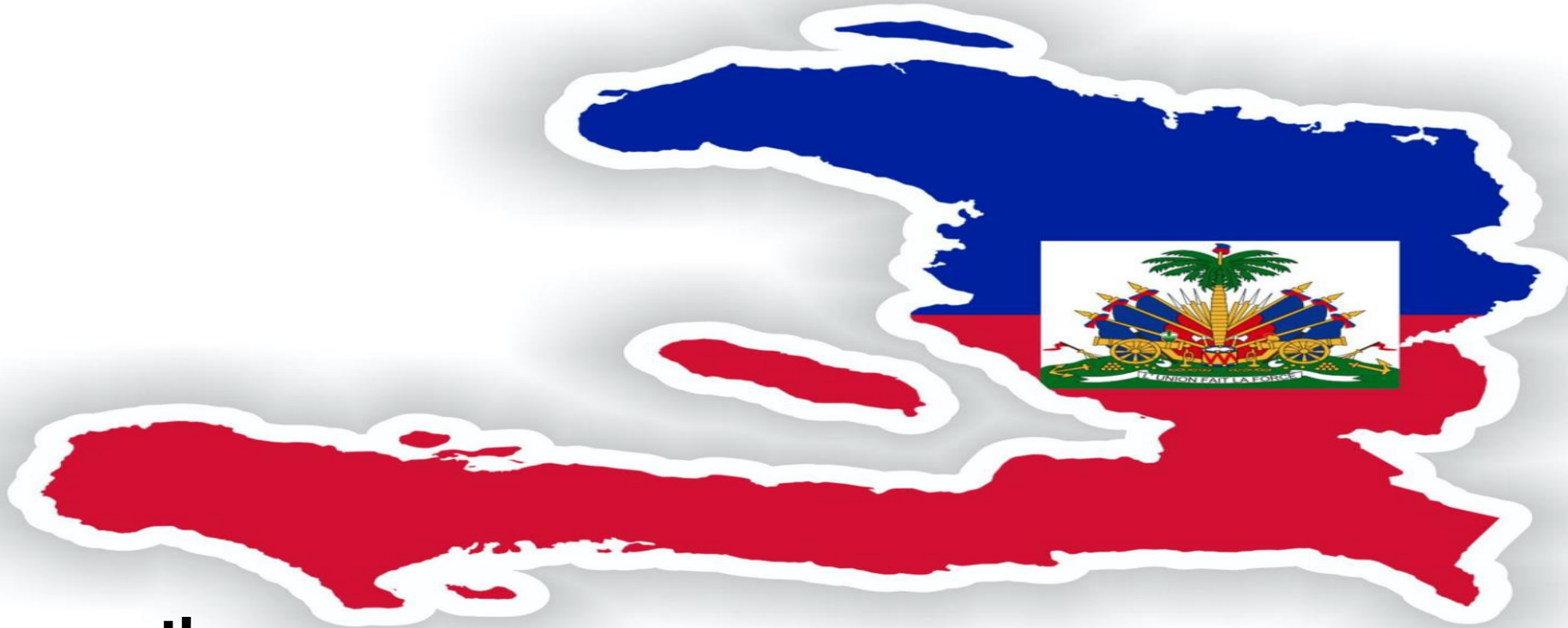


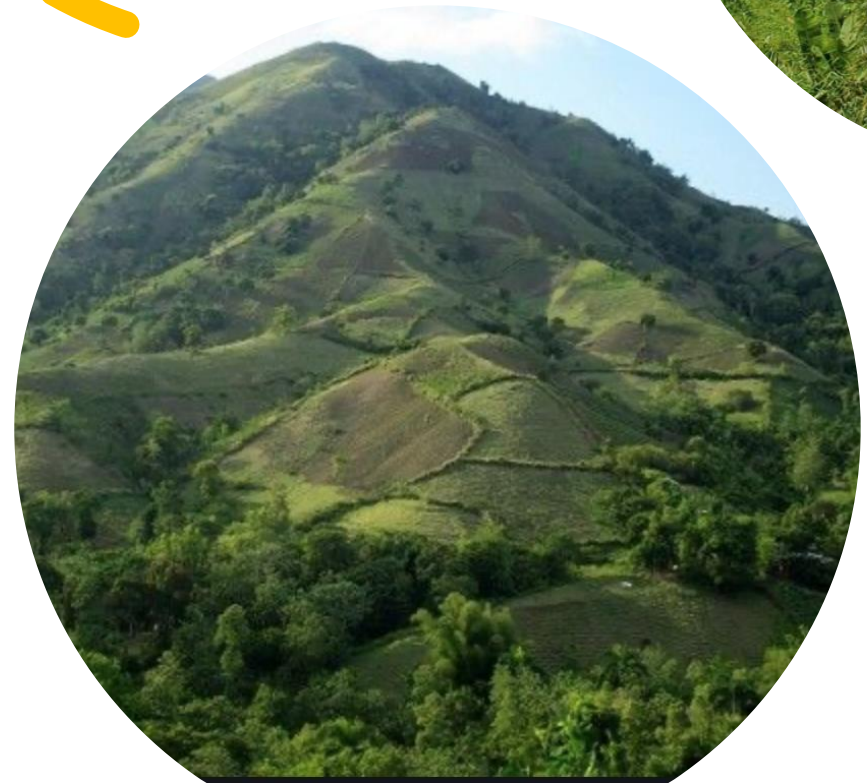
# My Haitian Culture & My cross-cultural experiences in the U.S



By Max Alexis

# Geography/ climate

- Haiti is the western part of the Island called Hispaniola and located in the middle of the Caribbean.
- It occupies three-eighths of the island and represents 27750 sq km.
- Haiti is the most mountainous nation in the Caribbean. The climate is tropical, with some variation depending on altitude.
- Haiti has a population of 10,800,000 people for a life expectancy of 63. Port-au-Prince is the capital.





# History /Independence



- During the French Revolution (1789–1799), slaves and free people of color revolted in the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), leading to the abolition of slavery and the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte's army at the Battle of Vertières on November 18th, 1803.
- The independence act was written by Boisrond Tonnerre on January 1st, 1804, that same day Haiti was officially declared Independent.
- Haiti is the first independent black Republic. Famously known for its great anti-slavery, anti-colonialist revolution.
- Haiti is also the symbol of liberty that led to the independence of the countries of South America.

# Flag / Monument



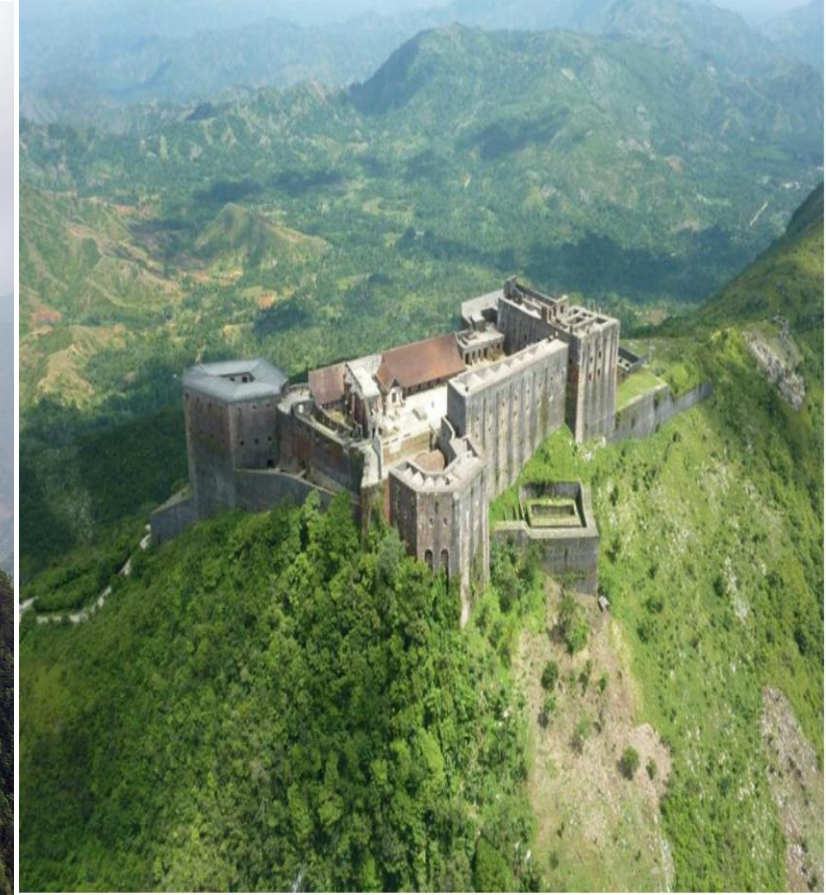
Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who declared Haiti's sovereignty, also became the first leader of Haiti.

His wife, Catherine Flon created the flag by taking a French flag, removing the white parts and then sewing the red and blue together. The white rectangle in the center featuring a coat of arm, the white rectangle states, "Unity is Strength".

Henri Christophe, official of the army had built many palaces symbol of sovereignty all over the country.

It was also in order to protect the country against spontaneous attacks from European countries such as France, insulted by the slave's achievements.

The Citadelle Laferriere is an exceptional monument and historical site in the region of the Caribbean, symbolizing the Haitian slave revolution, liberty, and independence. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982.



# Economy

- The Haitian economy depends mainly on agriculture and tourism.
- Trade represents over 60% of economic life and women play an important role.
- Traditionally called “Madan Sara”, they transport and sell the agricultural products in large cities.
- Labadie is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Haiti, it is a resort located on the northern coast of the country.



## Culture



## Language

As verbal expression, Haiti has 2 official languages are creole and French.

Creole is the native language, spoken by all Haitians and mostly used at home between close friends and family members. French is learned in school and spoken only by 50% of the population, it is mainly used during the official events.

Haitians are very expressive people and do not really have a lot of non-verbal expression. The very few ones are the facial expression are mainly used to express any uncomfortable or negative situations (sadness, shame, madness).

## Religion and vodou

Haiti is a religious country; Christianity represents 80% of population and 7 out every 10 people are Catholic.

15% of the population are practicing the traditionally religion called Vodou, it is an African religion that was developed in Haiti between the 16th and 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is a mixed of traditional religions of West Africa and the Roman Catholic.



## Dress

Our dresses, architecture and even our Penal Code are strongly influenced by the French culture.

However, a few traditional one ; the men's T-shirts in this picture are called "Wayabel" and the Ladies dresses are called "Kabarella".



## Food

Haitian cuisine also called Creole cuisine consists of cooking traditions and practices from Haiti. It is a blend of several culinary styles that populated the western portion of the island, namely the African, French, indigenous Taino.

Among the most popular ones let's note the black rice or diri Djondjon , the griots Fritay , the Tchaka and the most popular one the Soup Joumou or Haitian Pumpkin Soup.

It is the tradition to eat Soup Joumou to celebrate the New Year and also the Haitian revolution because January 1<sup>st</sup> is the Haitian independence Day.

# Society

## Norms, Values, Socialization, Stereotypes.



Haiti is a religious and very conservative country, with a strict way of living in society. The society also values marriage and specifically of union of people of different sex, polygamy is not allowed, and free union is socially degraded.

In the daily social interaction, the oldest person become the natural leader and leads the conversation. Cutting people off or raising voice is disrespectful.

You must be decently, properly dressed in public, in some places you may even not be allowed to enter.



95% of the Haitian population is Black and 5% mixed, also called Mulatto & white, they control more than 85% of wealth.

The society is patriarchal, the men control every single aspect of life, in the family, in the public and private administrations.

The family is the basic social structure.

Family in the Haitian household refers to large family, with kids, parents, grandparents, and sometimes the cousins too. As individual you represent your family wherever you go, if you do something bad it is like your family did it.



However, Haitians are not always friendly with strangers, they are suspicious. This resulting to the post revolution impact, trauma linked to exclusion, racism, and a very difficult time the new nation faced after being free in 1804.

Most of the European countries did not want to keep a balanced and fair relation or to trade with the new nation. Situation that constitutes a blockage to the country's development.

Nowadays, Haitians perceive Mullato as opportunist and dictator, because they control the economic life of the country. The mixed Haitians are stereotyped, receiving threats and are getting discriminated against daily. They are not recognized as Haitian.



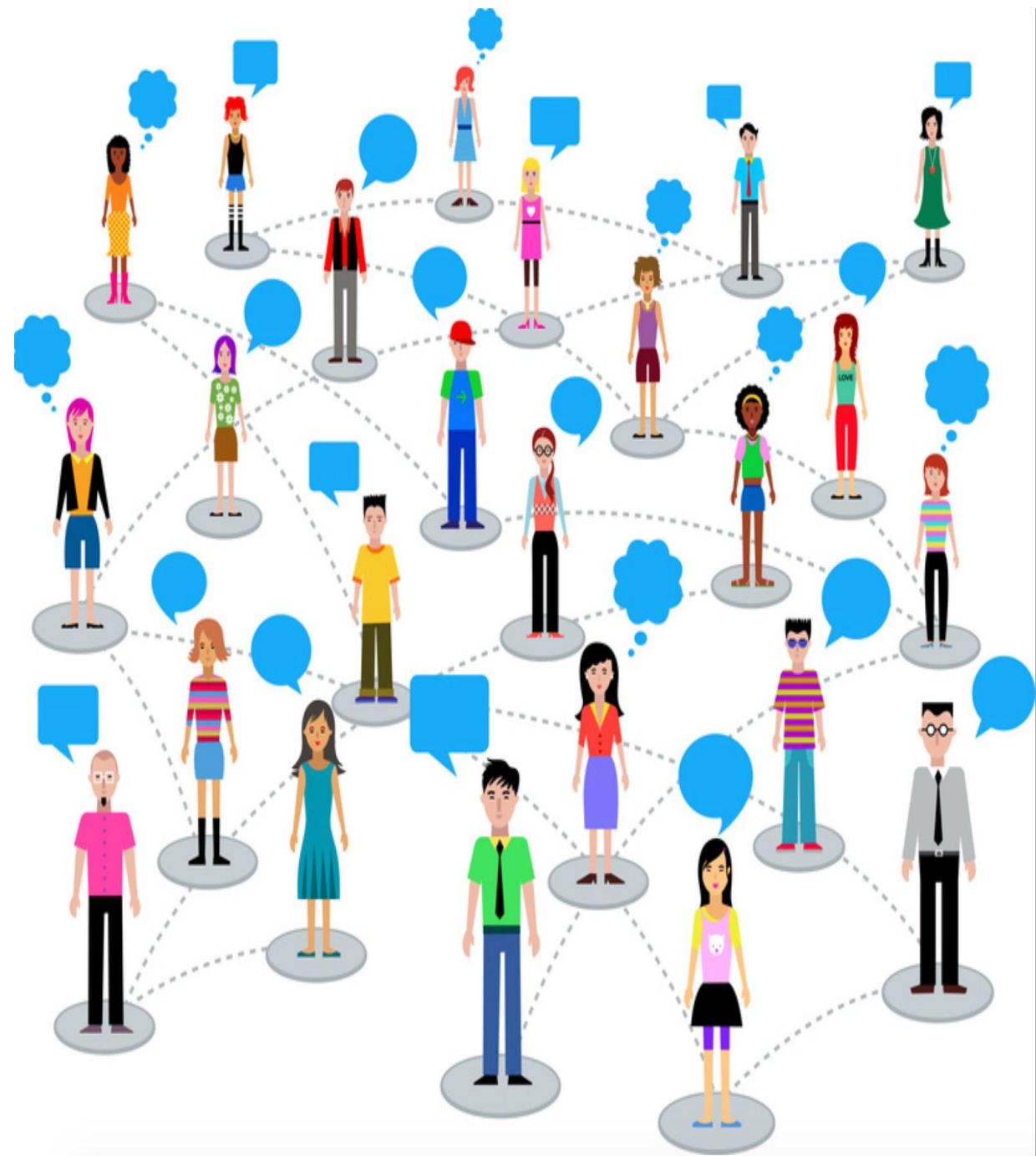
Homosexuality and transgender people are not tolerated. Feminism is among the movement badly perceived in the society too. Society patriarchal like Haiti often tend to bureaucratize gender inequalities and discrimination against women.

# Cross-cultural experience in US

## Differences and shock

- Learning of English and dealing with stereotypes due to strong accent.
- Domestication of animals such as dogs.
- Freedom Guarantee for all individuals, (all gender and sexual orientation), for examples protection of transgender and Gay people's rights to adopt kids and to get married.
- Society value equality of gender  
socialization is more balanced in workplace, no gender superiority.
- Social interaction in the families is less is submissive. In my culture, social interaction in the family is authoritarian very submissive.

For example, it is mad disrespectful to turn back on parents or to cut them off when they are talking. Parents give hard punishment but, in the US, they avoid physical punishments.



My cross-cultural experience was like a quick transition from a very conservative to more opened society, with new ideas. The institutions play major role in the process of socialization of individuals, the values and norms are shaped by level of production and development of each society, which makes them unique.

American society is more developed so consequently socially more emancipated. The people are exposed to new ideas and society value more personal freedom and self-identity. This should lead to a culture more opened where the people can be more expressive.

It is necessary to understand that the set of behaviors, of standards, of beliefs shared by people in society are social, contextual, dynamic and relative to each environment or country. Understanding these facts also helped to confidently work on ourself while embracing the differences.



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