Community After All? An Inside Perspective on Encampment in Haiti

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This article demonstrates the limits of the camp as a place to live from the point of view of displaced people: what is a camp for those who live inside? Why not envisage the camps as central place, where life is going on with, or without, the humanitarian help? It studies the differences between two different settlements created after the 2010 earthquake. One has been formally set up by non-governmental organizations but has ended up being abandoned by the humanitarian organizations due to troubles with the inhabitants. The other is a spontaneous settlement that has absorbed populations from other camps, and is today in a working condition organized informally by inhabitants themselves. In the first case, experiences of community and belonging of the post-earthquake population seems have been frustrated; in the second case, these sentiments could be an explanation of the informal forward projection. Thus, they pass from a liminal statement to a central perception. The monographic approach permits understanding the dynamics and the identitarian background of the installation in the camps.

Grasping the Borders of Encampment and Settlement in Haiti from the Inside

Starting and Ending Encampment

Three years after the earthquake that hit Haiti on 12 January 2010, at least 347,284 displaced people were still living in 450 camps, of which 337 are on private land, according to the UN Emergency Shelter and Camp Management Cluster (DTM 2013). The continued presence of people in camps points to the importance of the encampment process, whereby the move to set up camps is associated with a political logic: a logic that controls human life (Harrell Bond and Verdirame 2005). The end point of encampment can vary but there is one which is of particular interest to us here: that is a shift from a camp to a settlement. How do displaced people modify the place where they live, do they have the support of the 'humanitarian

apparatus'—the fluid humanitarian discourses and practices—to borrow the term first used by Foucault (Pandolfi 2003)? This article's ethnographic approach uses monographic observation[1] in order to gain insight into the displaced persons' feelings and perceptions, as well as to take stock of any investments they make in their environment—the camp—and in the humanitarian relationship. It allows us to reverse the gaze towards the humanitarian apparatus and to explore how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are operating from the camps' inside point of view: that of the camp residents.

This article will focus on two different camps. The profile of the Haitians camps is very diverse. Some benefit from the assistance of various NGOs and are highly structured, offering the prospect that the displaced people living there may become permanently established on the spot: these are the 'formal' or 'regulated' camps. But, in other cases, the 'spontaneous' or 'informal' camps may infringe the property rights of the land on which they are located and, as the NGOs' resources run out, the poorest are thrown back to their usual means of survival: fending for themselves ('*demele*' in Creole). This article will compare two adjacent Haitian camps located to the north of the capital, Port-au-Prince: Corail, a formal camp, and Canaan, an informal one. It will demonstrate the limits of the camp as a place to live in from the point of view of displaced people: what is a camp for those who live inside? How can we determine whether it is a place to take refuge, or a place to create a new frame of life? I will show that camps can be envisaged as central places that integrate in the urban life these who have been excluded by poverty and the damage caused by the earthquake.

When the camps were first created, despite their differences, Corail and Canaan were both 'floating spaces'—uncertain places called *heterotopia* by Foucault (2009: 36): 'other spaces', where people are pushed aside. But, unlike the humanitarian apparatus of the formal camp, the actions of the inhabitants in Canaan are guided by an informal logic. This observation raises questions about the camp's social and urban limits and contributes to regarding its political and urban nature, and even about its very identity.

Thus, this article stresses how the different logics of encampment and ending camps have interacted, and even entered into competition. First of all, it presents the general context in Haiti and describes the humanitarian apparatus with respect to camps. It then goes on to analyse how the 'formal camp' of Corail escaped the NGOs' humanitarian apparatus, prompting their departure when they thought it becoming unmanageable, and then how it has started to merge with Canaan, its neighbour. Canaan's informality has gone hand in hand with forms of solidarity that allow individual survival because of the survival of the group, and which run in parallel with individual strategies. The case of the little informal Mosaique Camp is used to illustrate how this situation allowed new groups of displaced people to be integrated into the site, after which the settlement dynamics at work in Canaan are analysed.

We will see that Corail, the camp set up by humanitarian organizations, tends to inhibit any long-term settlement—the encampment—due to the insertion of bureaucratic management procedures that do not take into account the social dynamics. On the contrary, the informal Canaan shows that, in the specific post-earthquake context, its inhabitants can be characterized as a supportive community. Left on their own, they are better off without any form of intervention, including governmental services.

The conclusion emphasizes the identity and political dimension of the camp. In contrast with Corail, elements of what could be called a 'community of condition' underlie Canaan's functioning, even though the camp is invisible to the government and NGOs precisely because of its informality, which makes it fall outside the legal framework. I will explain that this 'community of condition', a *naked* condition, is made by inhabitants who start with nothing, like 'naked people' (Agamben 2003), but not without resources: this is their way to solve their lives in precarious conditions.

A Disaster in a Weak Country

Haiti has distinguished itself as the world's first independent 'black' republic, which arose from a slave revolt in 1804. It has gone from being the number one tourist destination in the Caribbean in the 1960s to one drained by successive dictatorships and recurring natural disasters. According to pre-earthquake figures from 2003, 76 per cent of Haitians live below the daily poverty line of US\$2, while 55 per cent live beneath the absolute poverty line of US\$1 per day (UNDP 2004). The livelihoods of the vast majority of the population are based on the economics of day-to-day survival, where each person must invent a way to find the food they will eat that same evening (De Certeau 1990). In these circumstances, unpredictability is the rule, precariousness the norm. And consequently to the structural weakness of the country and instability of the state, this vast and pliable mass of excluded people provides an adjustable variable for Haiti's failing economy and enables the country to function: informality is the way to survive for the majority of the Haitians. Yet numerous charitable, religious, medical or development organizations support the people of Haiti. The United Nations has been present in the country since 2004 through the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti, better known as MINUSTAH, whose mandate has been extended following the 2010 earthquake.

The 12 January 2010 earthquake, the centre of which was located close to the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, was responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people (the numbers of the dead vary from 80,000 to 360,000 (Corbet 2012)), the destruction of buildings with the loss of many documents and the displacement of more than two million people. It also led to the proliferation of external aid, which has proved difficult to channel and coordinate. The 1,500 camps that sprung up in few days in January 2010 were gradually organized by their residents or through the actions of NGOs which

distributed water, food and tarpaulins, installed latrines, ran health clinics, etc. Many of their inhabitants were granted internally displaced person (IDP) status, thereby giving them rights (DTM 2013).

Initially, most of the inhabitants of the camps were people who had lost their homes, but the presence of humanitarian aid and the prospect of access to land in the city centre attracted certain people from very poor areas who sometimes moved from shantytowns neglected by the Haitian state to camps managed by international agencies. Some people living outside the capital were also attracted by the new urban neighbourhoods that grew out of the earthquake, continuing the trend towards urban drift that has gone hand in hand with the gradual impoverishment of Haiti's rural areas (Paul *et al.* 2010; Oliver-Smith 2010). Nonetheless, as the months went by, humanitarian aid progressively dried up, and only those who had no other option were left in the camps, where the living conditions steadily deteriorated, particularly during the rainy season and with the arrival of cholera towards the end of 2010. At the time of my last fieldwork, in 2013, a mixture of very poor people and of those who had lost everything remained in the camps, benefiting from humanitarian aid to a greater or lesser extent, according to where they lived.

Corail Camp: The Humanitarian Imposition

Building a Camp in the Desert

Corail is located 15 kilometres north of Port-au-Prince, in area that is virtually a desert. The camp opened in April 2010 and has two parts—Corail Cesselesse and Corail Sector 3—spread over approximately 25 hectares. In the space of a few days, it received as many as 10,000 people from camps that had reached saturation point in the centre of the city, including the Petion-Ville Golf Club, an up-market area located in the hills above Port-au-Prince.

The camp was created at the request of the United States army, in spite of the reluctance of the Haitian government and many NGOs, who questioned the appropriateness of creating a camp on that particular spot (Katz and AP 2010; World Vision 2011). As well as its distance from the capital and its very arid climate, the district is liable to flooding in the rainy season. Moreover, the area, which had previously been known as Titanyen, was a place renowned for summary executions during the dictatorship of François and Jean-Claude Duvalier. It was also the spot where, for practical reasons, the communal graves that were dug following the earthquake are located. We will see how the setting-up of Corail in this area has caused many problems, leading to a stalemate situation for its inhabitants.

Corail was put together in a very rational way, and administered by various NGOs with responsibility for its management with the aim of meeting emergency needs as best they could. Its design followed the very precise recommendations contained in camp management toolkits, which specify the best way to build and administer camps based on functional criteria: dividing

the camp into blocks, assessment on the basis of an estimated 'typical' family of the number of square meters for each home, of litres of water per person, number of latrines, etc. These recommendations are issued from NGOs' standards (UNHCR 2007; UNDP/IAPSO 2009) whose vocabulary and encompassing terms are sometimes used in this article in order to show how their rigid definition can determine some uncompromising interventions (Sphere Project 2015).

Was Corail intended to offer a site for temporary shelter, or to create a model town based on the assumption of a 'community' created by the encampment, as was suggested by several officials, including President Préval, who stated that, in the camp, 'roads and infrastructure will be built, like a real community' (*Haiti Libre* 2010)?

The 'toolkit' design of Corail is the same as in other formal camps, but is more evidently visible because the camp is far from the city. Its management, primarily only focused on the body's needs, has resulted in a camp that soon gave its inhabitants the impression that they were being subjected to encampment by an external supervision rather than being assisted along the road to reconstruction. Indeed, protests soon arose regarding the provision of aid and the difficulties associated with life in such a hostile location. When a storm devastated Corail in July 2010, the first rumblings of discontent were heard:

> A few people in charge of NGOs present when it all began quickly left in order to save their skins—a fact that was not appreciated by the victims. 'It's obvious that they've sent us here to die', they said bitterly with regard to the Government and NGOs (*Le Nouvelliste* 2010).

The camp's isolation cut its inhabitants off from work opportunities available on the informal urban market, making them dependent on humanitarian hand-outs. When payment for cleaning latrines was halted in summer 2010, there was further tension. For one NGO head,

> paying for basic maintenance risks damaging people's self-respect...Security and cleaning need to be taken care of free of charge and voluntarily in order to consolidate a sense of community.

This view—not applied in other camps—called into question the very meaning of the intervention: how can an organization 'expect people who are hungry to work for free?' asked another camp administrator (*Haiti Libre* 2010).

In this tense atmosphere, certain leaders adopted a classic strategy for gaining power in a humanitarian context and became influential in Corail thanks to their ability to interact with NGOs and the world of the *blan* ('foreigner' in Creole). Those who spoke English or French, who understood the humanitarian apparatus and who knew how to respond to its expectations—those who have social capital and agency—were particularly successful. Indeed, all the leaders that I have interviewed were in a position of

authority before they arrived in the camp, through either religious, economic, charismatic or violent influences. Even though they were not always camp residents and were not genuinely representative of the population, these leaders were accepted by the inhabitants, who saw in them the only way to be heard (Harrell Bond and Voutira 2007). Some of them have sometimes even exacerbated problems, or have over-victimized the displaced, playing up to the clichéd image of passive displaced people in order to demand more aid (Napier-Moore 2005: 13).

These intermediaries, known as 'community leaders/mobilizers/managers' in the humanitarian jargon, were also watched by the displaced people since their interaction with the world of the *blan* meant that they were suspected of making personal gain from their collaboration rather than working for the collective benefit, and particularly of siphoning off money and goods. It is true that these leaders often had an interest in finding work and earning social prestige. That is why other displaced persons, labelled as 'troublemakers' by the NGOs, set themselves up in opposition to them, making it even harder for outside bodies to understand Corail's internal dynamics. There was therefore a quick subjectification of some of the IDPs, who adopted personal and often opportunistic tactics to succeed and increased the differentiations and divisions within the camp. This, in time, allowed the population of Corail to come together around two main concerns: either cooperation with NGOs or opposition to them.

At the same time, transitional shelters were built to replace the earlier hurricane-resistant tents. These *T-shelters*, which are made of imported wood and have a lifespan of three to five years if they are well maintained, were initially rejected by the IDPs because they were considered too small and because they confirmed the half-temporary, half-permanent status of their presence in Corail. Furthermore, the aligned design of the camp prevented them from creating *lakou* (traditional areas of social life often located in the middle of plots belonging to families or groups of families). Nonetheless, the camp has gradually become transformed into a 'village' made up of thousands of shelters laid out in straight lines, like other urban camps that have been earmarked as transitional sites (Salome 2012).

When Camp Residents Oppose the Camp and Their Designated Community

Generally speaking, the exclusion of the inhabitants from projects intended for their benefit and the uncertainty over the camp's future strengthened the dependent power relationship on the humanitarian institutions that IDPs already had to put up due to the precariousness of their situation. The complete break in the humanitarian relationship was prompted by the increasing gulf between the humanitarian apparatus and IDPs, when an NGO attempted to establish a micro-business programme in Corail. Rumours, spread by 'troublemakers' among a population predisposed to consider 'humanitarians' as being responsible for their difficulties for the reasons exposed

before, grew up around the way that the beneficiaries of financial support had been selected. They said mostly that there was partiality. Demonstrations bringing together several hundred IDPs took place in Petion-Ville in April 2012. They were very well organized: buses were hired to transport the demonstrators, suggesting that Corail had been used to further one side in the Haitian political debate and disagreements about the massive presence of the international community. The camp managers and their NGOs interpreted these demonstrations as a form of betrayal and, since they could no longer control Corail or ensure the security of humanitarian personnel, who were sometimes threatened, they withdrew from the camp in the summer of 2012.

The IDPs—who, above all and according to their perspective, wanted greater clarity about the NGOs' programmes, pointing to their lack of coherence and unfairness—were able to be manipulated to the point where they completely rejected the humanitarian intervention. Yet they felt that the NGOs had abandoned them and were punishing them because they had not been 'good beneficiaries'. Since then, Corail has existed without any regular supply of treated water to prevent cholera, even if treated water is one of the major preoccupations of the NGOs, and a way to identify which are the camps helped by them (formal camps) and which are the other informal camps. Then, people buy water in small quantities, making it more expensive as well as being time-consuming and incurring a high social cost, so that some people end up using untreated water. What is more, the latrines have been closed down.

At the time of the Corail revolt, the supposed community of displaced people exploded simply because it never existed: Haitian society is highly fragmented (Tremblay 1995; Corbet and Groupe URD 2012) and IDPs are divided up into small family groups coming from various walks of life. That is why Corail has created multiple forms of resistance and its inhabitants rebelled against the only community that existed for them: the unspecified international community, so undefined in a theoretical sense (Lachmann 2011) but so poignantly concrete for Haitians, and which they sometimes describe as 'disguised occupation' (many Haitians have a strong feeling against the NGOs because they see few results despite their large number: they even commonly speak of 'Republic of NGOs' (Schuller and Morales 2012)). Moreover, by seeking to help the other in a biopolitical mode (Foucault 2004), the humanitarian intervention in Corail paradoxically reduced these same people to a passive form of existence. Via the status of 'beneficiary' that is intrinsic to being an IDP, the international community put the displaced population in the collective position of being a needy community so that the emergence of individual subjectivities, political claims and even the manipulation of IDPs living in camps were either ignored or were seen as an attack on humanitarianism (some similar cases have been studied by Nyers (2006) and Agier (2010)).

Events in Corail therefore confirm the existence of external humanitarian actors' assumptions, as well as the inflexibility of the heads of the

humanitarian apparatus and the dynamics of confrontation that they pro-
voke. As Turner indicates,

> a main assumption in community development and capacity building projects is
> that 'real' refugees are non-political passive victims. 'The projects assume that
> once the refugees are empowered or given voice, they will act in the (objective)
> interest of 'the community'' (Turner 2014:77).

Thus, ignoring power and politics, relief agencies are ignorant of what actu-
ally goes on in the camps. In this space of alienation, every action and every
interpretation is political, 'so paradoxically it is the depoliticisation that cre-
ates the politicisation' (Turner 2014:85).

The IDPs' revolt reveals the malfunctioning of the humanitarian apparatus
which, by assigning the label 'community' to a camp, creates a totalitarian
illusion that echoes Agamben's (2003) ideas: that of a space managed in a
rigid and authoritarian way. The case of Corail demonstrates, however, that
IDPs are not crushed by absolute power over bare life. Agamben's space of
exception—a paradigm of absolute power exerted over life itself—rapidly
enters into confrontation with social evolution. The exception is of more
significance to humanitarians than to displaced people themselves, thereby
creating points of friction. A camp's day-to-day 'care and maintenance' in-
tended to manage IDPs' basic needs are incompatible with the life that is
created there and with local dynamics (Turner 2005: 313). It even runs coun-
ter to Haitian-style day-to-day fending for oneself, since it prevents flexibility,
and instead imposes administrative rigidity. Yet life in the camp is as much
about displacement as emplacement (Agier 2002). Since the NGOs left, most
of the IDPs have rented out or resold their *T-shelters*, or adapted them and
planted trees. Some of them have started restaurants and small shops in the
vicinity of the camp. Others have organized *tap-tap* routes—public trans-
port—from the camp entrance into the greater Port-au-Prince area.

The case of Corail is an example of a camp whose planning forgot social
dynamics. It shows how a humanitarian perspective that ignores displaced
people as social and political subjects is at odds with their aspirations.
Humanitarian principles have been applied at the expense of the social
context: as if displaced people, just like the camp itself, are a-historic. This
approach has deprived Corail's IDPs of their life histories, their networks and
their ability to participate or to resist. It has been reinforced by the purely
technical—even hygienic—approach to camp management that is based
on the fusion of political and biological life and on the legitimization of
rights in the name of the suffering body. In other words, displaced people's
biolegitimacy (the legitimacy based on the body; Fassin 2000), granted by
their IDP status, has taken precedence over social adaptability. Thus, while
the various *toolkits* used to organize Corail are supposed to alleviate suffering
during the emergency period, their lack of flexibility and humanity resembles
a form of external control over the precariousness of human existence which

fails to ensure the camp's transition in such a way that its inhabitants can rebuild more normal, autonomous and dignified ways of life.

Since the NGOs left, Corail's IDPs have been trapped in a dead end: that of a camp no one knows what to do with. As in the refugee camps where there is no possible return and where the temporary turns into an eternity, there is no way out of the camp and its inhabitants remain in a precarious state of endless encampment. The T-shelters have now started to disintegrate, yet there is still no long-term re-housing solution for the IDPs. Although responsibility for the camp has been passed on to the local commune of Croix-des-Bouquets, President Michel Martelly's government, elected in 2011, continues to neglect the camp that was created by his predecessor. Corail's displaced population therefore hesitates either to set up home there permanently or to leave for another place where they can have more influence on their destiny, as if they were closed in spatially and morally in a temporary 'camp shape' with no one knowing what will become of it. In order to open up the possibility of something other than just waiting, they use various strategies to interact with the neighbouring site of Canaan. For instance, families split up, some keeping the Corail T-shelter, while others go to reserve a space in Canaan. Whereas previously they looked to the urban centre of Port-au-Prince, they now see their informal neighbour as a unit that might offer them a livelihood. In this way, the IDPs try to make the most of the advantages offered by both sites. In short, observation shows that, in the formal camp of Corail, the unity shaped by the experience of joining a camp stops functioning. The IDPs are then attracted by the nearby informal camp, whose cohesion—which we will subsequently refer to as the 'community of condition'—allows life projects to be successfully carried out.

Canaan, a Vast but 'Invisible' Camp

The Informal Organization of Encampment

Some of the first inhabitants of Canaan explained to me how they arrived in the area. In January 2010, the vast area around Corail was still virtually uninhabited but, following the devastation caused by the earthquake, a few displaced people moved there due to the lack of space in the city. They were joined there by hundreds of other households after April 2010 when a decree signed by President Préval declared 5,000 hectares to the north of Port-au-Prince 'of public utility' (*Le Moniteur* 2010). This decree was intended to allow IDPs to come to live outside the city, where land pressure was intense and where rental prices increased a lot, squeezing out the poorest. This is a common phenomenon in Haiti, where the poor rural people arrive in cities (rural exodus) that are not prepared to welcome them, which then creates new precarious districts in or outside the city: slums that became 'rurbanization' districts. For example, in response to the question 'where would you go if you had to leave the camp?', 53 per cent of IDPs in the camps within the

city answered 'I don't know' (OIM-Acted 2011: 4). The area therefore appeared to offer a solution to many of the displaced following the closure of a number of camps in 2011 and 2012. The site, renamed Canaan after a place of worship that was located there, has since filled up, whilst the metropolitan area has become less congested.

A few NGOs had operated in Canaan during the early stages, but they quickly withdrew once the emergency phase came to an end. They were waiting for the legal status of the site, which was contested by the landowners who were seeking compensation, to be sorted out. Haiti's land ownership system is highly complex and it is often hard to understand who owns a piece of land given the various historical and legal twists, both formal and informal, it has been subject to (Oriol and Dorner 2012). Everyone was waiting for the government to give more indications as to its intentions for the area. Moreover, Canaan received groups of people who were often abandoned because they were very poor: the internally excluded whom Zygmunt Bauman has crudely described as 'human waste' (Bauman 2004). By way of example, two-thirds of the inhabitants of Canaan interviewed during my fieldwork were born outside the capital and had migrated to Port-au-Prince at the time of the earthquake where they were living in precarious rental accommodation in shantytowns. Just under half had no identification documents—lost or not given by a corrupted and enfeebled administration—which prevents them from having access to various aspects of citizenship such as administrative procedures or care, and makes them stateless in their own country (Kaelin 2010), like the stateless 'outside the law' (Arendt 1972: 253). Bearing in mind that it brings together some of the most excluded sectors of Haitian society, and that it was ignored by both NGOs and the government whilst it was growing, we can say that Canaan has been invisible to the authorities and humanitarian apparatus. Their attention was instead focused on the most central and visible of the camps, such as those in the wealthy areas or located in front of the presidential palace. Yet, when, at the end of 2012, it was estimated that 54,045 people were living in one part of Canaan (DTM 2013), international observers put forward the figure of more than 150,000. Different neighbourhoods have grown up according to where the IDPs came from, as they often arrived together when a camp in the city was closed. The names of these areas are biblical, such as Canaan I, II, III, IV, V, Jerusalem and New Jerusalem, Village Grace de Dieu, etc.—a reminder that Haiti is replete with religious references (Hurbon 2004) and that Canaan is also considered a 'Promised land' for the displaced. Indeed, a lot of churches lead a faith-based market in Canaan, in order to develop their dominance on the area. One of the districts, which we will come back to later, is known as Mosaique Camp.

The first people to arrive in Canaan established committees, as was often the case in the camps in the cities. Although they are supposed to be representative, these committees are often self-appointed. Their members manage a given space, dividing into various groups managing water, the environment,

security and so on. They create a local administration of the space and people, as 'self made men' or 'big men' (Médard 1992), as most of them had done before the earthquake on their previous environment. These committees have multiplied in camps where the early humanitarian interventions promoted the emergence of community leaders, who presented themselves to outside institutions as the camp's main spokespersons, at the risk that—as in Corail—they fail to present the truth about the difficulties in the field. The heads of the committees in Canaan are often former leaders of districts in Port-au-Prince who command respect because of the sometimes violent control they exerted over their old territories. Such is the case of Manuel (a pseudonym), who heads one of the oldest areas of Canaan. After being abandoned by his parents when they migrated to the capital, he lived in the very poor and violent neighbourhood of Cité Soleil, mixing with *chimères*—armed militias that sowed terror during the Aristide dictatorship. After the earthquake, he heard an acquaintance talk about Canaan and decided to go there in order to 'leave the hell of Cité Soleil'. Since March 2010, he has been organizing the area and has jointly founded the associations that have grown up there. Although he did so as part of a strategy to create and preserve his own personal power, he has since tried to manage the site just like a mayor concerned for the general welfare of his district—knowing that his success will guarantee his personal position.

Like him, the other people in charge of the committees in Canaan appear to be aware of what is at stake in the creation of a new 'ideal' neighbourhood and its development. 'We've organised ourselves so that we are strong. We decided to make peace with each other through the organisations so that we do not end up fighting,' said one leader. For example, in one of the areas, young men who 'caused problems' were thrown out in order to maintain security. Manuel added: 'We do not want Canaan to become a ghetto like elsewhere. We are helping the state reduce the overcrowding in the city' (interviews in September 2012). A Presidential Commission to Build Canaan has also been created, to which each new arrival must pay money for collective infrastructure. These facilities have never been built, but the Commission has managed to impose its authority out of fear and the hope arising from its status. Moreover, in most of the neighbourhoods, the heads of the committees express suspicion about any external project, including any of the state's, which was still absent from the site in 2013. This situation allows the leaders to protect their community, but also to manage their districts alone. They often stress their independence from humanitarian interventions: such a stance reassures them in the face of the feeling of rejection by the humanitarian presence in the country, which we will not go into here, but which is very widespread and can be summed up by the notion that 'humanitarians get rich off our backs'. This independence also places a value on people's dignity, which is often swept aside by projects done to the species-body, a power focused on man-as-species (Foucault 1997). Aid is accepted primarily when it comes from religious bodies, when it is one-off

and, above all, when it can be controlled. But this independence is also a means, for some groups, to impose their authority and their control over certain markets that develop (particularly the rental market), and even to extend their network of influence with a view to furthering political ambitions. For competing groups headed by local strongmen, the emergence of Canaan is viewed as a new opportunity for territorial control.

Canaan is therefore a place born of the gradual arrival of people who have come looking for a piece of land, a shelter and hope. As it has grown, the rental market has grown with it, as well as many food stores or construction depots, restaurants and so on. Some infrastructure has been installed: electricity has been pirated from the road under the direction of local leaders at Manuel, increasing their popularity and enabling them to charge its users. Privately managed water cisterns have been built, and roads have been marked out and named so that the water lorries can fill them. Trees were distributed to the inhabitants in March 2011 and everyone was encouraged to plant food crops, providing some shade for the site. A private health centre, equipped with a scanner, has even been opened, even though it is too expensive for most of the local population. Churches with schools attached to them have sprung up. Religious leaders gain the loyalty of their flock, then start a private school to which the children of the faithful are sent—a scheme which ensures the religious leaders' wealth, often at the expense of their parishioners and the quality of teaching (Hurbon 2004).

While the site's apparent anarchy seems hard to decode from an external viewpoint, the IDPs in Canaan have nonetheless organized themselves in such a way as to create a coherent way of life. They have made sense of it and have made a production of locality (Appadurai 1996). To sum it up in a single phrase, the 'community of condition' cobbled together in Canaan, despite all its constraints, allows displaced people to muddle through and therefore take possession of the land in order to carry out their life projects. But only the wealthiest, who often have a stable job in the private sector, and who have been attracted by the space available in Canaan, have the means to live well there, by building a latrine, for instance. The remaining majority must work in the informal sector, starting small businesses on the spot or going back and forth to Port-au-Prince. It is true that Canaan has been quickly regarded as a big manpower reserve. The precarious day labourers, who are heading every day in the capital to find a job, offer a cheap labour force which is now of fundamental importance in the urban economy. Thus, Canaan is also an economic resource for its own informal development (especially in the construction sector) as well as for employers who are looking to find their flexible workforce.

Moreover, Canaan's organization makes up for the lack of any official structures. When Hurricane Isaac struck in 2012, the heads of the committees in Canaan took on the work of the commune of Croix-des-Bouquets by organizing the distribution of first aid kits. Thus, the informal took over

from the formal, with the latter able to reach an emergency an area that is neglected the rest of the time.

From the City to Canaan: The Trajectory of Mosaique Camp

The invasion of the land around Canaan and the sporadic cohesion that made it possible can be illustrated by the example of Cité Mosaique Camp. From the very evening of the disaster, some 130 households whose homes had been destroyed in the commune of Delmas, the economic centre of greater Port-au-Prince, established themselves on a small space used as a football pitch. A leader took charge in what became known as 'Cité Mosaique': the mosaic alluded to by its name was with respect to the diversity of people present on the site, while Cité, in Creole, means 'ghetto' or 'shantytown'. He had a water cistern built inside the camp, as well as some latrines and collective showers, and he interacted with a few NGOs that from time to time distributed treated water, medicines, etc. At the heart of the camp was a small space that became its social centre, recalling the traditional *lakou*. Thus, in Cité Mosaique, as in other spontaneous camps,

> there was a strong determination on the part of the survivors...During the time
> they lived in make-shift shelters, they showed a great capacity for improvisation
> in terms of construction, how community life was organized and more generally
> in the survival strategies that were adopted (Davis 2012: 5).

The example of the small Mosaique Camp demonstrates how IDPs organized themselves without any dependence on the state or international organizations. Solidarity was born out of necessity, and solidarity enabled survival. The precariousness of the situation they shared encouraged them to have a feeling of cohesion. But landownership pressures on the camp increased. Its internal climate deteriorated and the overcrowding gave rise to a squalid environment. In May 2012, all the shelters measured less than 15 m2 for households composed of an average of eight people! Two children caught cholera. In the spring of 2012, the Delmas town council promised US$125 per family to get the IDPs to leave. Having heard about Canaan, an 'Eldorado' where, rumour had it, there was a chance of acquiring ownership, and having nowhere else to go, one group left for Canaan at the end of April, just before Cité Mosaique was violently evicted by militia working for a supposed landowner who wanted to recover this space in the middle of the city (Amnesty International 2013). Eventually, the new camp was built on the edge of Canaan, close to the national road leading to the north of the island. The chief surrounded the site with barbed wire, staked out an area for the shelters and another for a small football pitch, and cleared away the refuse from the former hospital waste disposal site on which the camp was built. That was how Mosaique Camp came into being (no longer 'Cité'), far off the beaten track, with only the proximity of the sea and the road running alongside it as assets.

The camp committee, made up of 12 men and women, attempted to establish a micro-credit project. The 200 inhabitants all contributed towards getting water trucks to come to fill the reservoir with (untreated) water for the camp. They bought a boat, and a fisherman was recruited to provide the inhabitants with fish. No school was set up because the necessary skills were not there: those who could do so sent their children to Port-au-Prince to live with close relatives. After few months, they started to send them to the new schools of Canaan. But, as Camp Mosaique is in the margins of Canaan and because the road to go there is very long and difficult, the children mostly stayed in the camp, without any education. The camp population became overwhelmingly female and young, because the men worked in town during the week and because the camps brought together the most vulnerable. Everyone else found alternative ways out. So, in September 2012, Mosaique Camp was half adult (about 10 per cent of inhabitants were grown men and 40 per cent women) and the other half was made up of young children under 12: 30 per cent were aged between 6 and 12, and 20 per cent from 0 to 5 years old. Most of the women had no work, and most of the households in the camp were eating only one meal a day. Despite their vulnerability and the precariousness of their situation, they tried to make improvements to their living space in order to gain more privacy and make it more resistant to the unceasing wind and frequently torrential rains.

Because of their precarious situation, the initial solidarity that had been the key to better survival was not invested to the same extent in the camp's common welfare: in Haiti, 'individualism never finds its partner in the community' (Labadie 2013). Not because individualism carries more weight, but because it is necessary in Haiti, where the idea of a 'nation' owes more to a pro-independence reading of history than to a social body (Corbet and Groupe URD 2012). Tensions rose. For instance, some people did not accept that those who did not pay for water should have any, and the fishermen sold off their boats and disappeared. The chief had to manage these disagreements by 'playing' on popular beliefs, notably by resting his authority on the belief in *lougarous*, evil night-time spirits that attack children in particular, and which would punish those who behave badly in the camp. As of mid-2013, Camp Mosaique still had a very poor and precarious existence. No one had been able to save enough to build a solid shelter. The inhabitants, despite their shared history, felt liable to be evicted at any moment. But they persisted in claiming the space, which has become their only life option, so that Mosaique Camp has become a new district of Canaan.

From Informal Invasion to Occupied Land

In spite of the differences in people's situations in Canaan, the invasion of the land was based on individual and collective tactics for claiming the space: forming committees, fixing the boundaries of plots of land, building homes, looking after small gardens, dividing into districts. These forms of land

invasion in Canaan, as is true of the way land has been developed, are not new in Haiti. Even the creation of shantytowns with an impetus from the state has happened many times before. Cité Soleil—initially known as Cité Simone, after the name of the wife of the former dictator François Duvalier—was created in this way. Similarly, Canaan is sometimes called Cité Sophia Martelly, after the name of the wife of the current president. Does that then mean it will be transformed into a shantytown?

As it stands, Canaan is not simply an 'incomplete, unfinished form of urbanity' (Agier 2002: 337); it is above all an inchoate city-camp, floating between two states: between the town and the camp, and between *de facto* autonomy and dependence on decisions about its status. Moreover, with time, this location, which had previously been neglected in the days when it was the infamous Titanyen, has become attractive, as it demonstrated by a few sumptuous villas that have been built by wealthy people who sense that the site might become a fully fledged area of Port-au-Prince. Today, Canaan is therefore a potential town: a city in the making, a naked city (Agier 2002), where people are living as in a normal Haitian town, but without any administrative consideration or urban planning from the authorities—a place where there is no regalian power, just the creations made by the invasion and the installation of the IDPs.

After being occupied by people who came to live there in 2010 or more recently, as in the case of Mosaique Camp, the field study shows that Canaan is more than a spontaneous camp: it is a place of encampment. This means that the land there has been organized, given names and projected into the future, as with 'urban dwellers in the making' (Pérouse de Montclos and Kagwanja 2000: 206). Informality is very organized by a lot of unofficial actors, from the inhabitants to the sector leaders. Canaan is composed of a hotchpotch of different groups with varying objectives. Like a shantytown, it is a hybrid town made up of houses built with tarpaulins or cement. At best, Canaan may offer legal access to land ownership and, at the very least, the chance to rebuild a house or run a business for a certain amount of time. This huge informal camp is also seen to provide an opportunity for many of its inhabitants, which is why it has become much more about politics and urban development than humanitarianism. The international community has, moreover, started to ask questions about Canaan's existence and future, encouraging the Haitian state to show some concern about what the site might become in the future. The state is in fact said to be engaged in reshaping Canaan, with plans for building basic infrastructure (Ayiti kale Je 2013). Even though the public utility area was created by presidential decree, these plans—still only on the drawing board—would result in the eviction (the *deguerpissement*) of many IDPs, who are considered 'squatters'. Yet they are likely to rise up against the state taking over 'their' Canaan: 'this is not a camp, it is where I live,' one of them said in September 2012.

What will the future of Canaan be? For the Haitian government, the actual state of affairs will require regulation that will be all the more difficult to

introduce since Canaan's informality has allowed time for various actors to make their mark, particularly since it has allowed groups of people to introduce their lifestyle with complete autonomy and so will be difficult to curb. Some observers claim that the Canaan area (which has gradually expanded to include Corail) is already the largest shantytown in the greater Port-au-Prince area, or one of Haiti's largest agglomerations. This neglect is symptomatic of the usual 'laisser-faire' of Haitian leaders. It is as if Canaan were 'the physical embodiment of the national reconstruction strategy based on self-build' (Noël and Groupe URD 2012: 5): a strategy that allows the forgotten part of the population to fend for itself—so long as they do not cause any problems. Yet Canaan's lack of management also raises a security issue: it could become transformed into a shantytown blighted by the committees that might turn into gangs, or its inhabitants could rise up against the government's plans. While waiting for a determination about his future, Canaan remains in a state of exception because it is invisible to the government and to NGOs, and due to its unclear legal status and the uncertainty surrounding its future. Its inhabitants feel a strong sense of insecurity, which forces them to continue to muddle through day by day, even though they make some investments, such as strengthening their homes, thereby betting on the future. While it is still an informal settlement, Canaan is no longer a camp in people's discourse, yet it continues to be one in terms of its precariousness.

The Identitarian Background of Informal Encampment

Corail has been built as an 'ideal' camp for the humanitarian logistics, but is increasingly emptied of its population. This paradox seems to be observed in other cases, such as in Jordania, where a camp named Azraq has been built by the UNHCR in the middle of the desert in order to unclog the oppressive atmosphere of Zaatari camp. Scheduled to reach 120,000 people in April 2014, it hosts 17,000 people one year after. Many Syrians settle in informal sites closer to the populated areas or try to go to other countries. Are these experiences likely to lead camp makers to a new way of thinking?

Corail's planned space seems to have failed compared to Canaan, whose invasion is illustrative of the passage from the logic of a camp to one of population, resembling an urban genesis. The vast informal camp has seen the emergence of a shared awareness of belonging to the same place (or feeling of belonging): whose inhabitants now call themselves 'Canaéens', give names to the roads, go to churches, have shops, etc. It is reasonable to put forward the idea of a sort of community of misfortune and condition brought about by the earthquake, which was the founding moment for Haitian camps. Since the disaster was very sudden, people were mixed up during the emergency period, particularly in camps. That moment still remains in Haitians' discourse as one of the rare moments when all social classes came together (Corbet 2012). That equalization of living conditions between what are generally impenetrable strata of Haitian society, even

though it was only temporary, was one of the first elements contributing to the fiction of coherence that grew up after the earthquake. Since then, the memory of the camp's founding has remained strong, even though the earthquake was not always the reason people moved there. There is therefore an identity-like affiliation, real or fictitious, to this 'community of condition'. It allows the IDPs to make sense of their situation, sometimes demanding the government and NGOs' attention by referring to this initial event, aware of their image as 'absolute victims' (Rancière 1995). According to several interviews carried out in the course of this study, the scattering of people that followed the closure of some camps and the sprinkling of housing solutions throughout the metropolitan area is a mistake. In dispersing the camp's population, their unity, which was the factor giving them coherence and which provided the basis for them to be able to build new ways of living together, has been taken away.

We have seen that interventions that ignore or downplay community efforts are likely to turn its inhabitants into passive victims, as described in Corail. Conversely, the case of Manuel illustrates the community resourcefulness that goes a long way towards establishing new community organizations. But, at the same time, Canaan is fragile, depending on the grievances of the landowners, the future decisions of the government regarding the area, the individual conflicts and the land-grabbing competition, as shown by the case of Mosaique. Canaan is sometimes described by its inhabitants as a 'Far west': everything is possible and people are organized to do their best but, when something wrong happens, there is no law or any governmental protection.

Thus, the form of solidarity seen in Canaan cannot be considered the same as a 'community' in the sense often used by humanitarian organizations, which define it according to spatial criteria, making it synonymous with a shared identity. It is too restricted in time and it does not show in the daily life of the camp, where individualism takes precedence despite belonging to the same place. Yet, nonetheless, this 'community of condition' calls into question the camp as a place defined by its history, like a partial community spirit. There is a process of belonging in the claims made by IDPs of living in a camp that links their personal history with the collective one (Malkki 1995). In other words, the earthquake provides a strong liminal reference point that legitimates their presence in the camp and their right to 'own' it. It can also allow room for fending for oneself and for autonomy. Concretely, this is expressed through an architectural transition: tarpaulins give way to cement. People or groups of people who were strangers at the beginning have started to come together in economic, social and friendship networks: *moun pa*. In Canaan, for example, the displaced Haitians have created order out of the initial disorder. They no longer always need to leave the camp, which increasingly provides employment solutions and is dotted with small shops, churches and schools. Even though still set apart, Canaan is Foucault's heterotopia incarnate and has become inhabited. It is not a

situation of exclusion, in a camp where they cannot live by themselves, but a settlement process, where unofficial actors regulate the informal.

The contrast with Corail is stark, where only the bare bones of the informal town dwelling that is to be found in Canaan can be observed. Yet it is there that the basic infrastructure lacking in Canaan is to be found: latrines, water for all, etc. But even if, from a distance, the T-shelters give the impression of a multi-coloured village—albeit one that is laid out in straight lines—Corail remains in a state of complete indecision and its inhabitants are 'stuck' in the formal camp. They have been cut off by the humanitarian apparatus, which has deprived them of the means of 'owning' the land, of standing together and creating forms of solidarity that enable them to become organized. Hence, the Corail IDPs remain in a state of dependence due to the uncertainty surrounding the fate of the place where they live, without the ability to organize it in the meantime. They must, moreover, leave the camp in order to be able to subsist in the camp. Yet, rather than living a bare life, they have challenged the humanitarian apparatus that has denied their emergence as political beings. But, because of Corail's rigid 'camp shape', they have not been able to build a coherent living space as in Canaan. The 'community of condition' that is visible in Canaan—even if it is sporadic and opportunistic—has been undermined in Corail by the humanitarian apparatus. By insisting on a 'community' that is believed to be created through the process of setting up a camp, and which is supposed to be needy but willing, and in imposing its management over the species-body and basic human needs, the humanitarian apparatus has increased the fragmentation, even leading to competition, among its inhabitants. This can be summed up, from an internal point of view, by saying that, in Corail, the humanitarian logic has gone *against* the camp.

These examples remind us that the history of the camp is one of a multitude of personal histories, of the way its inhabitants put effort into the camp or fail to do so and the adaptability or not of the humanitarian apparatus. Over and above the non-place (Augé 1992) and even the off-site ('hors lieux'; Agier 2002), the camp should therefore be analysed beyond the logistics of its creation and its pure material existence. It is a place that evolves over time, constantly being reshaped, whose inhabitants try to build a future for themselves rather than staying in a temporary state that is particular to camps. Camps therefore deserve to be seen as central places at the heart of strategies of space, power and identity—places where people from the 'country beyond' (the *mounsayo*, i.e. the peasants and, by extension, all of the very poor (Barthélémy 1990)), whose hidden presence has become visible, are inserted into urban life. Although the inhabitants of Canaan, for instance, remain in a state of exception, abandoned by the government in particular, and even though the area is peripheral, located in between two liminal states (Von Gennep 1909), the site nonetheless resembles a space at the heart of an urban and social construction. What makes the Canaan model attractive is the cohesiveness of its community and the possibilities that exist there. The

site allows investments to be made there, unlike Corail. Thus, one type of camp absorbs another. Being drawn together by the 'community of naked condition' has become a means of protection from land ownership challenges and of opening up opportunities, despite the precariousness and vulnerability of its population. It is a way of constructing 'my place' and of defending 'our place'. Yet, it is in relation to the other and through sharing—whatever it may be—that citizenship is defined (Balibar 2001). Have not the excluded people of Canaan found a new life for themselves in forms of citizenship which, in a formal camp, have been blocked by the humanitarian apparatus?

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