physically or re-imagining of responsibility in material forms.

However, Theme 1: Sovereign Territory emerged somewhat unexpectedly. The literature review did not reveal territory as a prominent way in which disaster intersects with space. In fact, most research emphasized the opposite: disasters don't respect international borders (Collins, 2010; Sheller, 2013), disaster responses are multisectoral and multistakeholder (Stumpenhorst et al., 2011), and corporations have more influence than government (Klein, 2007). But the centrality of sovereign territory to Haiti's master disaster texts suggests that territory should not be so easily overlooked by disaster scholars. It also suggests, as noted above, there could be more spatial themes in disaster waiting to be uncovered.

Chapter Seven: Analysing Space at Work in *Refondation*

This chapter builds on the initial coding themes presented above and, in keeping with Mullet's (2018) fifth and sixth steps, considers their use in context (internal and external analysis). I trace the role of the themes across *refondation* to identify their function and logic, and to unpack the power and politics behind spatial constructions. Texts are useful artifacts precisely because they are a form of claim and render visible negotiations between actors vying to bring into being the certain future they desire. It follows that the vision for recovery and reconstruction in Haiti is multiple, contested.

I identify a primary discourse: "Building Back Better: A Neoliberal State, Population, and Territory" whereby international forces dictate neoliberal arrangements onto Haitian space to correct the professed incorrect relationship between the state, its population, and territory. Here, I trace the PDNA and PARDH's rescaling of the disaster from local to national levels where the myth of the modern state is invoked. Once there, a new (old) problem emerges: concentration and centralization around Port-au-Prince or the Haitian State's incomplete relationship with population and territory. A spatial solution is proposed: development hubs evenly spaced out across the country to remake Haiti into the right order of things and governable in neoliberal terms and relations.

I also locate a secondary narrative from the Haitian State in which it carves out a space for its own voice in *refondation* (A Response from Haiti: Rebuilding State Sovereignty and the Nation). It responds to the primary discourse not by trying to change the so-called rules of the game but by trying to change the Haitian State's own position in relation to it. Here, I understand the Haitian State's claim as an act of agency within unequal framework of authorship and ownership. Its fraught negotiation over sovereignty with interlopers plays out against a very real history of foreign intervention. Finally, the Haitian State sets its sights on its own citizens and works to construct solidarity and obligation to *refondation*, and its own version of an ideal nation-state.

Part 1: Building Back Better: A Neoliberal State, Population, and Territory

Rescaling The Disaster

The PDNA and PARDH detail the epicenter of the earthquake and its surrounding impact zone. Affected cities are listed, specific human and material damage/losses are totaled. However, these particularities are quickly subsumed by a totalizing narrative that looks to not only reconstruct damaged areas but to rebuild the whole country from the ground up. Indeed, as the title of the Action Plan for National Reconstruction and Development of Haiti suggests (emphasis added), "this proposal not only encompasses the affected areas but also calls for structural changes affecting the *entire national territory*" (Coding Theme 1: Sovereign Territory) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3). The Head of State's words reiterate this position as do the documents' visual elements. The limits of the earthquake are left off the map and all of Haiti is put up for *refondation*.

A shift to the national level scales the frame of reference up and away from local areas of impact towards a familiar geo-political map. Here, I am referring to the basis of international relations: the modern state (Agnew, 1994). The significance of this discursive shift is not that reconstruction will simply take place at a larger scale. Rather, I argue that reconstruction is now rendered thinkable within the discursive possibilities bounded by modern state frames.

Haiti, like all modern states, is conceived of territorially: “In order for a state to exist, it must have territory – a portion of geographic space ... over which it exercises power” (Storey, 2017, p. 116). As I contend, territory is far from an innate or natural way of organizing the world but rather is a distinct and gendered political form of space. Territory is composed of homogenous, abstract spatial units with a clear inside (domestic) and outside (foreign). It is imbued with Westphalian norms and on the “right” side of history (Axtmann, 2004, p. 259). In other words, it is positioned as the ideal, modern political formation and any community pursuing self-determination is expected to embrace it.

Territory renders other types of political arrangements inconceivable but allows for a wider set of relations within frame coherence. For example, civil society occupies the space in between the public state and the private individual (Reitzes, 1994). International organizations structure and facilitate more complex types of inter-state relations. International law, the rules based international order, and a long list of international agreements further shape how things (should) operate in a modern state-based world. Within and between relations, gendered hierarchies operate based on masculinist logics of the modern state and a “social order in the interest of men as a gender – through its legitimating norms, forms, relation to society and substantive policies” (MacKinnon 1989, p. 162).

The PDNA and PARDH easily capture Haiti in such a territorial form. As the results of my FCDA reveal, Haiti is constructed as geographic space belonging to the masculine Haitian state (Coding Theme 1: Sovereign Territory). It is written up in whole and abstract terms, interchangeably: the country, the territory, the entire national area. The Head of State is written in as a familiar, paternal figure. Externally, Haiti is recognized as existing within a wider international system of like territories governed by sovereign states. Other actors stick to their pre-defined scripts and two-dimensional territorial maps reinforce a geographic sense of homogeneity and certainty. The same base map of the country is used over and over, without its scale or boundaries ever changing. Haiti’s future is only rendered visible through a national lens.

Thus, Haiti’s master disaster texts relocate *refondation* to the discursive and gendered frame of the modern state. In doing so, they naturalize its hegemonies and the spatial logics of the modern state: territory. It is necessary to turn to the question of why – why decide to reconstruct all of Haiti? And once sights are readjusted beyond the locales of disaster, what does the new problem and its solution become?

A New (Old) Problem: Centralization and Concentration

The twin issues of centralization and concentration cut quietly across the PDNA and the PARDH. Both documents recognize an “imbalance” in the predominance of the capital city Port-au-Prince (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 43). The disaster, they say, is “made worse by the fact

that it hit the country's most populated area as well as its economic and administrative centre" (Coding Theme 3: Geographies of Risk) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 7). Here, I consider these terms in their widest senses. Centralization is the consolidation of (decision making) power in the hands of a few whether informally through personal politics or formally through constitutional arrangement. Concentration is the sense of accumulation and density – whether of people, money, or power.

Centralization and concentration are by no means unique to Haiti, however their degree in Port-au-Prince defies the normative framework of the modern state. Beyond disaster, I argue that the PDNA and PARDH are concerned with a more existential crisis: the incomplete relationship between the Haitian State and its territory.

Recall that a modern state should exercise authority and control over its territory and population. While the Westphalian triad of equal sovereignty, internal competence, and territorial preservation offer little direction on precisely how states should go about this task, subsequent political thinking provides new markers against which individual statehood could be measured. The emergence of failed and fragile states demonstrates on one hand the malleability of statehood's conceptual construction and its relationship to race in the international system (Fatton Jr, 2017). On the other, it reflects a shifting focus to the internal happenings of modern states and the "right disposition of things" (Foucault, 2009, p. 93).

The PDNA and PARDH reveal poor state performance in almost every sector measured and an abstract view of space like that of territory makes the limits of government easy to spot. Haiti's master disaster texts acknowledge that Port-au-Prince alone "accounts for more than 65% of the country's economic activity and 85% of Haiti's tax revenue" (Coding Theme 3: Geographies of Risk) (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 5). Seventy-two percent of the rural population lives in poverty, electricity is "almost nonexistent", and roads, water, sanitation, and formal employment suffer similar structural weaknesses (Coding Theme 5: the Natural World) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 22). The PDNA sums up, "the further one moves away from the capital, Port-au-Prince, the more government services decrease" (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 44). The list of sectors that must be decentralized and deconcentrated is all encompassing: state agencies, the economy, the cultural sector, service delivery, administrations, authorities ... among others.

Thus, the earthquake is not Haiti's actual issue. At the heart of the PDNA and PARDH is a fundamental problem that is spatial: centralization and concentration around Port-au-Prince. In keeping with the modern state frame, the current disposition of things does not amount to the correct relationship between the Haitian State and its population and territory. A preoccupation with such internal happenings or "saving failed states" is not so dissimilar to the fundamental underpinnings of colonialism wherein "certain human beings, who were predominately black and brown peoples, were inferior to Europeans and simply incapable of governing themselves" (Gordon, 1997, p. 909). Turning to the proposed solution sheds further light on the spatial operation of power in Haiti's master disaster texts.

A Governmental Solution: Territory in Neoliberal Terms

The need to open up and even out Haiti is at the heart of *refondation*. Haiti's master disaster texts affirm that a different distribution of population and economic activities is needed. To achieve this, regional development centers or "hubs" are proposed (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 16). Ten cities are selected, spread out evenly across Haiti (Coding Theme 4: Flow State). The PARDH continues, "The creation of development centers is critical. Otherwise, the overdevelopment of Port-au-Prince is likely to not only continue but its rate will increase" (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 27).

Regional development centres or hubs are much more than a simple balancing act. With the help of an extended Foucauldian lens, I argue that hubs are a technique of governmentality that aim to correct Haiti's fundamental spatial failure. Proper territory must be intelligible if it is to be amenable to government. In doing so, it reveals territory and gender's reimagining in neoliberal terms.

Notwithstanding Foucault's fraught relationship with the state, his theory of governmentality provides useful insight into power's inner workings. To be sure, governmentality is horizontal (non-hierarchical), de-centred, and subtle, and the state alone does not bring about the results it desires. Rather, it is the conduct of the self-governing population that ultimately acts to maximize its own prosperity (or not). To achieve this, Foucault stresses the importance of knowledge: "(T)he population is the object that government must take into account in all its observation and savoir [knowledge], in order to be able to govern effectively in a rational and conscious manner" (2009, p. 100). In other words, a population's well-being must first become knowable (defined, measured, recorded) then understood in order to be properly governed from a distance. I contend this principle extends beyond population. Space must be rendered knowable to be governed, too.

The hubs work to transform Haitian space from something outside of government into something "owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered, controlled" (Elden, 2007, p. 578). As this research has shown, Haitian space is reimagined and reworked in multiple ways. The PARDH affirms, "the rational use of the territory and resources requires development of plans and schemes to enable an applied coordination of development activities" (Coding Theme 5: the Natural World) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 18). "National plans" of all sorts must be drawn up to determine precisely how hubs will anchor and manage surrounding regions (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 17). Risk zones, seismic zones and flood zones emerge for management attention (Coding Theme 3: Geographies of Risk). It continues, "In addition, the necessary infrastructure, in terms of roads, ports and airports will have to be built as a backbone for the development of these centers" (Coding Theme 4: Flow State) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 27). Virtually no aspect is left out of the hub model or map: electricity, tourism, watershed management, and public services all flow in and through these centres.

Thus, the PARDH and PDNA provide a framework within which national space is fundamentally reconstituted into so-called proper modern state territory: intelligible to and within the reach of the Haitian state. In other words, space is transformed into an object of government. People and places are no longer left off the metaphorical or literal map. They

constitute a legible territory and connected population through which power can be exercised. Finally, I contend they do so in neoliberal terms.

Haiti's hubs subtly impose and spatialize a neoliberal rationality. The highly decentralized hub structure is the epitome of an autonomous subject, "free to conduct themselves in a certain rational way" (Huxley, 2007, p. 189). The right *laissez-faire* inspired combination of opportunity and connectivity will facilitate the right kind of productivity and profit in kind. Here, atomized responsibility and capitalist competition bring about the masculine coded ideals of entrepreneurial innovation and economic growth (Froc, 2020). The PARDH affirms, "Better redistribution of population and economic activities throughout the country requires the consolidation of new regional development centres ... based on the economic development and the integration of various dimensions (industrial production, agriculture and social and special organization)" (Coding Theme 6: Public-Private Divide) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 16). Space takes on "causal and productive powers" which must be harnessed towards desired ends (Huxley, 2007, p. 193).

Further, the Haitian State is only present where a neoliberal state should be (Fatton Jr, 2017). The Haitian State is active, leading, and responsible for territorial rebuilding (Pillar 1) and institutional rebuilding (Pillar 4). However, it stays far away from the economy and social services. In fact, the Haitian State disappears from view in Pillars 2 (Economic Rebuilding) and Pillar 3 (Social Rebuilding). The private sector, foreign direct investment or some nebulous, unnamed force will carry forward progress in these areas. In doing so, gender relations are transformed at least on the surface. The old paternal state offloads its responsibility to provide social welfare and protection to the vulnerable. Instead, it encourages self-reliance and free-market solutions for all citizens, men, and women, and ignores any structural barriers that might get in the way (Valcke-Beckett, 2023).

Thus, hubs not only order and visualize space to fix the relationship between the Haiti State, its territory and population, hubs function to remake this relationship in neoliberal terms. They are a spatial catalyst for the eventual production and betterment of population. They work to correct and reimagine Haitian territory through the productive rationalities of neoliberalism, including new iterations of familiar gendered power relations.

Whose refondation?

With the above primary spatial discourse sketched out, I now turn explicitly to questions of power and politics behind its construction. On one hand, the PDNA and PARDH are Haiti's master disaster texts. The Government of the Republic of Haiti's emblem is stamped on their cover pages. The texts explain, it is the Haitian Head of State that has "defined the country's long-term vision for development", the Government of Haiti who "has drawn up a framework for reconstruction" and the action plan "that we [Haiti] are presenting to our partners in the international community ..." (Coding Theme 2: National Identity) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3, 8). On the other hand, the PDNA and PARDH are products of a complex international disaster governance framework and international system.

To begin, the international system is hierarchical. As Agnew (2018) contends, “States are neither born equal nor can a dominant position relative to others be equally available to all” (p. 263). Colonial powers cum Western states are its authors and conveniently the ideal prototype. Notwithstanding the already-debunked history of Westphalia, the application of Westphalian ideals remains a fundamental inclusionary/exclusionary process through which power is exercised. As postcolonial theorists contend, Western states claim exclusivity for its normative interpretation (Nuzzo, 2017). By every measurable marker, Haiti comes out at the bottom or, in Fatton Jr.’s (2017) terms, at the “outer periphery” of the world system (p. 29).

I do not offer this view to deny Haiti or non-Western states agency (indeed, this will be the focus of “Part 2: A Response from Haiti”). Rather, it is to establish the unfortunate colonial history and present in which “our globe [is] the product of – and indeed is measured and weighed against – a narrow Eurocentric normative standard” (Poumakharti, 2013, p. 1786). This begets a framework in which difference is synonymous with deficient and inferior. As a result, the balance of power remains ever tilted in the West’s favour. Thus, while Haiti’s name is the front pages of the PDNA and PARDH, a glimpse at the hierarchy of the international (disaster) system reasonably calls into question just how much Haiti is behind Haiti’s *refondation*.

Previously, I demonstrated that Haiti’s *refondation* is underpinned by neoliberal governmentality. That the answer is neoliberalism may come as no surprise these days, but it is precisely the naturalized hegemony which neoliberalism enjoys that I argue suggests a Western shadow behind the rationality of Haiti’s master disaster texts.

The genesis and application of neoliberalism is asymmetric. Spun from lofty institutions in the Global North, neoliberalism is the answer for everything but only a choice for a select few. Top down, coercive processes mandate and monitor deep internal reforms in the Global South while the Global North retains control over the trajectory of its own domestic affairs. The imposition of free market freedom, however, is not a contradiction in the way it may appear. On one hand, Foucauldian scholars recognize that different forms of power can co-exist: governmental beside disciplinary beside sovereign (Huxley, 2007). On the other, the West must sustain its identity in relation to a subjected Other (Said, 1978). That is, the West sustains its own power by defining and determining other populations, even if that is through the importation of supposed liberal ideals (Forjwuor, 2023).

Certainly there can be (and are) supporters of neoliberalism in the Global South and in Haiti. But my point is not a simple question of one person’s beliefs. Rather, it is that neoliberalism is the latest in a long line of imperative and totalizing solutions imposed by the Global North onto the Global South, supposedly for its own good (Gaillard, 2019). That the PDNA and PARDH espouse neoliberalism shows more so the success of the West’s policy agenda rather than Haiti and Haitians playing a role in the decision-making process that determines their own fate.

Finally, I have previously laid out some of Haiti’s history of foreign intervention. It would be remiss to not reiterate the power and politics of the PDNA and PARDH against this backdrop. As Fatton Jr. (2017) argues, “the patterns of imperial interventions Haiti has endured over the years ... have transformed the country into a virtual trusteeship” (p. 29). Put plainly,

whatever the guise or reason, the unequal international system and its authors' have a clear propensity to descend on Haiti including right up until the earthquake. From this vantage point, it would actually be a radical change (and the first time in over two centuries) if *refondation* were not taken over by foreign forces and agendas.

At the same time, there is always space for negotiation with "domination and dependence" and sometimes, a discourse is rendered more visible precisely when it is challenged (Fatton Jr. 2017, p. 37).

Part 2: A Response from Haiti: Rebuilding State Sovereignty and the Nation

A Quintessentially Haitian Plan?

Within and beside the primary discourse, I identify a parallel current in the PDNA and PARDH: a sort of response to international forces from Haiti. The Haitian State also takes the opportunity to send a message to its nation. Recall that a discourse is never totalizing. It is a framework that depends on continuous production through relations and interactions. Every moment is a chance for continuity and for change and renders visible the people and practices active in its negotiation. Ultimately, Haiti's response does not try to reverse the balance of power or change the so-called rules of the game. Instead, it works to negotiate a better place for Haiti within the existing framework. To begin, I argue that the Head of State's claim of a quintessentially Haitian plan is a real act of agency within an unequal negotiation over authorship and ownership of *refondation*.

The PDNA was prepared by a joint team of "Government [representatives] and members of the International Community, under the direction of the Government of the Republic of Haiti" ... "over two hundred national and international experts worked in eight themed teams" (Government of Haiti, 2010b, p. 2). Likewise, the PARDH "is based on a joint effort of reflection and consultation" (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3). In and of itself, presence of non-Haitians in the documents' development does not mean too much. Documents such as these are never written by a single individual and rarely by one actor (like a state). Plus, as much is admitted rather plainly in both texts. However, when the same non-Haitian authors also re-appear in *refondation's* management circles, the line between author and owner becomes blurred.

The principal management and reconstruction structures set out by the PARDH are the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti (HIRC) and the Fund for Haiti's Reconstruction and Development (FHRD) also referred to as the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). The PARDH explains: "The HIRC is co-chaired by the Prime Minister and an eminent foreign figure involved in the reconstruction effort" (Coding Theme 1: Sovereign Territory, Coding Theme 6: Public-Private Divide) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 54). Although all HIRC decisions must be confirmed by the President of the Republic, only nine of the HIRC's twenty-six members are representatives of the Haitian State. Sixteen are from eleven donor countries and international organizations. The remaining four are from civil society.

At Haiti's request, the FHRD/MDTF will be administered by the World Bank in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations. The PARDH

affirms, “The organization tasked with managing the MDTF is responsible for achieving these results, and is accountable to both Haiti and donors” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 55). However, the PARDH makes clear this arrangement is not forever. It continues, “At the end of its mandate, the functions of the HICR will be transferred to the Haiti Development Agency (RDH) ... the missions, remit, and duration of the mandate of the RDH will be laid down in law” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 54).

On one hand, the above reaffirms the overall findings of the primary discourse. The Global North has a disproportionate seat at the table, including side by side with the Prime Minister of Haiti. On the other, it reveals a counter balancing at work. The Haitian State is still at the table and that it is less powerful is a fact most certainly not lost on its authorities. From this view, Haiti’s claim to *refondation* is not to deny its authorship and ownership by powerful international forces but to advocate for its own role and agency within unequal structures.

Another New (Old) Problem: Sovereignty

The PARDH contains a small, half page on Haiti’s expectations from the international community. Speaking in the voice of Haiti, it requests support but “with respect for the Haitian leadership” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 6). Elsewhere it states, international cooperation must be based on “the principles of the Paris Declaration and those pertaining to operations in Fragile States, particularly by making the strengthening of the state central to our action” (Coding Theme 1: Sovereign Territory) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3). Again, “the country will have to rely on flows of external aid that are adequate and according to a timetable that is compatible with the implementation of the reforms to strengthen the State’s internal funding structures and capacity and its financial independence” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 48).

Perhaps the above can be read as a simple affirmation of nationalism in the international sphere. Afterall, a central pillar of the Paris Declaration is fragile state ownership: “partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions” (OECD, 2005, p. 3). But I argue that it is a different and more profound display of agency based on Haiti’s fraught history of foreign intervention. Again, applying a spatial lens to Haiti’s master disaster texts reveals much more.

The word sovereignty appears just once in the PDNA and PARDH. Recall from previous chapters that sovereignty is the notion of equality of states, internal competence for domestic jurisdiction, and territorial preservation of existing boundaries (Elden, 2006). It is fundamental to (the myth of) the modern state system. The PARDH states, “Haiti has undertaken a political journey to regain full national sovereignty since constitutional rule was restored in 2006 (Coding Theme 1: Sovereign Territory) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 6). It continues, “the momentum created since 2006 must not stop” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 6).

A fleeting reference to such a big idea is curious. For the unfamiliar reader, it may come as a shock that Haiti is not fully sovereign. For others, it pulls in Haiti’s long, complicated history. Some of this history has already been spelled out elsewhere. But it is worthwhile to reiterate explicitly that Haiti’s sovereignty has almost continuously been defined by external international affairs (Heppelman, 2019).

Against this backdrop, the inclusion of Haiti's expectations of the international community is not simple nor meaningless nor routine politico rhetoric. Rather, it can be viewed as a real act of negotiation for the future based on a fraught history and the neocolonial tendencies to save failed states (Gordon, 1997). *Refondation* means Haiti contending with new (old) forms of interlopers – the U.S., NGOs, the UN. This time, how can physical presence on its territory, performing public functions, and controlling the money be different? In this view, Haiti's ask of the international community is charged, worried and with good reason. Haiti cannot change the current international system but it can still act in other ways to resist total domination and dependence (Fatton Jr., 2007).

A State Versus its Nation?

I have previously established that discourses are not monolithic. Neither are states or the institutions and people that constitute them. The Haitian State is at once a power-less actor relative to other states in the international system and power-ful as the recognized sovereign authority, in particular vis-à-vis its citizens. While the Haitian State may be unable or unwilling to effectively exercise power in certain ways outlined in the first part of this chapter, I argue that it is invested and active in at least one: producing its ideal Haitian nation.

The PDNA and PARDH invoke a paternal narration. The President of the Republic is just as often called the “Head of the State” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 53). From this position, he leads eternally and the rest of the body of Haiti follows. The Head of State “defines”, “commits”, obligation and unity follow (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 53). Haiti and Haitians have a duty to reconstruct, specifically a historic one (Coding Theme 2: Nation and Identity). The pronouns “we” and “our” are used 24 times in the preface alone, speaking in Haiti's voice.

As established, nations are social constructs the contours of which require constant building and rebuilding. A common identity is needed to span spatial and social divides, and the fact that most members will never meet (B. Anderson, 2006). At the same time, boundaries must be maintained to determine who is inside or outside the nation, and why (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The state is often a powerful force in writing those limits and establishing what is required to belong. Feminist scholars demonstrate the multitude of connections between the state and gender relations, including how public and political processes of nation building often reinforce masculine ideals and feminine subordination.

Returning to Haiti's master disaster texts, the language of obligation continues, “we must learn from this national tragedy”, “we must reverse the spiral of vulnerability”, “we must strengthen the links between all regions of the country” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3). It continues, “we must build on this new solidarity which is expected to trigger profound changes in behaviour and attitudes” (Coding Theme 2: Nation and Identity) (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 5). Solidarity is needed, including “by Haitian men and women at home and abroad” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 3). The role of the diaspora is repeated at different turns, and receives its own section. The PARDH states, “All agree that the diaspora has an important role to play in the reconstruction of the country and that one must find the means to put the skills of

Haitian men and women living abroad to the service of this call for rebuilding” (Government of Haiti, 2010a, p. 29). In particular, the PARDH determines, remittances are needed from abroad.

Thus, the Haitian State views *refondation* as an opportunity to sustain and produce its desired nation. While identity may come from the Haitian territory, it is not bounded by it. The nation is eternal and ethereal spanning both home and abroad. The use of the Head of State, however, reinforces the idea of a connected family and one which is led by the father. Recalling Yuval-Davis’s (2011) question “what is required of an individual to belong?”, in this case identity begets action or perhaps obedience. The Haitian State works to produce and atomize responsibility at the level of the individual and create an ideal citizenry compelled to act on account of duty and moral imperative. Although it does not speak to them much, the Haitian State calls on women abroad to send *refondation* remittances and those in Haiti are targeted for high-intensity labour jobs. While they appear to be brought into the economic fold, little to nothing is said of their political participation or that of other vulnerable groups.

I conclude with Trouillot’s (1990) class argument that Haiti has been a state against its own nation for 200 years. Historic twists and turns around Port-au-Prince have intensified a struggle for power between the splintered elite. As political, economic, and military factions vied for dominance in an ever-smaller space, primary interests reduce inwards and self-serving: amassing wealth and sustaining their own political survival. Where they remained united is against the nation. Indeed, on the eve of the 2010 earthquake, the rift between the rural and urban, peasant and elite, the nation and the state remained ever present, if more spatially complex (Smith, 2014). Continued neglect of the rural has sustained urbanization so that the nation of the past now inhabits urban centers, too.

Perhaps *refondation* is a genuine opportunity for the rift to heal. However, what the Haitian State has chosen to say to its citizens in the small space carved out in the PDNA and PARDH may suggest otherwise. For one, the Haitian State does not acknowledge any rift or divide, sidestepping accountability and an important first step in healing. Further, the direction of obligation follows a familiar and paternal pattern of the state demanding from its citizens. This echoes Trouillot’s description following Haiti’s independence where Haiti’s urban elite were intent on “a fiscal policy that persistently siphoned off the meager resources of the peasantry, so that this peasantry came to finance the state while having no control over it” (1990, p. 59). *Refondation* suggests a similar future and one in which women and other vulnerable groups are producers rather than participants.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the FCDA findings presented in previous chapters and presents its conclusions, the final step of Mullet's (2018) framework. In doing so, this chapter responds to this thesis' remaining two research questions: What are the roles of spatial discourses in Haiti's disaster *refondation*? And how can feminist geographies and postcolonial studies contribute to enhancing knowledge and theory in disaster studies? This chapter also offers final reflections, including for future research.

I find space clearly at work as a technique of governmentality in Haiti's *refondation*. It functions to produce desirable neoliberal relations and needs a capable Haiti and Haitians to do so. Maps reaffirm the primary discourse and help bring into being the future Haiti's master disaster texts envision but hold little technical value. Feminist geographies and postcolonial studies help reveal the gendered, spatial, and racialized dimensions of disaster studies and space – including where they are missing. This theoretical pairing should be considered beyond the case of the 2010 Haiti earthquake as should more investigations into the space and spatiality of disasters, broadly.

The Roles of Spatial Discourses in Haiti's Master Disaster Texts

Space is clearly at work in Haiti's master disaster texts. That is, it functions to serve a purpose or objective. Prior discursive analyses carried out on disasters (Hewitt, 2019) and Haiti (Lawless, 1992) identify the active negotiation of reality and power relations through talk and text (although not with space in mind). On disaster, inquiries reveal subtle attempts to define the problem of disaster and the field of disaster studies in one way or another (Bondesson, 2019; Merilainen & Koro, 2021). Those on Haiti reveal particular, often negative constructions of the country and its people (Mason, 2011). They do so, scholars conclude, to render certain interventions by certain actors thinkable and logical, over others.

The results of this research's FCDA are similar: Haiti's master disaster texts work to bring a certain future into being and define what actions are needed and by whom. As presented in Chapter Seven, this research's FCDA reveals two relational, spatial narratives at work. First, "Building Back Better: A Neoliberal State, Population, and Territory" uses the myth of the modern state (territory) to lock onto a bigger problem for *refondation*: centralization and concentration. Regional development centres are the logical solution to unwind and fix Haiti forever, in neoliberal terms. Second, "A Response from Haiti: Rebuilding State Sovereignty and the Nation" responds not by trying to change the so-called rules of the game but by trying to change the Haitian State's position in relation to it. The Haitian State also sets its sights on its own citizenry to drum up the national identity and remittances it needs to make *refondation* possible.

Specifically, I find that space emerges as key tool in Haiti's *refondation* and a site of negotiation. That is, space is a matter of reconstructing Haiti materially but also of producing desirable relations. Recalling Massey's (2005) definition, space and social relations are mutually constituted. Space shapes individuals and their interactions, which in turn shapes space itself. Their arrangements produce or sustain certain power structures, making space political.

Materially, *refondation* fixes Haiti territorially and in modern state terms. I do not suggest this is a border issue in the traditional Westphalian sense but rather, a matter of (re)making the inside of Haiti to enable proper government. Recall here that territory is politically produced space and by its own logic, cannot be undefined or unknown or empty. Territory must be measured, rationalized, and continually produced in order for power to be exercised over and through it. As demonstrated in Chapter Seven, Haiti's master disaster texts work to produce so-called proper territory through development hubs. The earthquake then is certainly framed as a window of opportunity for Haiti to build back better. But what is better and is it good for all?

Relationally, space is a key tool or technique of *governmentality* in Haiti's *refondation*. Recall that Foucault's (2009) governmentality is the conduct of conduct, operating at the level of the population and through the right arrangement of people and things. Neoliberalism underpins its logics. Through spatial arrangement, development hubs bring about a productive, self-managing, and self-sustaining population and enable governance at a distance. In fact, these arrangements enable the wholesale application of free-market norms to society and Haiti's more productive integration in the international economy. As demonstrated in Chapter Seven, this normalizes sets of relationships that are inherently unequal but in the best interest of some powerful actors.

Maps are also at work in Haiti's master disaster text. There are five in total: one in the PDNA and four in the PARDH. As previously shown, maps are powerful tools when it comes to constructing and negotiating reality (Harley, 1989). The selection and presentation of information impresses truth upon its reader but are more an art of persuasive communication than a neutral reflection of the world. Maps, as Harley (1989) attests, are a powerful form of knowledge production and claim about the right natural order of things.

I find the PARDH maps visually represent and reaffirm the primary discourse "Building Back Better: A Neoliberal State, Population, and Territory". They help to bring into being the future which Haiti's master disaster texts seek to realise. All four PARDH maps use the same base template: a simple view of Haiti at the national scale. They depict only the desired future and what could (or should) be, no vision of the past or of the disaster. This is consistent with the text's use of the myth of the modern state (territory) which moves beyond disaster and locks on to a new basis for *refondation*: concentration and centralization. As the PARDH progresses, each map is populated with new information related to its section building the future layer by layer. It culminates in a decentralized, atomized yet connected Haitian landscape where population and territory are legible and arranged into the right order of things.

By contrast, the PDNA contains only one map with a different, more technical template. This map shows the number of damaged and destroyed infrastructure as a result of the earthquake. Its scale is noticeably smaller, tightly focused around the areas of impact. Relative to the scope of *refondation*, the map is confined around the Bay of Gonaïves. While not in line with above conclusions *per se*, I still view the PDNA as consistent with the overall findings of "Building Back Better: A Neoliberal State, Population, and Territory". First, this particular map is restricted to the PDNA, the more technical of the two documents, and second, is vastly

outnumbered by the four PARDH maps. Further, by actually showing the earthquake's area of impact, it renders visible how quickly disaster is overcome in *refondation*.

The production of desired and desirable social relations also raises questions about individuals and identity. I have previously mentioned Haiti's history of "bad press" whereby its people and places are depicted in a litany of problematic ways (Lawless, 1992). It is worthwhile noting that there are no overtly racist or colonial statements in Haiti's master disaster texts. Haiti is not described as tropical and diseased (Bankoff, 2001), as hell on earth (Henley, 2010), or the poorest country in the Western hemisphere (Fatton Jr., 2007). One might not expect to find any such statements in (inter)national documents but as Mason (2011) and others have shown, problematic depictions are unfortunately the norm rather than the exception.

In fact, visual representations in the PDNA and PARDH are overall positive. Haiti is shown as lush, vibrant, and clean. Haitians are smiling, together and active. This contrasts with what Mason (2011) finds to be typical visual representations: destitute, desperate, and waiting for Western aid. In this sense, Haiti's master disaster texts and their spatial dimensions diverge from what often circulates as what we "know to be true" about Haiti and the Third World (Mason, 2011, p. 105).

But it is also necessary to remember the objectives and authors of Haiti's master disaster texts. As mentioned, *refondation* envisions country-wide development hubs to facilitate government in specifically neoliberal terms. As an ethos, neoliberalism applauds – indeed relies on – values like self-determination and efficiency. As David Harvey (2005) writes, market logics are a "guide to all human action ... each social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions" (p. 3). For *refondation* to work, its recipients must be (and be produced as) capable. The PDNA and PARDH suggest this is the case for Haiti and Haitians, if only given the right circumstances. Otherwise, old representations would render development hubs hopeless, too.

It is clear then that Haiti's master disaster texts subscribe to the *build back better* mantra (one could even argue an extreme version given the entire country is put up for *refondation*). The final section will address Cheek & Chmutina's (2022) important critique whether *better* is good for all but before doing so and in closing discussion of my second research question, I suggest that space should also be viewed as playing an important role in *building back better*. As argued, space sits at the interface of social and material worlds, shaping and shaped by both in return (Massey, 2005). How space is written, built, and imbued with meaning can impact the flow and distribution of power. While it is important to evaluate the efficacy of *build back better* responses after the fact and decision-making processes beforehand like Fernandez & Ahmed (2019) and Mannakkara & Wilkinson (2014) have done, it is also important to look for ways in which power operates subtly. The existence of space as a logic of power able to hide behind technical maps or taken for granted static assumptions is one such valuable opportunity.

I therefore conclude (again) that space matters to disaster. This one case study revealed space at the heart of Haiti's *refondation*, across six themes and two narratives. Its prominent role further suggests the need for disaster scholars to urgently take up spatial inquiries to better understand how and why space functions in disaster.

Disaster Studies in Dialogue with Feminist Geographies and Postcolonial Studies

As discussed in Chapter Two, the origins of disaster studies orient the field towards a particular set of ideas and ideals. It has even been accused of being insular. And while true to some degree, it is also true that disaster studies' most important developments have come from its intersection with other disciplines. Here I refer principally to the advent of vulnerability and its successor concepts capability and resilience. These advances invite political, social, and economic (among other) considerations and require new analytical tools to do so. Although analyses vary greatly, in general, the discipline now recognizes it cannot define, prevent, or address disasters solely on its own. This line of thinking should extend to feminist geographies and postcolonial studies. As this research has shown, they have much to offer how we think about, study, and respond to disasters.

Feminist geographies demand attention to space and encourage its placement at the centre of scholarly inquiries. To date, disaster studies have thought about space peripherally at best and at worst, completely overlooked it. Feminist geographies could help to bring and anchor the spatial turn within disaster studies and demonstrate that space is an important element of disasters. In doing so, feminist geographers also have new ways of thinking to offer. Where space has been attended to by disaster scholars, it is often in a static and absolute form. Feminist geographies' relational and relative thinking can push past such conceptions and radically expand and productively complicate how we think about space in relation to disaster. Doing so could open the door to space as a question of materiality, of social relations, and of power.

Likewise, postcolonial studies' attention to discourse could shed new insight on the way disaster studies thinks and talks about disasters. It would advance greatly what is meant when disaster scholars look at the production of disasters. At present, disaster studies looks at the role of the hazard and its intersection with society. Some even trace structural factors contributing to vulnerability. However, few think of discourse as also playing a role in producing disasters and how the world responds. Whether it is media coverage, official statements, or technical assessments, part of what is true (or functions as true) about disasters is negotiated far from any point of impact and through talk and text. And although postcolonial studies is not the only discipline to attend to discourse (indeed many feminists do, too), it has a particularly helpful long view of how discourses are used. That is, attention to history affords postcolonial studies a unique vantage point to not only identify contemporary discourses but their evolution over time and space.

Equally important is feminist geographies' and postcolonial studies' contributions around gender, race, and intersectionality, key facets to evaluating whether *building back better* is good for all (Cheek & Chmutina, 2022). To begin, Haiti's master disaster texts were mostly devoid of meaningful analysis in these regards. Women and children did feature in the PDNA but just as quickly disappeared from view when it came time for action in the PARDH. Somewhat surprisingly, the PDNA and PARDH do acknowledge disability – not common where inclusive analyses are weak. However, the total of 7 references to women and 5 to disabled in the PARDH do not suffice. On one hand, this underscores the need for disaster studies to continue its integration of gender and intersectional analysis, including to influence the field of disaster

management and its internationalized tools and processes. On the other, it is perhaps not unexpected in light the discourse identified.

The un-meaningful addition of women and other marginalized groups tracks with feminist critiques of neoliberal logic whereby equality is reduced to a matter of economic prosperity. As Dangoisse & Perdomo (2021) argue, neoliberalism welcomes (co-opts) feminism and anti-racism with open arms but positions women and other marginalized groups as an untapped resource needed to unleash full economic potential. Women's equality, or more aptly her equal ability to contribute to the market, is made out to be a simple matter of fact - everyone is born equal.

This common-sense view succeeds in including women and other marginalized groups but erases any trace of unequal structural forces and shifts responsibility from institutions to individuals. Once a commitment to gender equality or anti-racism is made by hegemonic neoliberal powers, the female and racialized subject has no choice but to "accept full responsibility for her own well-being and self-care" (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 420). In other words, the problem of women's oppression is reconfigured from a structural to an individual affair.

Thus, Haiti's PDNA and PARDH may bring women and other marginalized groups into the fold but do so in such a way as to reproduce desired neoliberal relations. Acknowledging their disadvantage will somehow resolve it. The logics of *refondation* cannot grapple with structural inequalities less they render development hubs hopeless, too.

While I have addressed feminist geographies and postcolonial studies contributions distinctly, in closing it is important to reiterate their connectedness and overlap. Indeed, feminist concerns are not unique to feminist geographies nor are issues of race confined to postcolonial studies.

Conclusion

Space is at the heart of this thesis and so I conclude by returning to Massey (1994): space is constituted through relations and power and in turn, shapes those phenomena. The gendered operation of power is an important component but not the only one and certainly not distinct.

Indeed, it is dichotomous thinking that often functions to uphold the radical and unequal distinctions in our society. To center multiple axis of analysis and attention to difference is one reason this thesis combines feminist geographies with postcolonial theory. A second is that, as Sidaway (2017) explains, geography is originally a product of colonialism and bears philosophically and institutionally marks of its past. This problematic relationship must be confronted and worked through, productively. Postcolonial theory helps attend to the politics of knowledge production and the dangers of writing about far away people and places.

On the flip side, postcolonial theory can be critiqued for an overreliance on ideological, literary, or psychoanalytical analysis to the detriment of the material world (Mills, 1996). Feminist geographies' attention to the particularities of space and place ensures balance between the ideological and material.

Thus, feminist geographies and postcolonial theory are well suited together to attend to questions of space and disaster. This research has shown only the beginning of this pairing through its examination of *refondation* following the 2010 Haiti earthquake. It calls for more attention to the spatial dimensions of disasters and more case studies in and beyond Haiti to uncover the ways in which space works, known and unknown. In doing so, it recommends in particular that territory not be overlooked. Environmental processes may be transnational, and globalization may connect far away places like never before however, the political-spatial manifestation of territory continues to underpin international norms and domestic values that mediate disaster experience, recovery, and reconstruction.

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