A Psychological and Political Analysis of a Twentieth Century "Doctator": Dr. François Duvalier, President-for-Life of Haiti

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Abstract

As one of the prominent "doctators" (physicians who become political dictators) of the twentieth century, François Duvalier successfully translated the trappings of beneficence associated with his status as a medical doctor to the office of President-for-Life of Haiti. This psychological and political analysis of Duvalier traces his early political development, strongly influenced by the presence of the U.S. military in Haiti, to his post-graduate medical education in Michigan, culminating in his ultimate rise to power and reign of terror against those who challenged his political authority. The psychological influences of mental illness of Duvalier's mother, and subsequent use of Voodoo imagery and mounting levels of his grandiosity and paranoia, are discussed in the context of his behavior as a political dictator. The circumstances of Dr. François Duvalier's remarkable rise to political power and terror are of both historic and current interest as unanticipated political leaders continue to emerge in international political landscapes.

Keywords: François Duvalier, doctator, dictator, psychobiography, decision-making, leadership, paranoia, narcissism

Un análisis político y psicológico de un "doctador" del siglo veinte: el Dr. François Duvalier, presidente de por vida de Haití

Resumen

Como uno de los "doctadores" prominentes (médicos que se convierten en dictadores políticos) del siglo veinte, François Duvalier tradujo exitosamente las trampas de la beneficencia asociadas con su estatus como un doctor médico a la posición de presidente de por vida de Haití. Este análisis psicológico y político de Duvalier relata la historia desde su desarrollo político temprano, fuertemente influenciado por la presencia del ejército de los EE. UU. en Haití, hasta su educación de posgrado en educación médica en Michigan, culminando en su ascenso al poder y reino de terror contra los que estaban en contra de su autoridad política. Las influencias psicológicas de la enfermedad mental de la madre de Duvalier, y el subsecuente uso de imágenes de vudú y niveles ascendientes de su grandiosidad y paranoia se discuten en el contexto de su comportamiento como dictador político. Las circunstancias del asombroso ascenso al poder y terror del Dr. François Duvalier son tanto de interés histórico, como actual, ya que hay líderes políticos no anticipados que continúan apareciendo en los panoramas políticos internacionales.

Palabras clave: François Duvalier, doctador, dictador, psicobiografía, toma de decisiones, liderazgo, paranoia, narcisismo

从心理和政治角度分析一位二十世纪的"医生独裁者":弗朗索瓦·杜瓦利埃医生——海地终身总统

摘要

作为20世纪最突出的"医生独裁者"(由医生成为政治独裁者, doctator)之一, 弗朗索瓦•杜瓦利埃成功地将与其地位

相关的各种恩惠表现为他从一名医生到成为海地终身总统。 本文从心理和政治方面对杜瓦利埃进行了分析,追溯了他的 早期政治发展(在此期间他受到海地地区美国军队的强烈影 响)、他在密歇根州接受研究生医学教育、以及最终成为当 权者并支配恐怖主义反对那些挑战其政治权威的人。杜瓦利 埃母亲所患的精神问题对他造成的心理影响、以及之后他使 用的巫毒意象,加上越来越严重的自大和偏执,这些都在他 作为政治独裁者的行为背景下进行了探讨。弗朗索瓦•杜瓦 利埃从医生到政治独裁者并实施恐怖主义的非凡经历不仅具 有历史性,还具有现实意义,因为当前国际政治景观中继续 出现意料之外的政治领导者。

关键词:弗朗索瓦·杜瓦利埃,医生独裁者(doctator),独 裁者,心理传记,决策,领导力,偏执,自恋

The psychological study of political leaders provides researchers an opportunity to better understand political behavior and elite decision-making. Through leadership assessments and profiles, scholars can better understand how personalities and the environment can impact political decision-making. Early works in this area typically focused more on the political ends as evidenced by Lasswell's (1930) early work, rather than on the "personological" (Immelman 1993). However, modern research into this area has taken on an increasingly psychological focus as researchers attempt to understand varying psychological components that go into decision-making and how a person's characteristics impact their decisions. Barber's (1972) work on Presidential Character, for example, uses psychobiography, a method which looks at a person's history, to develop a typology of presidential character. Through Barber's (1965, 1972) influential works, leadership analysts have continued to strive for a more nuanced approach to better understand the decision-making of world leaders, particularly when they are autocratic leaders with a firm grip on power and near total control over domestic and foreign affairs (Hermann 1976).

One subset of world leaders that has captured the attention of political psychologists is the political dictator. Research on dictators has taken many forms, including classic inquiries into their behavior, along with analyses on the relationships they have with their subjects. Within the United States (U.S.), early work profiling dictators can be directly tied to research commissioned by the Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency) whose subject of interest was Adolf Hitler (Post 2003; Coolidge, Davis, and Segal 2007). To be sure, during the 1940s insight into the mind of Hitler and his decision-making was highly sought after to understand and combat how a person could sanction the atrocities committed during the Holocaust.

Research focusing on dictators has lent additional insight into whether leaders are born or made, as well as how individuals can come to commit, and to order, extraordinary acts of violence against others. Authoritarian leaders are excellent subjects to examine how personality impacts politics; their near-total control over all political activity ensures that their directives impact actions taken by the government (Greenstein 1987; Post 2003). For leaders including Hitler (Victor 1998; Coolidge, Davis, and Segal 2007; Coolidge and Segal 2007, 2009; Hyland, Boduszek, and Kilkiewics 2011), Saddam Hussein (Post 2003; Coolidge and Segal 2007, 2009), Kim Jong-II (Post 2004; Coolidge and Segal 2009), and Stalin (Birt 1993; Stal 2013), it is their extreme—and often dramatic—actions and decision-making, as well as their propensity toward violence, that make them important subjects for dictatorship research (Hermann 1976).

Dictators, and dictatorships, are often looked at with negative connotation as they are associated with images of violent repression, death, punishment, and widespread fear. In fact, the deep-seated fear experienced by the public is largely what helps these tyrants stay in power—something that is certainly a factor in this case study of François Duvalier. Often when assessing leadership behavior through a psychobiography, researchers have focused on a detailed review and assessment of the individual's upbringing, their first encounter with a position of power, key political mentors, the political environment in which they came to power, how they assembled a powerbase, who they surround themselves with, among other things. Specific to the study of dictators, Moghaddam (2013) argues the importance of taking a holistic approach and examining trait-based explanations for their behavior as well as situational context and group characteristics. To avoid reductionism, leadership personality, to include that of political dictators, must be examined in the context of the cultural environment in which they live and operate (Runyan 1981). For this reason, we carry out a psychobiography, a type of at-a-distance approach, to assess the leadership of François Duvalier and better understand how a physician charged with healing human ails, transforms into a political dictator that does not hesitate to take human life to enhance his own.

A psychobiography, as it sounds, takes a detailed look at a person's biographical history and applies psychological themes to help assess a person's life and gain understanding about their leadership behavior (Lasswell 1930; Post 2003; Schultz 2005). Through a content analysis of written and/or recorded material, the information assessed focuses on a leader's upbringing, and the social and political development into their adult years. Here, the statements of the leaders themselves, in addition to their biographical and sociological information, are assessed to infer their political psychological make-up (Cottam et al. 2004). Through psychobiographies, political psychologists assess personality traits like that of "The Big Five" including neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, and conscientiousness, as well as personality disorders such as sadism, antisocial behavior, schizophrenia, neuroticism, narcissism, and paranoia (Birt 1993; Coolidge, Davis, and Segal 2007; Coolidge and Segal 2007, 2009). To date, many leaders have been assessed using the psychobiographical research method including Woodrow Wilson (George and George 1998; McDermott 2008), Indira Gandhi (Steinberg 2005); Hillary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice (Fitch and Marshall 2008); Ronald Reagan (Glad 1989; Gilbert 2008); John F. Kennedy (McDermott 2008); and Richard Nixon (McDermott 2008) to name a few.

Specific to political dictators, Victor's (1998) psychobiography of Hitler was carried out to better understand the pathway that led to his evil transformation. Moving this work forward, Coolidge, Davis, and Segal (2007) further investigated Hitler's psychopathology, and later Hyland, Boduszek, and Kielkiewicz (2011) approached Hitler from a psycho-historical perspective to gain great depth of knowledge on his development and pathology. In an attempt to better assess the personality of dictators, Coolidge and Segal (2007) would compare their findings of Hitler to Saddam Hussein, and later to Kim Jung Il (Coolidge and Segal 2009); they found that all shared the six personality disorders including sadistic, paranoid, anti-social, narcissistic, schizoid, and schizotypal in varying degrees. Coolidge and Segal's (2007) work agrees with Post's (2004) finding that Hussein was strongly oriented toward paranoia, but the two somewhat disagree on whether Hussein suffered from any psychotic disorders beyond malignant narcissism. Kim Jong Il is further described as being emotionally volatile, unpredictable, without empathy, and having a propensity toward malignant narcissism (Post 2004). Stalin, another dictator, has also been assessed as having a paranoid personality disorder which was thought to be a key component in his rise to power (Birt 1993; Stal 2003). As will be seen in the psychobiography below, paranoia also plays a key factor in Duvalier's behavior.

The current body of knowledge on leadership psychology has substantiated a clear link between personality and political outcomes. Additionally, the literature demonstrates that there are some shared personality components among political dictators. However, one subset of dictators that has been overlooked include those individuals that, in addition to gaining political notoriety, were first known for their medical expertise. These doctor-dictators represent a unique subgroup that have not yet been fully assessed for clues that may explain their pathway to violence. Within this psychobiography, we assess François Duvalier's rise to power by looking at how this individual transformed himself from a medical doctor, into the President-for-Life of Haiti. Consistent with the psychobiographic method, we examine Duvalier's rise to power and leadership transformation. We also consider Haiti's brutal past, its leadership instabilities, and how this may have shaped or influenced Duvalier's behavior. We also review his development during his early years, the assembly, consolidation, and maintenance of his powerbase, and the development of his cult of personality. Additionally, of importance in this study is the development and cultivation of his medical interests, and manipulation of this background to further gain a political edge and enhance his political strength. This case reveals Duvalier's innate ability to utilize the imagery associated with his medical profession as a veil to his grim desires to "cure" the political ills of Haiti. In addition to better understanding the doctor–dictator link, case studies help provide insight into different diplomatic strategies for engaging with such leaders. For example, paranoid individuals will be highly suspicious and will largely mistrust others, so negotiated policies should include a certain degree of confidence-building measures to help break through this kind of personal defense mechanism. Likewise, malignant narcissism and sadism will also have an influence on how individuals interpret and react to events. For these reasons, it is important to continue delving into the behavior of past leaders to be better prepared for the future.

Doctators: Physicians as Political Dictators

The modern study of conditions that give rise to political dictators has an assorted range that includes twentieth century psychoanalysts C.G. Jung (1936) and Sigmund Freud (Stamps 1956) and extends to twenty-first century political psychologist Fathali M. Moghaddam (2012, 2013). While numerous conventional studies of dictators have focused upon the examination of societal conditions and concurrent psychological traits of dictators as a homogenous group, there remains a unique subset within the dictator population that have not been extensively evaluated: political "doctators"—a play on words to represent physicians who become political dictators. The "doctatorship" concept was first coined by the journalist Simon Sebag Montefiore (1997, 17), who defined "the process by which a medical doctor, devoted to sacrificing himself to save lives, becomes a dictator, devoted to sacrificing lives to save himself."

The power, status, and social position of physicians are distinct and elevated compared to most professions. Unlike that of career politicians, "physicians are considered—rightly or not—as persons responsible for the quality of our lives. They are societal heroes ... By definition, a doctor is a person educated in a profession that is compassionate to the poor and ill, and because of his education, (in a prime position) to shape the national health and protection of their country" (Lass et al. 2012, 642; author translation).¹ Coupled with this elevated social status, they are also expected to uphold much higher societal expectations. Sawicki (2011) explains that these standards hold true for physicians' personal lives as well

^{1 &}quot;Lekarze są uważani - słusznie lub nie - za osoby odpowiedzialne za jakość naszego życia. Są bohaterami społecznymi ... Z definicji lekarz to osoba wykształcona w zawodzie współczującym dla biednych i chorych, a także ze względu na swoją edukację (w doskonałej pozycji), która kształtuje krajową opiekę zdrowotną i ochronę swojego kraju."

as for state licensing boards. Licensing boards authorize discipline based on "unprofessional" or "unethical" conduct as it applies not only to their professional lives, but also to their personal lives. In attempting to discern why physicians (and nurses) charged with protecting life and limb are held to a higher standard than others, Sawicki explains that because they work in a profession where the healing and safeguarding of those most vulnerable is part of the profession, "society looks askance at any conduct that calls into question this ethic of care and respect" (Sawicki 2011, 719). Ultimately, society tends to elevate physicians, holding them in high regard for their ability to heal and the perception that doctors personally desire to make the world a better place.

Why do some societies allow physicians to then slip into the role of political dictator? How can widespread human suffering be sanctioned by someone who holds himself to the Hippocratic Oath? These are among some of the interesting questions that arise when considering doctors who assume the role of political dictators. When doctors enter politics, some look upon them differently compared to career politicians, lawyers, or any other profession. Early on, medical doctors were assumed to enter politics for only brief periods of time to impact change within their personal professions, never fully giving up their medical careers (Glaser 1960). Perper and Cina (2010) make the case that doctors are looked upon as father figures, helping their constituents feel safe and secure. It can be argued that society perceives that through their wisdom and healing hands, doctor politicians will know what is best for the country (Perper and Cina 2010). This perception is something that some doctators have come to integrate into their worldviews when they see themselves as the father of the state. However, despite these high standards, doctors are not perfect, omnipotent beings. In fact, some have been downright evil: in the contemporary political domain, Dr. Bashar Assad, President of Syria and a trained ophthalmologist, is said to be responsible for the deaths of more than 250,000 of his countrymen (Naylor 2015). Likewise, Dr. Radovan Karadzic, a psychiatrist, betrayed the values of his profession and was found guilty of genocide, war crimes, and the crimes against humanity which took place in Srebrenica (Post 2004).

Historical Violent Conflict and Duvalier's Childhood Development

To better understand how a society can give way to a ruthless dictator, it is important to assess the political environment in which the individual came to power. However, on occasion digging deeper into a country's history can also provide insight into how a society may come to be bruised by a particularly brutal past. While many countries have developed through a series of phases often marked by war and political violence, Haiti's development is particularly brutal and has given way to a series of unstable governments. For this reason, an understanding of the etiology of circumstances leading to Duvalier's assumption of power must begin with a brief account of Haitian history.

Under French colonial rule, Haiti was a successful "plantocracy" that was built on the backs of African slaves. Slavery in Haiti was particularly horrific: an estimated one million African slave lives were lost to torture, hard labor, and dire living conditions (Abbott 1988). During French colonial rule, it was considered more economical to replace slaves every 4–7 years rather than keep them alive and nourished as a strong workforce. Torture was a common form of punishment; in addition to regular floggings, slaves were also "burned with boiling cane, chained, branded with hot irons, buried alive, manacled and smeared with molasses so ants would devour them, mutilated and crippled by amputation of arms, legs, and buttocks, raped, starved, and humiliated" (Abbott 1988, 11).

Under the leadership of a Jamaican slave named Boukman, a 13-year revolution ensued, when slaves rose up: "scorching the earth, burning every habitation, and destroying every vestige of the plantations, the rebels slaughtered beast and man, raped women before killing them and their children, tortured prisoners of war with the obscene refinements they had learned as victims" (Abbott 1988, 14). Under this banner of blood, Haiti would earn its freedom from France in 1804. The bloodletting continued under the savage rule of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who for many would become a national hero. In 1806, Dessalines was assassinated, leaving Haiti divided between blacks in the north and the mulatto-ruled south (BBC News 2012). By the time Duvalier was born in Port-au-Prince in 1907, Haiti unified under the leadership of Pierre Boyer, who later became the first of many presidents forced into exile (Abbott 1988). Between Boyer's rule and the American occupation, only one president out of 22 would serve his full presidential term. "Three died natural deaths ... three died by violence, and fourteen more, like Boyer, were driven from Haiti by revolts" (Abbott 1988, 25). It is within this tumultuous backdrop that Duvalier's coming of age and political development must be considered.

Duvalier was born into a lower-middle class family; he was the son of a primary school teacher and a bakery worker (Diederich and Burt 1969). His father, Duval Duvalier, wore many hats as a teacher, as a journalist, and eventually was appointed to Justice of the Peace (Perper and Cina 2010). Duval's experience as a journalist is of interest, as François, too, would come to captivate a Haitian audience with his nationalistic prose. In his journal *Le Courrier du Soir*, Duval would rail against the selfish political elite and praise the love of the nation (Nicholls 1996). His mother, Uritia Abraham, was mentally ill and was chronically hospitalized; as a result, Duvalier was raised by his Aunt, Madame Florestal and his father (Abbott 1988). It was reported that he was "deeply resentful and ashamed" of his mother; he was not permitted to mention her name during his youth (Abbott 1988, 51). During Duvalier's early years, Haiti would go through a particularly turbulent political period.

When he (Duvalier) he was one-year old Gen. Antoine Simon overthrew Alexis. He was four when a revolution ousted President Simon, and five years old when an explosion reduced the old wooden Palais National and President Cincinnatus Leconte along with it to splinters. Duvalier was six when President Tancrède Auguste was poisoned; his funeral was interrupted when two generals began fighting over his succession One Michel Oreste got the job, but he was overthrown the following year by a man named Zamor, who in turn fell a year later to Davilmar Théodore. (Diederich and Burt 1969, 30)

The American occupation of Haiti began when Duvalier was eight years old. During this period, he witnessed American repression and assault on the Haitian religious culture and practice of Voodoo. By the time his mother died in 1921 when he was 14, Duvalier had lived under nine Haitian presidents and experienced an American occupation with violent nationalistic attempts to oust the unwelcomed force. There would be 12 additional Haitian presidents between 1922 and October 1957, eight of whom held the position for less than one year. The swiftness with how quickly political tables can turn is something that Duvalier would come to internalize and later account for during his own presidency. His mistrust of others would force him to consolidate power and surround himself with family and individuals he believed he could control.

Duvalier was reportedly inspired to become a physician around the age of 12, when he watched a Haitian mother treat her child for a tropical bacterial skin infection; following this event, Duvalier decided that he wanted to heal those afflicted by diseases (Abbott 1988). After completing his secondary education, Duvalier came to pursue his interest in medicine and enrolled in the University of Haiti School of Medicine, without being required to take an entrance exam (Diederich and Burt 1969). During his time in medical school, he became politically active and participated in student strikes, initially protesting against education policies, and eventually expanding to an overall protest against the U.S. occupation (Abbott 1988; Johnson 2006). A description of Duvalier during his medical school years mirrors his time in primary school, where the general sentiment was that he was underwhelming and nonthreatening. In her book Haiti: An Insider's History of the Rise and Fall of the Duvaliers, Elizabeth Abbott (1988) describes Duvalier as a "mediocre" medical student who was distracted by his other ethnological interests and who "studied only enough to pass" (8). This description is reinforced in reports that his colleagues referred to him behind his back as "the dummy" or "the dumb one" (Marquis 2007, 106). In addition to his political and academic behavior while at medical school, additional information regarding Duvalier's temperament comes to light in a story told by one of his instructors: while living with a roommate at a boarding house, Duvalier "heard from the houseboy that his roommate has spoken unfavorably about him. Without questioning the gossip, Duvalier moved out and never spoke to the roommate" (Diederich and Burt 1969, 37). Later, one of his physician-instructors commented that Duvalier "feels that nobody less educated than he could ever deceive him, so he believes them" (Diederich and Burt 1969, 37). This behavior extended to his political relationships, with Duvalier turning against many of his close associates at the slightest inkling of disloyalty. These behavioral observations were interpreted as an acute sense of paranoia by others, which falls in line, and is further amplified with his behavior later in his political career. In political dictators, paranoia is often coupled with regular waves of power consolidation and the brutal removal of distrusted others.

After graduation from medical school in 1934, Duvalier began an internship at the Hospice Saint François-de-Sales. During this time, he gained the nickname "Papa Doc," bestowed on him by his patients (Perper and Cina 2010). This would prove to be fitting as he would later come to see himself as the father of Haiti and its people. It is during this time that Duvalier was revered by the Haitian peasantry for his healing work as a doctor—something that he would later come to exploit. Five years after medical school, he married Simone Ovide. They had three daughters and a son; Jean-Claude became his father's successor (Diederich and Burt 1969). Following Duvalier's medical internship, while unable to gain employment as an Army medical doctor due to his eyesight, he was appointed as a government consultant for a retirement home just south of Port-au-Prince (Abbott 1988). This position gave him additional exposure to work within the government.

In the 1940s, Duvalier began his participation in a joint U.S.-Haiti effort to control the spread of tropical diseases in Haiti. The leader of this project, Dr. James Dwinelle, made use of Duvalier's medical and English-speaking skills and used him as an interpreter (Diederich and Burt 1969). In June 1943, Duvalier served as chief of his own clinic. A year later, his dedication to this effort afforded him the opportunity to continue his post-medical education at the University of Michigan, a position he received as a result of the Inter-American Affairs Commission, where he studied from 1944 to 1945 (Diederich and Burt 1969). While Duvalier reportedly failed his courses at the University of Michigan, he returned to Haiti and continued working in the field of tropical medicine (Abbott 1988).

The death of his mother and the U.S. occupation from 1915 to 1928 are considered to be critical events during Duvalier's transition to young adulthood. Up to this point, nothing suggested that Duvalier would become a predatory and ruthless dictator. There is no evidence indicating that he suffered from the same mental illness as his mother. During this period of his life, Duvalier is commonly described as being sheepish and reserved. "To his school friends, he was a bespectacled bookworm who shunned confrontation, a retiring 'hole in the corner' figure who preferred his own company" (Marquis 2007, 91). Ultimately, there were no indicators up to this point in time that Duvalier would transform from a community doctor into a ruthless dictator.

Les Griots, Voodoo, and Haitian Politics

n integral portion of Duvalier's development into a politician began before his training as a physician and continued well past his post-graduate med-Lical education. Duvalier attended the state-owned Lycée Alexandre Pétion for his primary and secondary school. At Lycée, Duvalier became close with two teachers who exercised a profound influence on his life: Dumarsais Estimé, a noirist who would become the first black Haitian president since the U.S. occupation, and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, one of Haiti's leading ethnologists. Noirism was a black pride movement that came to also be known as the negritude movement. Both individuals are important figures and helped shape Duvalier's worldview and political outlook. Price-Mars' work would come to captivate Duvalier during his formative years as he would regularly gather with two others, Lorimer Denis and Louis Diaquoi, to discuss Price-Mars' position on the black middle class and the budding ethnological movement (Smith 2009). Originally held at Denis's house, "Les Trois D," as they referred to themselves, formed the "Berceau de L'École Historico-Culturelle des Griots," where they focused their discussions around cultural issues, including the attack on Haiti's Voodoo culture (Smith 2009, 24). Later Duvalier drew from his knowledge of Voodoo and its importance in Haiti to manipulate the peasantry and Voodoo leaders into supporting his political pursuits.

As so-called nouveaux Haitians, Duvalier and his associates played a role in shaping Haitian historical and literary culture. It is during this time that Duvalier further solidified his worldview of Haiti in its current state, and Haiti as it *should* be. Under *Les Griots* Duvalier further explored his political perspectives and built upon his past literary contributions at *Action Nationale*, a daily nationalist newspaper, where he wrote "under the pen name Abderrahman, ... eighth emir and first caliph (912–961 A.D.) who founded the medical school of Cordova" (Diederich and Burt 1969, 38). In his writings as Abderrahman, his publications included topics ranging from literature to politics. He severely criticized the American occupation and the elite mulatto ruling class. Duvalier demonstrated a "great bitterness and discouragement about Haiti's fate ... but he also expresse(d) hope that 'a man will come' to correct injustice and set things right" (Diederich and Burt 1969, 39). A chilling self-prophecy predicted his future reign.

In 1933, together with Lorimer Denis and Arthur Bonhomme, Duvalier published *Les Tendences d'une Génération*, or "Trends of a Generation," which called for the development of a Haitian literary base (Marquis 2007). The writers presumed that this declaration would help Haiti come out of the shadows of foreign influence and into its own cultural enlightenment. By 1938, *Les Griots* transformed into a quarterly journal largely focused on articles that mapped out the uniqueness of Africans and their descendants from people of the west (Smith 2009). Duvalier and Denis wrote articles espousing that Haiti was negatively impacted by "the assimilation of French values which had impaired the proper development of Haitian society" (Smith 2009, 24). The Haitian problem was thought to be the result of the population's inability to break free from the burdens of French colonial values.

When evaluating questions of political stability, these noirists viewed the consistent exploitation by the mulatto elite over the black population to be a critical issue in need of resolution, along with the integration of Voodoo into the greater Haitian culture. The Griots argued that African politics were based on communitarianism, whereby the government was responsible to secure the resources of the people and redistribute them fairly. The current individualism "inherent in Haitian politics was a consequence of the importation of French political systems during colonization" (Smith 2009, 26). Along these lines, Duvalier and Denis asserted that the Haitian government needed to be founded upon the psychological and social realities of the Haitian population and move away from individualism to a refocus around communitarianism and the incorporation of Voodoo into national life. With much of the Haitian population being rural peasants, the Griots argued that the development of Haitian culture should center on these people and their traditions (Smith 2009). Furthermore, as Voodoo was the foundation of their spiritual beliefs, it was something that all of Haiti-including its governmentshould fully embrace and support.

While there are not yet indicators that Duvalier would become a brutal dictator, during this time he further develops his political ideas and is seen to promote the desire for Haiti to develop a national identity that is free from foreign influence. Through his writings, it appears Duvalier is longing for a drastic change in the culture of Haiti as a whole. This is something that is further reinforced by his embrace and promotion of the Haitian Voodoo culture. However, during the 1940s, Voodoo was about to be persecuted by the Catholic Church which began instigating an "anti-superstition" campaign or purge against Voodoo. Important ceremonial symbols such as drums and gourds were smashed and burned by priests and their parishioners. In response to this religious cleansing, the intellectual movement, including novelist Jacques Roumain, established the Bureau of Ethnology in 1941, to preserve and learn about the religion and its history (Johnson 2006). Duvalier also became active in the Bureau and published The Gradual Evolution of Voodoo (Time 2011) in 1944. Duvalier used his position within the Bureau to forward his noirist ideals. His activities in the Bureau allowed him to further establish and rapidly grow his Voodoo network as he "built an arsenal of friendships with vodou priests (houngans) and priestesses (manbos) and reinforced his ideas about Vodou as the heart and soul of the Haitian peasantry" (Johnson 2006, 9). Duvalier's knowledge of and affinity for Haiti's Voodoo culture not only further solidified Duvalier's trust within the Haitian peasantry, but also was interwoven and integrated as the cornerstone of his government.

François Duvalier: Political Engagement and Positioning

In 1946, a Labor Party known as the Mouvement Ouvrier Paysan (Peasant Worker Movement, abbreviated as MOP), emerged on the Haitian political scene. The MOP was formed by students of Daniel Fignolé, a charismatic leader of the urban working class. Fignolé's views mirrored that of many *noirist* intellectuals including Duvalier and Denis. In 1945, the two began their work on *The Problem of Classes Throughout Haiti's History*. Officially published in the 1950s, it initially appeared in the Chantiers newspaper "and was dedicated to 'the popular leader Daniel Fignolé, symbol of the aspirations and traditions of all classes of men" (Smith 2009, 66). This became the first treatise that Duvalier would publish where his political perspectives were revealed (Abbott 1988).

The original intent of the MOP was to support Fignolé's bid for the presidency; however, he was not yet old enough at that time. As a result, leaders within the MOP sought another suitable candidate, deciding Duvalier would be a good fit, especially given his *noirist* politics. Duvalier had no prior political experience and, at the time, was thought to have little interest in such pursuits (Abbott 1988). Leery of becoming Fignolé's puppet, Duvalier instead accepted a position as the organization's secretary-general. This is a key turning point in his relationship with Fignolé as Duvalier was pitted against him as a potential rival.

Following the overthrow of President Elie Lescot in 1946, Duvalier's former teacher and mentor, Dumarsais Estimé became President of Haiti. In October 1947, Fignolé attempted to organize a strike to protest Estimé's new law that prohibited strikes by organized labor groups. Estimé's policies proved more popular than initially thought, especially among MOP members and, specifically, Duvalier. The event caused a dispute between Duvalier and Fignolé and resulted in Duvalier permanently leaving the MOP (Abbott 1988). As a former student of Estimé, Duvalier "was appointed Director of Public Health, thereafter Under-Minister of Labor (1948), and finally a member of the Cabinet, as Minister of Public Health and Labor" in 1949 (Johnson 2006, 10). During this time, Duvalier did not promote any particular position and "he aroused few enmities and made few strong impressions on anyone," continuing his preferred position of remaining in the political shadows (Diederich and Burt 1969, 55).

Under Estimé's leadership, Duvalier found himself content and aligned himself closely with the Haitian president. However, as with other presidents that came before him, Estimé was challenged by the Army, and in 1950, Estimé was overthrown by a military coup. This presidential unseating would have a lasting effect on Duvalier; it taught him that the military strongly influenced a president's reign. This is something that was further reinforced by Haiti's checkered past with frequent government overturn and corruption. Refusing to accept the coup, Duvalier temporarily set aside politics in favor of continuing his medical practice (Diederich and Burt 1969; Perper and Cina 2010). The lasting impact the Army had on the political environment in Haiti was not lost on Duvalier and was reflected in the development of the *Tonton Macoute*, Duvalier's armed militia which had the power to do Duvalier's bidding, but not be powerful or organized enough to overthrow him.

While working with the Service Coopératif Inter-Américain de la Santé Publique (Co-operative Inter-American Service, abbreviated as SCISP) as part of the U.S. Health Commission in Haiti, Duvalier began formulating his political plans. In the SCISP offices, he engaged with other Estimists to establish himself as heir to the presidency (Smith 2009). During this time of political plotting, the military persecuted Duvalier for his opposition. He went into hiding in the countryside among his trusted peasantry base, where he continued to practice medicine and further develop his network among the rural Haitian people (Diederich and Burt 1969; Perper and Cina 2010). Abbott (1988) describes Duvalier's time in hiding as a key turning point. He "shed his past as a dedicated country doctor and engaged scholar to become a politician obsessed with greatness, history, and power" (Abbott 1988, 61). His friends claimed he focused his interests on Machiavelli's The Prince and took on a "total lack of loyalty, universal mistrust of individuals, an ability to lie and break promises with stone-faced regularity, and a penetrating ability to identify an individual's Achilles' heel" (Abbott 1988, 61). This account echoes descriptions of Duvalier and his lack of trust for others during his earlier years. However, compounded by his political desires to become president, his paranoia would further increase as he recognized his own current persecution, and the past faced by other Haitian political leaders. As his troubles with the Army worsened, Duvalier's paranoia became more pronounced, and he began to hide firearms on his person, under beds and pillows, and in desks. During this time of increased personal stress, Duvalier turned toward spirituality. Katherine Dunham, an acquaintance of Duvalier, "felt he plunged into (spirituality) with an intensity that bordered and perhaps trespassed on the pathological" (Abbott 1988, 61). This spiritual immersion would later serve Duvalier well as he would come to take on a cult of personality and make himself feared in the image of Baron Samedi, Voodoo god of the dead.

Papa Doc: President-For-Life and Genesis of the Reign of Terror

In September 1956, Duvalier announced his candidacy for president. He campaigned under the banner of Populism, seeking to improve the condition of the masses. "He regarded his campaign as a 'crusade' inspired by 'a dynamic ideology' ... He emphasized the importance of 'leadership' and referred to the influence which Kemal Ataturk [had] upon his thinking" (Nicholls 1996, 210). Interestingly, Duvalier toned down his *noirist* views within his campaign speeches, instead further positioning himself as Estimé's heir.

In 1957, with the support of the Army and a strong support base in the countryside, Duvalier was elected to a 6-year presidential term (Perper and Cina 2010). As president, he promised to "fulfill his populist vision to end domination of the mulatto elite and bring political and economic power to the black Haitian majority" (Perper and Cina 2010, 129). He quickly reestablished the Voodoo traditions and further strengthened his powerbase in the rural countryside. Houngans and mambos (Voodoo priests and priestesses, respectively) who opposed him were immediately eliminated, beginning his ruthless power consolidation that came in the forms of imprisonment, interrogations, beatings, and shootings. Shortly after the election, there were reports of truckloads of still-living people including men, women, children, and officers being dumped into mass graves and smoothed over with cement (Abbott 1988). In another example of terror involving a newswoman from the opposition, a group of Duvalier's men broke into her home. After her children were beaten and thrown into the street, the victim was driven to a field where she was beaten and gang-raped in the presence of Duvalier (Abbott 1988). Within seven months of his taking office, the majority of Duvalier's opposition were killed or driven underground and out of the country (Diederich and Burt 1969). This serves as a clear indicator that Duvalier was preparing for lengthy career in his new political position. The elimination of opposition serves to ensure that he can remain in power until he is able to build up a force that will help to further defend his seat of power.

Duvalier experienced the first of several assassination and coup attempts during his first year as president. All of them further enhanced his acute paranoia. On April 30, 1958 after a bomb plot was uncovered, Duvalier was granted emergency powers, and he imposed a curfew in the city. Duvalierists began roaming the streets, armed with machine guns, checking everyone on the streets. It was during this time that the public began calling the Duvalierists the *Tonton Macoutes* or "Uncle Gunnysack." Haitian folklore told of a diabolical man who would kidnap children roaming the streets at night, taking them away in his bag. The *Tontons Macoutes* were largely volunteers from the Haitian peasantry, extracting their living through looting and extorting their victims. Under Duvalier's command, they helped him to consolidate control by terrorizing any who opposed him (Diederich and Burt 1969). Later, on May 18, Duvalier would request a U.S. Marine survey team to thwart his opposition and show his people that his government had U.S. support.

Duvalier was left traumatized after repeated overthrow attempts. He accelerated his weakening of the Army and enhanced his efforts to increase the numbers in his personal militia. He fired 18 top military officials and created a new

Presidential Guard, trained by the U.S. Marines, that were housed on the grounds of the Presidential Palace. This is something that further demonstrates how Duvalier had recognized past mistakes made by Haitian leadership and can further be explained as a result of his keen distrust of others. He was described as becoming "physically altered" and rather than a "quiet, humble country doctor ... he was shown snarling out at the world from under a large American army helmet" (Diederich and Burt 1969, 122). As further evidence to his paranoia and distrust of others, he took to wearing a gun on each hip to protect himself from future assassination attempts. These are key indicators of Duvalier's transition from a government official to someone with a pathological determination to defend his political power.

In May 1959, he contracted a serious case of influenza and suffered a heart attack later that month. Duvalier's personal physician, Dr. Jacques Fourcand, asserted that Duvalier lapsed into a coma, lasting nine hours (Abbott 1988). Some Duvalier associates assumed that irreversible neurological damage had occurred because of oxygen deprivation after an incorrect dose of medication was administered (Abbott 1988). Some of Duvalier's palace intimates noted behaviors consistent with lapses into insanity (Abbott 1988). During his incapacitation, presidential powers shifted to Clement Barbot, head of the *Tontons Marcoutes* (Perper and Cina 2010). After his recovery, Duvalier imprisoned Barbot, accusing him of treason.

In April 1963, after being released from prison, Barbot planned a coup and orchestrated a failed kidnapping attempt of Duvalier's children. "Hundreds, some say thousands, were to die in the horrific aftermath of this event. Duvalier's immediate response was to order a neighborhood sweep. Then he instigated a witch hunt among those considered suspect" (Marquis 2007, 209). When a group of *Tonton Macoute* believed they had cornered Barbot in a room where he was reportedly hiding, they kicked down the door and found instead a lone black dog. Subsequently, an urban legend began that Barbot transformed himself into a black dog, who ultimately escaped. According to lore, in response Papa Doc ordered the extermination of every black dog on the island of Haiti (Abbott 1988; Perper and Cina 2010). After the kidnapping attempt, more of Duvalier's grandiosity surfaced as he declared himself Haiti's "predestined' leader with a 'historic mission to fulfill'" (Diederich and Burt 1969, 217). During this timeframe, it was rumored that Duvalier began personally directing the torture of his opponents (Time 2011).

After his heart attack, Duvalier was described as being "Hitler-like," who would "rant and rave and foam at the mouth like a true lunatic" (Abbott 1988, 98). This further indicates the depth of his paranoia and distrust in others. Duvalier began to withdraw from those close to him and to surround himself with his fervent supporters, the *Tonton Macoutes*. In a post-heart attack speech to people in the countryside made up of at least half *houngans* and *mambos*, Duvalier is quoted as commanding, "never forget that I am the supreme authority of the State ... Henceforth, I, I alone, I am your only master" (Abbott 1988, 102–103).

By 1964, Duvalier had lost interest in the facade of presidential elections, declaring himself "President for Life." During this time, his ruthlessness surged to new heights. On September 6, 1964, Duvalier's men stormed a Catholic Church service in progress, having received information that a so-called black mass was taking place with the goal of causing harm to Duvalier (Diederich and Burt 1969). After locking the church doors behind them, they severely beat the parishioners and priests. Duvalier's paranoia caused him to perceive both the church and communism as significant threats to his rule. As a result, he limited freedom of movement through the imposition of curfews, he closed the university in fear of a student uprising, and he censored the media, including the Catholic newspaper (Marquis 2007).

Under Duvalier's rule, Haiti sank further and further into disarray as he misappropriated millions of dollars in foreign aid.

The GNP slumped in an average year by 2.3 percent, while the cost of living shot up. Soil erosion and natural disasters caused a 13 percent drop in agricultural production, and that in a nation primarily agricultural. Haitian also had a life expectancy of forty years, the highest infant mortality rate in the Western world, the lowest literacy, the lowest percentage of children in school, and the lowest intake of calories and protein. The country's foreign debt skyrocketed from a modest \$4 million under Estime, to \$52 million under Duvalier. (Abbott 1988, 139)

Image building was key for Duvalier to promote the illusion of a prospering nation. He forbade businesses from filing for bankruptcy and required them to stay open. To demonstrate a thriving night life to the tourism industry, he ordered people in government to go out in the evenings.

As Duvalier attempted to portray an important world leader, his people were flocking in droves to neighboring states including the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas. The sudden increase in illegal immigrants became a serious cause for concern to the Bahamian government, which forcibly deported fleeing Haitians by the hundreds (Abbott 1988). Duvalier found himself in the midst of a serious brain-drain as the educated classes of doctors, lawyers, and intellectuals left the country in hopes of a more stable life.

An International Commission of Jurists publicly denounced the quality of life in Haiti under Duvalier's Presidency:

The systematic violation of every single article and paragraph of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights seems to be the only policy which is respected and assiduously pursued in the Caribbean republic. The rule of law was long ago displaced by a reign of terror and the personal will of its dictator, who was awarded the title of Life President of the republic, and appears to be more concerned with the suppression of real or imaginary attempts against his life than with governing the country. He is leading his nation not in the direction of prosperity but towards the final disaster that can be seen in its political, social, and economic collapse (Abbott 1988, 143).

The Cult of Personality: Duvalier, Dieu, and Dessalines (DDD)

s Duvalier aged, he became increasingly cognizant of Voodoo's significance in the belief structure of the Haitian people, and was able to manipulate Let that to serve his power-hungry ambitions. With his knowledge of the Haitian Voodoo culture, Duvalier purposefully mirrored himself after Voodoo priests replicating behaviors that included a staring, penetrative gaze, whispered speech, and hyper-slow physical movements (Time 2011). Duvalier portrayed himself as being possessed by the spirit of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the famed historical figure who led Haiti to independence (Johnson 2006). Outwardly, he fashioned his appearance after the Voodoo Gede spirit, Baron Samedi, dressing in funeral attire (Johnson 2006; Perper and Cina 2010). "In the panther of loas, Baron Samedi is a god of the dead often portrayed as wearing a white top hat, black tuxedo, dark glasses, and cotton plugs in his nostrils" (Perper and Cina 2010, 130). Papa Doc used this imagery to strike fear in the hearts of his adversaries and to keep the masses at bay and mystified. Using the power of zin, a Creole term for spreading gossip, Duvalier was able to keep the people of Haiti living in fear as rumors spread rapidly that he was followed by spirits who lived with him at the Palace and made sure that no human could overthrow him (Abbott 1988; Johnson 2006). He summoned truckloads of citizens to his Palace to sing and dance for his entertainment. He even went so far as to have the Lord's Prayer changed to further his cult of self-worship:

Our Doc, who art in the National Palace for life, hallowed be Thy name by present and future generations. Thy will be done in Portau-Prince as it is in the provinces. Give us this day our new Haiti and forgive not the trespasses of those anti-patriots who daily spit upon our country. (Perper and Cina 2010, 130)

As a dictator, Duvalier created a cult of personality by having his portrait hung across the country. In some of the imagery, he "conveyed the message that he was chosen by Jesus Christ to lead Haiti. In one such portrait, Papa Doc stood next to an image of Jesus Christ with his hand on Papa Doc's shoulder, along with a caption that read, 'I have chosen him" (Ezrow and Frantz 2013, 232). He used "DDD" signage to position himself with God (Dieu), and Dessalines. Duvalier viewed himself as being one with the state, and an attack on him was a direct attack against the state of Haiti.

Duvalier perpetuated his reign of terror by having his enemies' decapitated heads brought to him, so he could confer with the dead regarding their plans. He allegedly sought counsel from spirits and studied goat entrails (Johnson 2006). "For the fourteen years he was in power, the people of Haiti were never certain he had a soul, that he was a moral man" (Marquis 2007, 144). This use of the Voodoo religion allowed Duvalier to conflate religious power with political power. For a highly spiritual population, the people of Haiti had little choice but to accept Duvalier's leadership.

Conclusion: "A Nation's Ills Demand a Doctor"

Duvalier retained his presidential status and power for 14 years. His education and access to the rural population during his medical practice placed him in a unique position to build a strong powerbase with the rural peasantry. His study of Haitian history helped him to recognize and understand the mistakes of his predecessors, especially regarding the role of the Army. By deflating the influence of the Army, he surrounded himself with eager hand-picked followers, who were rewarded by steady pay and the position of power. For those followers who practiced Voodoo, Duvalier was revered as a Voodoo god and one who could neither be crossed nor killed. Individuals who opposed Duvalier were faced with fleeing to neighboring countries, seeking asylum in foreign embassies, or experiencing extreme punishment or death.

Duvalier masterfully exploited the importance of his iconic image as a physician with the power Voodoo-related beliefs held over the vast majority of his constituency; he positioned himself to initially command high status and respect, and then subsequently fear and terror. Two quotes from Papa Doc reflect this conscious awareness of political strength, both domestically as a despotic ruler, and internationally, when during his rule his status as a physician/dictator was unique and admired among world leader peers: "A nation's ills demand a doctor," and "A doctor must sometimes take a life to save it" (Montefiore 1997). Dr. François Duvalier perceived himself and his power as an integral part of a radical political cure, by way of terror and bloodshed, whose cost was justified in taking the lives of 30,000 Haitians during his Presidency (Metz 2001).

Papa Doc's evolution from physician to despotic dictator is a remarkable, but not unique, international political phenomenon. The current Syrian President, Bashar Assad, an ophthalmologist, has created a "cult of personality" (Burke 2015), culminating in a devastating civil war with 465,000 Syrians dead or missing (Moore 2017). Radovan Karadzic, former President of Republika Srpska and a psychiatrist, was convicted of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity by a United Nations tribunal ... for leading a campaign of terror against civilians in the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War II. ... In 1992, the height of the ethnic cleansing campaign, close to 45,000 people were killed or missing, almost half of the 100,000 who died in the Bosnian war. ... Men and boys were held in concentration camps, where thousands were tortured, were killed, or died of starvation, and women were said to have been raped and used as sex slaves. (Simons 2016)

Papa Doc Duvalier, along with his Doctator-contemporaries Bashar Assad and Radovan Koradzic, each skillfully manipulated their status as a physician into authoritarian dictators who imposed a harsh citizen domination coupled with extreme loss of life. There are further examples of international physician politicians who were instrumental in transforming their nation's political landscape, all of which provide further insight into this subset of political dictators, including Dr. Hastings Banda, President of Malawi, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, founder of the Republic of China, Dr. Che Guevara, Latin American revolutionary leader, Dr. Agostino Neto, former President of Angola, Dr. Salvador Allende, former President of Chile, and Dr. George Habash, founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Lass et al. 2012). All of these cases are deserving further exploration to better determine how this subset of individuals may be unique.

In an unanticipated turn of political events, Haiti once again has a political leader who is a physician. Dr. Jack Guy Lafontant, a gastroenterologist and member of the American College of Physicians, was appointed Prime Minister of Haiti on March 20, 2017. Prime Minister Lafontant had no known political experience or knowledge of the political administration prior to his appointment (Charles 2017a). Upon the new government's swearing in, Prime Minister Lafontant noted the following: "The hour is grave, and the legacy is heavy" (Charles 2017b, n.p.). Although these remarks were delivered in the context of current political and economic challenges, they also serve as recognition of the potential political power and influence a physician Prime Minister can exercise.

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