

# Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora

Regine O. Jackson



# **Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora**

# **Routledge Studies on African and Black Diaspora**

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Edited by Regine O. Jackson

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*For Claude and Colette*



# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	xi
<i>List of Images</i>	xiii
<i>List of Maps</i>	xv
<i>List of Tables</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xix
<i>Foreword: Locality, Globality and the Popularization of a Diasporic Consciousness: Learning from the Haitian Case</i>	xxi
NINA GLICK SCHILLER	

<b>Introduction: <i>Les espaces Haïtiens</i>: Remapping the Geography of the Haitian Diaspora</b>	1
REGINE O. JACKSON	

## PART I

### Lateral Moves

<b>1 From the Port of Princes to the City of Kings: Jamaica and the Roots of the Haitian Diaspora</b>	17
MATTHEW J. SMITH	
<b>2 The Dialectic of Marginality in the Haitian Community of Guadeloupe, French West Indies</b>	34
PAUL BRODWIN	
<b>3 The Onion of Oppression: Haitians in the Dominican Republic</b>	51
SAMUEL MARTÍNEZ	
<b>4 On the Margins: The Emergence of a Haitian Diasporic Enclave in Eastern Cuba</b>	71
YANIQUE HUME	



- 5 **Between Periphery and Center in the Haitian Diaspora:  
The Transnational Practices of Haitian Migrants in the Bahamas** 91  
ERMITTE ST. JACQUES

## **PART II**

### **Siting Diaspora**

- 6 **Mediating Institutions and the Adaptation of Haitian  
Immigrants in Paris** 113  
MARGARITA MOONEY
- 7 **The Uses of Diaspora among Haitians in Boston** 135  
REGINE O. JACKSON
- 8 **Haitian Migration and Community-Building in Southeastern  
Michigan, 1966–1998** 163  
CHANTALLE F. VERNA
- 9 **Departing Diaspora’s Future? Forced Return Migration as an  
Ethnographic Lens on Generational Differences among Haitian  
Migrants in Montréal** 185  
HEIKE DROTBOHM

## **PART III**

### **Diaspora as Metageography**

- 10 **Listening for Geographies: Music as Sonic Compass Pointing  
Towards African and Christian Diasporic Horizons in the  
Caribbean** 207  
ELIZABETH MCALISTER
- 11 **The Reproduction of Color and Class in Haitian Bilingual  
Classrooms** 229  
FABIENNE DOUCET
- 12 **Language, Identity and Public Sphere in Haiti’s Diaspora: The  
Evolution of the Haitian Creolists’ Internet Network** 247  
ANGEL ADAMS PARHAM

<b>13 Going Home Again and Again and Again: Coffee Memories, Peasant Food and the Vodou Some of Us Do</b>	<b>265</b>
GINA ATHENA ULYSSE	
<i>Contributors</i>	281
<i>Bibliography</i>	285
<i>Index</i>	307



# Figures

6.1	Evolution of new Haitian asylum requests in France: 1981–2006.	123
7.1	Key events for Boston’s Haitian community.	136



# Images

- 4.1 Tato Milanes in his *cai mama*—interior room of the ritual space or *peristile*—Santiago de Cuba, July 2009. Photo by the author. 85
- 5.1 Shantytown home on New Providence. Photo by the author. 99
- 5.2 Floats from the 25th Anniversary of Independence Parade on the corner of Market Street and Wulff Road, Nassau, Bahamas. Photo by the author. 104
- 7.1 Andre Yvon Jean-Louis in Boston, MA, on October 7, 1974. Courtesy of the *Boston Globe*/John Blanding/LANDOV. 137
- 7.2 Dorchester, MA—Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly, democratic candidate for governor (right) and State Representative Marie St. Fleur (left) on January 31, 2006. Courtesy of the *Boston Globe*/Jim Davis/LANDOV. 138
- 10.1 Lolo and Mimerose Beaubrun of Boukman Eksperyans by Marc Steed. 208
- 10.2 Rara Djakout in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park in the early 1990s. Photo by the author. 214



# Maps

I.1	La Diaspora.	3
7.1	Haitians in Greater Boston, 2000.	146





# Tables

I.1	Official Population Estimates of Haitian Communities in the Americas, by Site	4
6.1	Growth of Haitian Immigrants in France (Excluding Naturalized French Citizens)	118
6.2	Haitians in France by Nationality at Birth and Current Nationality	119
6.3	Haitians Living in the French Antilles, 1999	119
6.4	Haitians Whose Place of Residence Changed from the French Antilles in 1990 to Metropolitan France in 1999	120
6.5	Official Sources of Haitian Migration to Metropolitan France and <i>Les Antilles</i> , 1993–2001	121
6.6	Entry of Permanent Workers by Department and Haitian Nationality, 1993, 1994 and 2000	122
6.7	Haitians Holding a Private and Family Life Card, 2000–2001	123
6.8	Haitian Asylum Seekers in France, 1981–2006	124
6.9	Haitians in France with Temporary Student Status	126
6.10	Department of Residence for Haitians Living in <i>Île-de-France</i>	127
6.11	Sex Distribution of Haitians in France	127
6.12	Haitians in France by Age Bracket	128
6.13	Educational Levels of Haitians in France	128
6.14	Economic Activity of Haitians in France	129

xviii *Tables*

6.15	Unemployment Rates of Haitians in France	129
7.1	Characteristics of Top Massachusetts Places Where Haitians Reside, 2000	148
7.2	Characteristics of Haitians in Massachusetts by Place, 2000	149

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## Foreword

# Locality, Globality and the Popularization of a Diasporic Consciousness: Learning from the Haitian Case

*Nina Glick Schiller*

The term *geography*—with its connotation of space, place, scale, territoriality and units of governance—is too rarely linked to invocations of diaspora. Since the 1990s the term *diaspora* has been increasingly used to signal and reinforce a sense of unity and identity between people, despite their dispersal to disparate locations around the globe. Therefore, the analytical strategy described in this book of researching diasporic experience and consciousness by pluralizing geography is pathbreaking. Moreover, the “geographies of the Haitian diaspora” are a particularly useful case in point for the development of a comparative diasporic studies that is able to encompass locality and globality. This is because the term *diaspora* has become commonplace, not only for scholars of Haiti, but also for people of all classes in Haiti and for persons of Haitian background, wherever they have settled.

The dispersed geographies of Haitian migration documented in this book remind us that different social and geographical positions matter and scholars and political movements neglect them at their peril. The legal, racial, political, social and economic experience of living in a variety of distinctive locations and the interconnections among these places forged through kinship, Internet sites, food, music and religion create a complex mix of solidarity and distance. The simulacrum of common memory contains different experiences, sensibilities, affective states, desires and ideologies of belonging. At the same time, this very diversity may fuel the longing for shared identity and community.

Shortly after the earthquake of 2010 that forever shattered the Haiti invoked in these pages, I spoke to someone at National Public Radio (NPR) who was looking for people to interview about the response of the Haitian diaspora to the tragedy in Haiti. The young man from NPR spoke with matter-of-fact assurance about a Haitian diaspora, unaware of how recent and contested this assumption of commonality has been and of the continuing contradictions and tensions between the geographies of Haitian settlement and the imaginative invocation of a common diasporic identity. In the end, as is often the case, NPR reporters searching for the Haitian diaspora ended up speaking to people of Haitian origin in New York City.

In that moment in Haitian history, it is possible that geography did not matter. It is in the crises of natural disaster, police brutality or collective stigmatization such as the AIDS epidemic that the diaspora as a shared community of pain, suffering, nostalgia and aspirations for a future better, dear Haiti, comes into being. At a time of national disaster such as the earthquake, people may embrace a diasporic membership they otherwise would eschew.

However, as in any invocation of the national, the language of commonality glosses over the world of differences that constitute the experience of daily life. This book brings the impulse toward community together with the simultaneous tensions of differences. Some differences are rooted in the continuing vast disparities of wealth, power, education and associated lines of color that has always been Haiti. (See, for example, Fabienne Doucet's discussion of Haitian bilingual classrooms in the Boston area, this volume.) Others, although linked to these forms of intersecting differentiation, reflect the very varied localities of settlement including the political economies of place described in chapters of *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora*: the distinctive U.S. location of Boston and cities in Michigan, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Eastern Cuba, Guadeloupe, Montréal and Paris. Clearly migrants' identities and degree of transnational connection change and are transformed across both space and time. Diasporic research makes it clear that a sense of shared transnational community is neither a constant despite distance and historical experience nor inevitably lost over the years.

The various contributors to this book assess the significance of geography and history in shaping the Haitian diasporic experience from a range of vantage points. Their explorations make it clear that, as Ermitte St. Jacques (this volume) states:

The destinations that form the geography of the Haitian diaspora demarcate central places as Miami and marginal locations as Nassau that correspond to their position within global and regional geopolitical hierarchies. Power dynamics within the Haitian diaspora, then, mimic the geopolitical configuration of the settlement countries as well as represent the uneven status of migrants within the transnational community. At the same time, local conditions in the different countries of settlement structure transnational identities and practices. The specific social conditions of these destinations speak to the plurality of the transnational experience within the Haitian diaspora.

I quote St. Jacques here at length because in these sentences she underlines the puzzle that is diasporic studies. She stresses plurality and yet speaks of a single Haitian diaspora. If there is a single diaspora, why stress plurality? If there is in fact plurality, do references to the diaspora obscure more than elucidate?

Paul Brodwin (this volume) suggests that there is a binary division between approaches to diasporic identities. One model looks at transnational circuits of memory, nostalgia and ongoing social relationships and sees a uniform Haitian diasporic identity created with transnational space and a shared longing for home. In this “first model, Haitians in Guadeloupe, the United States or Canada regard themselves first and foremost as members of the same supra-local group. Their subjectivity emerges out of a single, if complex set of globally circulating rhetorics, musical forms, religious practices, political projects” (Brodwin, this volume). Brodwin’s second model makes local experience primary. It emphasizes that settlement in disparate places with varying experiences of racialization, possibilities for permanent settlement and social mobility create dramatically different forms of localized collective identity.

Brodwin prefers this second approach. He tells us “undoubtedly, the vehicles of diasporic subjectivity are ideas, people, money and media that circulate transnationally. But people weave them into a singular rhetoric about identity chiefly in response to the situation immediately at hand, and it is often a dangerous situation of marginality and racialized stigma. According to this second model, Haitian migrants living in Pointe-à-Pitre [Guadeloupe], Brooklyn or Montréal du Nord each develop a different notion of their group’s essential and defining characteristics” (this volume). That is to say, the term *diaspora* may be used by Haitians wherever they settle but it is used to mean different things.

However, an overview of the empirical research on diaspora and of the case studies in this book warns against binary thinking. Elements of both models may simultaneously be part of the diasporic experience because the local, national and global are mutually constituting. Place and time are indeed significant in shaping diasporic imaginaries but local variation is produced and altered in relationship to elsewhere. As the book as a whole demonstrates, localized experiences of racialization and Haitian responses to discursive processes of stigmatization and disempowerment have to be understood as simultaneously shaped by the local politics of place—whether the place is Boston, a Paris *banlieue* or a Dominican *batey*—and global narratives about blackness that have been continuing components of what Anibel Quijano (2000) has called the coloniality of power. And Haiti and the continuing imaginary of the Haitian revolution were and are part of the contestation of this continuing form of coloniality, understood as an imbrication of narrative, financial and military power.

Our lives are lived within distinctively different places and yet these places—whether we approach place as cities, nation-states or regions—are not bounded. Localities and nation-states are interconnected and interpenetrated by their positioning within the ongoing processes of the construction and destruction of capital, globe-spanning discourses including the politics of representation and migrants’ transnational social fields (Glick Schiller 2010; Harvey 2006; Massey 2005).



The developing scholarship of transnational processes and diasporic relationalities and the daily political identities each of us assume must address this ever-changing dynamic of simultaneous difference and interconnection. This complexity is a significant theoretical and empirical challenge for scholars of diasporic experiences. As in so many cases in which theory confronts historical experience, the Haitian case proves to be a useful one from which to think and theorize. This is because people in Haiti have been among the first to experience and articulate so many globe-spanning historical processes, including New World conquest, national liberation, neocolonialism and production of a racialized dual consciousness.

To address the simultaneity of relationship and difference contained within Haitian invocations of diaspora, it is useful to trace the popularization of the term by tracing the steps between the situation in the 1960s, before the term *diaspora* was known within a Haitian context, and the current situation in which *diaspora* is a term of reference self-consciously deployed by Haitians living in dispersed localities. In 1969, when I set out to explore the dynamics of Haitian migration and migrant identity, much of the Haitian dispersal documented in the pages of this book had not begun and the term *diaspora* was unknown to all but Haitian theologians. Yet Haiti did have a significant migration history. As Mathew Smith (this volume) notes, Haitian slaves and slave owners contributed to the cultural mix of other Caribbean islands, as well as to the United States in the period of the Haitian revolution. The sugar industries of Cuba and the Dominican Republic were built with Haitian labor (Hume, this volume; Martínez, this volume). Haitian professionals became part of the efforts to construct postcolonial Africa. Persons of varied class backgrounds from sailors to intellectuals had been making their way to the United States from at least the beginning of the twentieth century and this flow increased in the 1950s and quickened in pace with the political repression and economic disruptions brought on by the advent of the Duvalier regime. However, until the 1980s few scholars of Haiti made an effort to think about these migrations as a common experience or examined the relationship between these various migrations and Haiti.

Not only was there no sense of membership in a diaspora among Haitian immigrants in New York in the 1960s, there was also no invocation of a "Haitian community." This was true whether Haitians were speaking about their presence in New York or the United States; there was certainly no global term of reference. Political divisions and historic differences of class and color were central in organizing immigrant life. However, this began to change in relationship to the intense globally interconnected national liberation, antiracist and anti-imperialist struggles of the 1960s. These struggles engendered a language of contestatory politics that made visible ongoing processes of racialization, imperial domination and national oppression. This context shaped the Haitian experience in New York and the anti-Duvalierist struggles in Haiti.

However, much of the thrust of these political movements was domesticated by various U.S. governmental policies that encouraged identity politics. A program that promised to “empower” the urban poor through “maximum feasible participation,” which was initially pioneered by the Ford Foundation, was implemented within a federal antipoverty program that funded local community groups organized along ethnic lines (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller 1975, 1977). In historic immigrant gateways such as New York City ethnic institutions and politics had actually long been part of local dynamics of power. New York City, with its long history of immigrant politics in which those who aspired to political leadership on a local or a national base were able to come to power on the base of ethnically organized constituencies, was a focal point of the emerging identity politics.

As part of this U.S. form of identity politics, Haitians settling in New York City received active encouragement to organize themselves as an ethnic group (Glick Schiller 1975, 1977; Glick Schiller et al. 1987a, 1987b) Although the tripartite nature of the process is rarely acknowledged publicly, immigrant settlement in gateway cities in the United States generally has been a process of simultaneous cultural assimilation, ethnic organizational differentiation and transnational connection. At different times and different places, one or another of these processes has been given prominence in public policy. In the 1970s, New York City institutions, long imbued with the ethnic politics of the city, responded to the federal and charitable encouragement of displays of cultural diversity by further fostering ethnic community organizations and displays of ethnic identity.

A handful of Haitian immigrants, some with a history of local-level politics in Haiti and others with the legitimacy of authority bestowed on them as Catholic priests, took up the challenge of creating social service organizations in New York City in the name of the “Haitian community.” In contrast, most other Haitians of the middle class and elite in New York spoke of those who settled in New York in terms of a Haitian colony. They invoked the sense of an expatriate colony of temporary settlement that would soon return to a post-Duvalier Haiti. Meanwhile, most immigrants from Haiti got on with their lives, with people of all class backgrounds initially primarily obtaining working-class jobs in the small factories that were still part of the New York metropolitan area or in services industry employment, working as parking attendants, janitors and nursing home aides.

The term *diaspora* was first used in New York in the 1980s by the Haitian Fathers in their efforts to organize a grassroots mobilization of Haitian immigrants against the Duvalierist dictatorship. The Haitian Fathers were a group of priests steeped in liberation theology, with transnational ties to Europe and Latin America as well as Haiti. They became part of the leadership of the Haitian “community organizations” in New York City that had developed in the 1960s in response to the ethnic organizing fueled by the antipoverty programs. The Haitian Fathers, in their mobilization of forces

to “rebuild Haiti,” tried to build on and supersede this New York-based ethnic group organizing.

To understand these developments it is important to place them in local and global contexts. By the mid-1980s, the political economy of New York, the United States and the world, identity politics in U.S. cities, and the political situation in Haiti were all being shaped by a worldwide restructuring of processes of capital accumulation. The 1970s was a period of global financial crisis with the movement of industrial production from the United States and Europe to locations in the global south and the development of a neoliberal agenda. A number of countries instituted neoliberal measures, such as privatization, the devaluation of national currencies, reduction of state services and subsidies of basic commodities and the abolition of tariffs on imported goods. These measures began to be introduced in Haiti under the regime of Jean-Claude Duvalier, which began in 1971. In response to this global economic restructuring—often accompanied by increased political corruption and repression—global migration increased and increasing numbers of immigrants from all around the world began to arrive in U.S. gateway cities such as New York, including Haitians. Those Haitians who could not travel by plane tried to leave Haiti by boat. Meanwhile, New York City went bankrupt in 1975, accompanied by deindustrialization and cuts in public services.

Public response in the United States and the Americas, in general, to economic restructuring led to anti-immigrant sentiments, with Haitian “boat people” becoming part of a growing public image of a nation under siege from waves of undesirables. Efforts to organize Haitian immigrants during the 1980s, including around concepts of ethnic group identity, community and diaspora, were galvanized by the arrival of Haitian “boat people” and the struggles that arose around their suffering and stigmatization. While many in the Haitian middle class and elite tried to distance themselves from images of ragged desperate refugees, Haitian rights activists and U.S. social movements struggling against racism and for social justice forged coalitions to protest the detention of those who fled by boat. These coalitions made visible links between movements against the Duvalier regime in Haiti and efforts to win rights for Haitians to settle in the United States and Canada.

It was within this synergy of protest and organizing efforts that the Haitian Fathers began to popularize the term *diaspora*. In 1985, just before the Duvalier regime was overthrown in Haiti, Josh DeWind and I, together with researchers of Haitian background including Carole Charles, Georges Fouron, Antoine Thomas and Mary Lucie Brutus, conducted a study to explore the identity concepts that were being used to build organizations composed of Haitian immigrants. Of the ninety-six Haitian leaders in the New York metropolitan area interviewed, only those leaders who were directly linked to the Haitian Fathers or were part of Haitian media had heard of the term *diaspora*. Others knew nothing about the term, although one helpful

respondent offered to look it up for us in a dictionary. Nor were the leaders we interviewed generally comfortable with the concept of Haitians as a U.S. “ethnic group” and those few who used the term *ethnic* did so primarily in discussion with funding agencies and New York City politicians.

In the same year, U.S. foundations supported efforts to bring together Haitian leaders based in other cities with those in New York to evoke a national Haitian immigrant community organization but there was little interest. However, within New York the term *Haitian community* began to be a term that could be used to galvanize local political action in the streets or bring people to Washington DC to demonstrate. First to protest the detention of Haitian boat people and a few years later to protest the incorrect assumption that Haitians were vectors of the HIV virus, Haitians in the thousands and tens of thousands took to the streets. Speakers claimed to speak for the Haitian community.

Yet, a decade later the term *diaspora* had become part of Haitian *Kreyòl*. By 2010 it became deeply entangled in the common sense of Haitian identity in New York, south Florida and in Haiti. In other places of Haitian settlement, it became generally known although not uniformly invoked. The term *Haitian diaspora* also was routinely used in public discourse in the United States by a range of actors, including U.S. local and national politicians and the media.

What brought about this transformation in self-reference and public reference and why does locality still matter in the degree to which and frequency with which people of Haitian background make use of the term? The variations of Haitian identity are explored in this book and the time has certainly arrived for this exploration. It is important, however, for scholars to keep in mind three points about the current use of the term *diaspora* as differentiation of the Haitian experience. First of all, the reason for the current exploration of variation is that at this point a common language of diasporic identification has indeed emerged. Second, whereas this diasporic identification is currently in some ways taken for granted, it is actually quite recent. Finally, the normalization of the term *diaspora* within the Haitian migration experience is part of broader global transformations.

The emergence of the widespread use of the term *diaspora* must be linked to the rapidly changing configuration of world conditions and Haitian political configurations in the past two decades. By the 1990s, the global neoliberal restructuring that continued to exacerbate local and national structures of inequality had produced intensified migration and political destabilization in the global South and within Europe. It was at that moment that a number of migration scholars called for a new paradigm to study migration and offered terms such as *transnationalism* (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1990; Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992; Kearney 1991; Rouse 1991) and *diaspora* (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Chow 1993; Radhakrishnan 1994). In response, intellectuals of migrant background increasingly introduced these terms into homeland narratives

and strengthened an identity politics that linked political movements in homelands and lands of settlement.

Many Haitian intellectuals, people of various class positions, traditional political leaders and those within grassroots movements found in the term *diaspora* a way to highlight the simultaneous duality of the Haitian migration. The term resonated with the fact that in various localities migrants were settling in, working and building families and friendships. These family networks and friendships extend to many different localities of settlement so that the domain of Haitian settlement became a transnational social field. And at the same time many Haitian migrants were simultaneously sending money to Haiti, dreaming of return and building second homes in Haiti. Those of Haitian background including the second generation, who might not directly be investing in or communicating with Haiti, were often connected through ties of kinship, friendship or religious community to others who did retain direct relationships to Haiti.

But the term *diaspora* has always been one of distance as well as connection. Many migrants have attributed their experience of distance to either physical distance or to the volatility, insecurity and unpredictability of the situation in Haiti. But the problems of the disconnections within the connectivity of diaspora are structural. The distance of diasporic connection was and continues to be a product of the ways being Haitian varies across divisions of age, gender, class, skin color, as well as the length of time away from Haiti, the generation of migration and the locality of settlement (see Drotbohm, this volume).

If geography has been one factor of differentiation in the meanings of diaspora, once the term became widely accepted, the dynamics of change in Haiti and globally continue to be a factor that generate anew *diaspora* as a shared term of reference. By the millennium, the global context for diasporic identities began to change again. To counter the growing inability of states, including those in Europe and in the United States, to provide basic services and security for their citizens, states of migrant settlement around the world revitalized nationalist discourses, histories, symbols and border demarcations and made migration to those states more difficult. It has become common for migrants to find themselves chastised for not being part of the nation-state in which they were resident, even as it has become increasingly impossible for migrants to become legal residents or citizens in most of these states. Those who labor endlessly to support families “here and there” are finding that they are now routinely denied full belonging. This precarity can fuel the diasporic imagination, even as the risks of embracing it may be too high a price to pay.

Yet the current period is also marked by a celebration of migrant remittances as a new form of foreign aid. By the end of the 1980s Jean-Bertrand Aristide had begun to speak of the ‘bank of the diaspora’ (Richman 1992a). Today political leaders of migrant-sending countries around the world, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and

the Inter-American Development Fund and world financial markets have become aware of the size and significance of migrant remittances and are finding ways to capitalize on these resources. Exploited and stigmatized as foreign labor, increasingly denied rights and services in their country of settlement, migrants find themselves hailed as agents of development in their homeland.

Within this contradictory celebration and persecution of migrants, the growing global disparities among countries and the world's geographic regions are being maintained and the gap between various locations of settlement grows even wider. This means that signaling a Haitian identity publicly has greater risks and differential rewards in specific states such as Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe or the Bahamas than it does in the United States and Canada. At the same time, the increasing hostility towards persons of migrant background that Haitians may be facing wherever they have settled renews diasporic longings and identification. As these chapters remind us, identity is something that is constantly and variably performed and produced. The analyses of the diasporic multiplicities, relationalities, differences and disenchantments brought together by Regine Jackson in this book make it possible to understand why the geographies of the Haitian diaspora are a space of commonality as well as distance.



# Introduction

## Les espaces Haïtiens: Remapping the Geography of the Haitian Diaspora

*Regine O. Jackson*

Among Haiti's professional geographers, Georges Anglade was legendary. Born in Petionville, a middle-class section of Port-au-Prince, ten years after the American occupation of Haiti ended, Anglade came of age at a time when air travel and post-World War II economic and geopolitical shifts opened up the world. He left Haiti—for the first time—to study in Strasbourg, France in 1965, the year after François Duvalier declared himself “president for life.” After earning a doctorate in geography in 1969, Anglade made his way to Montréal, Canada where he served as professor of social geography at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM) until his retirement in 2002. His research took him to the Bahamas, to Venezuela, Nigeria, Djibouti in Northeast Africa and back to Europe many times; but his was not (only) the privileged life of a nomadic scholar. He served Haiti in official and unofficial capacities, exemplifying the full range of nationalist and long-distance nationalist actions on behalf of his ancestral home: lobbying, contributing money, creating works of art, even dying (Glick Schiller 2005, 270). Anglade and his wife of forty-three years, Mireille Neptune Anglade, died in Port-au-Prince in the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake of Tuesday, January 12, 2010.

Scholars of transnationalism credit Anglade as the first to use the term “Tenth Department” (*Dixième Département*) to describe the external province of Haiti made up of immigrants, exiles and refugees living abroad (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1995; Labelle 2002; Richman 2005). In the late 1970s, primarily among a cadre of French-speaking émigrés, diaspora became an important signifier of nation-ness encompassing the scattered *arrondissements* (districts) where Haitians lived and worked.<sup>1</sup> Although this reimagined community—without regard for traditional geographic and political boundaries—developed in varied contexts, it was foremost an indeterminate state, with the potential to “become more important than physical space itself” (Batty 1993, 615). Accordingly, Michel Laguerre describes the Haitian diaspora as “located between and inside these two social formations [homeland and receiving country] that tie them to each other in a transnational spatial flow” (Laguerre 1998, 4). The complicated task of representing this dispersed community graphically likely explains



## 2 *Regine O. Jackson*

why Anglade often described himself as “a man in three parts”: a geographer, a politician and a fiction writer. His efforts to map the national and transnational space of Haiti seem a fitting way to introduce this volume and at the same time honor his memory. Indeed, Anglade’s attention to the history of migration from Haiti was the inspiration for this book, which focuses on geographically specific sites of the Haitian diaspora.

### “A DIASPORA IS BORN”

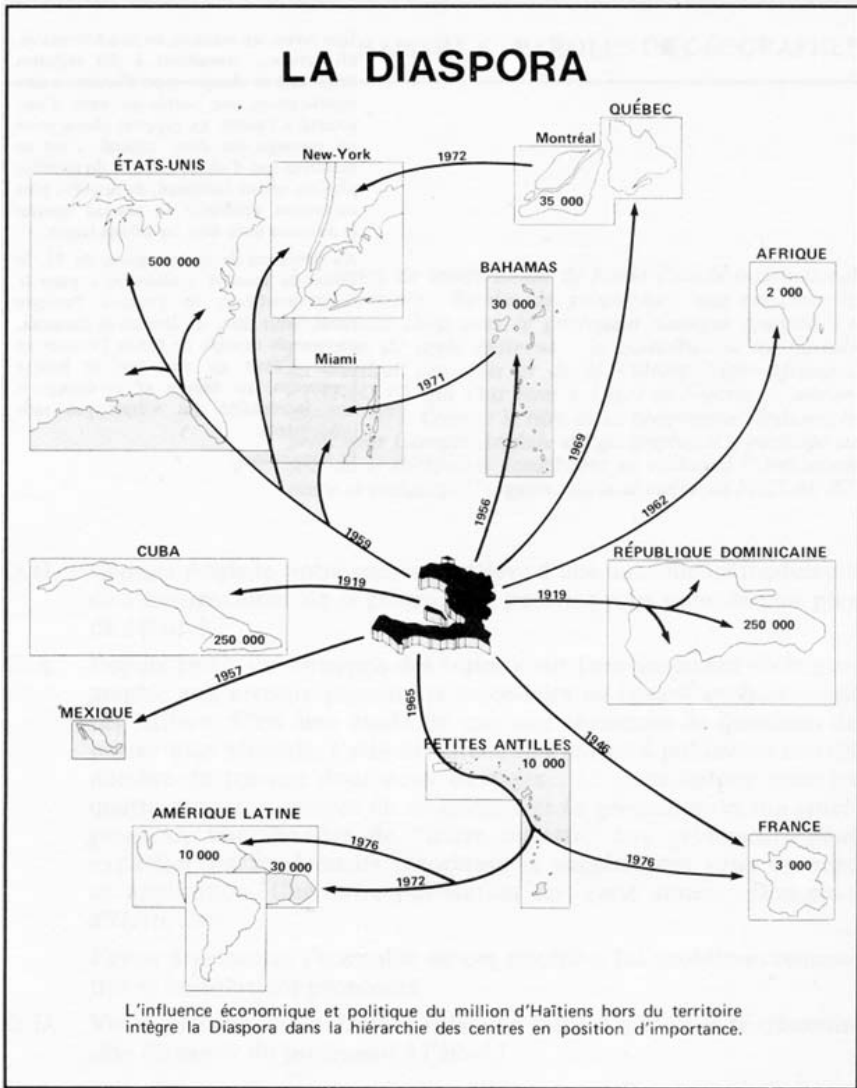
Early in his career, Georges Anglade produced several case studies of Haiti, including *L’espace Haïtien* (1975), *Atlas critique d’Haïti* (A Critical Atlas of Haiti) and *Espace et liberté en Haïti* (Space and Freedom in Haiti), both published in 1982. These works offer richly detailed thematic depictions of the country, but the most important for our purposes here is “La Diaspora” (Anglade 1982b, 132, fig. 5), a map that illustrates how twentieth-century migration from Haiti created what Anglade called a “nouvel espace haïtien.”

“La Diaspora”(see Map I.1) charts a broad range of agricultural and urban migratory movements to the various sugarcane plantations in the Dominican Republic and eastern Cuba, to France, the Bahamas, Mexico, the United States (New York, Miami, New Orleans and Chicago), Africa, the French Caribbean islands and Canada. Anglade also pays attention to inter-diasporic flows from the Bahamas to Miami; from Montréal, Canada, to New York; and from the Francophone Caribbean to Latin America, as well as to France. With these migrations, Anglade wrote:

A diaspora was born. The million Haitians distributed in several core locations in other countries of the Americas produced the critical mass necessary for this new phenomenon. Three generations with different problems rub shoulders there. Multiple and varied bonds connect them and will connect them to the country. (1979, 57–58; my translation)

Anglade’s work in the 1980s lays the ground for the central project of this book, as it suggests a blueprint for the examination of individual communities of the Haitian diaspora and raises a set of questions about how geography shapes migration and the social positions that Haitians occupy *in place*.

First, although “La Diaspora” does not convey very well the physical size or actual location of these sites, their proximity to each other or to Haiti, Anglade’s map invites us to (re)consider what we know about the numbers of Haitian nationals living abroad and the formation of various settlements. His figures correspond to well-known historical events, policy shifts and labor recruitment efforts (as in the Democratic Republic Congo—then Zaire—after its independence from Belgium<sup>2</sup>). But the assumptions



Map I.1 La Diaspora.

Source: Georges Anglade (1982b) *Espace et liberté en Haïti*.

that these estimates rely on do not consider such matters as the regulation of citizenship, changes in migration policy and self-identification. Many of these issues have been taken up in subsequent scholarship (see Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Brazier and Mannur 2003; Glick Schiller 1995; Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1995; Labelle 2002;

#### 4 *Regine O. Jackson*

Laguerre 1998, 2006). However, almost thirty years after the initial publication of “La Diaspora”, the very size of the Haitian communities abroad remains somewhat elusive.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 786,000 persons of Haitian ancestry living in the United States, with 360,000 in the state of Florida; 182,000 in New York; 60,000 in Massachusetts and 57,000 in New Jersey (source: 2006–2008 estimates). The most recent French Census counted approximately 21,000 Haitians in the French Departments in the Americas (FDAs) or Caribbean overseas departments (cf. Mooney, this volume). And the 2006 Canadian Census reported 102,000 people of Haitian origin living in Quebec (see Table I.1).

*Table I.1* Official Population Estimates of Haitian Communities in the Americas, by Site

Site	Population Estimate	Source
United States	785,681 (+/- 15,233)	2006–2008 American Community Survey (ACS)/U.S. Census Bureau*
Florida	359,197 (+/- 9,766)	
New York	181,808 (+/- 7,121)	
Massachusetts	60,210 (+/- 4,121)	
New Jersey	56,816 (+/- 4,650)	
Georgia	18,918 (+/- 2,589)	
Pennsylvania	18,884 (+/- 2,507)	
Canada	102,430	2006 Census—20% sample data**
French Départements in the Americas (FDAs)	20,869	Recensement de la population 1999***
French Guiana	11,726	Atlas des Populations Immigrées en Guyane
Guadeloupe	7,798	Atlas des Populations Immigrées en Guadeloupe
Martinique	1,345	Atlas des Populations Immigrées en Martinique
The Bahamas	21,426	2000 Census of Population and Housing Report (All Bahamas)****

\*2006–2008 American Community Survey/U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>3</sup>

\*\*Single and multiple ethnic origin responses for the Population of Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations.

\*\*\*Institut National des Statistique et des Études Économiques (INSEE).<sup>4</sup>

\*\*\*\*See Table 8: Total Population by Sex, Age Group and Country of Citizenship. 2000 Census of Population and Housing Report (All Bahamas)

Those familiar with the Haitian diaspora “on the ground,” recognize the low figures numerated by the various government agencies responsible for tracking migration. For instance, the Puerto Rican version of the American Community Survey (ACS) for 2006–2008 suggests that no Haitians reside in Puerto Rico even though large numbers of people have moved from one Caribbean territory to another since the late eighteenth century (Duany 1992). Population counts, whether from the censuses of the United States, Canada, the Bahamas or France, paint a partial picture of Haitian migration within the Americas. Despite the lack of evidence for—and all the theorizing against—a static and unilinear conception of immigrants, “the focus tends to be on permanent migrants, that is, persons who are admitted to the country and granted the right of permanent residence upon entry” (Dumont and Lemaître 2005, 5). As a result, these numbers do not necessarily reflect undocumented migrants, second-generation Haitians (those born in the place of settlement) or geographic mobility. In other words, they limit our understanding of dynamic and flexible migration flows.

Moreover, for places such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Jamaica, there is simply no reliable census material. The Statistical Institute of Jamaica, ONE Republica de Cuba (Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas) and ONE Republica Dominicana (Oficina Nacional de Estadística) either do not collect or they do not report data on Haitians in their national and official statistics. Available data on Haitians in Cuba, for instance, suggests that the resident population ranges from forty-five thousand—the 1989 count of Haitians in Guantanamo Bay alone<sup>5</sup> (see Ferguson 2003)—to four hundred thousand, the number of suggested “creole language speakers” in the country (Hurlich 1998). Whereas demographers deploy different methods to compensate for the lack of accurate migration data, low (or inflated) counts of foreign-born populations impact how we conceptualize or imagine the Haitian diaspora.

The chapters in this volume take seriously Micheline Labelle’s warning to “distinguish ethnic categorization from the fact of communalization and not infer the existence of communities from census . . . or transnational practices” (Labelle 2002, 11). Our argument is that indifference to the diversity of diaspora spaces could reproduce the “homogenizing effect” of older theoretical approaches and erase important structural and cultural differences in the experiences of Haitian diasporans. We also engage with current discourses on geographical and geopolitical scale. Since the 1980s, the concept of scale has been part of an effort to make sense of the asymmetries, conflicts and confrontations of the globalizing world (Paasi 2004; see also Jessop, Brenner and Jones 2008). As the Haitian diaspora is constituted by different types of spaces, there are significant regional, city and state variations within a nation-state. Focusing on the geographies of diaspora introduces the idea that diasporic experiences

take shape at various levels of geography, rather than on a global, geopolitically neutral and inert stage where events inevitably unfold (Taylor, Watts and Johnston 2002).

We offer an approach that stays attentive to both local and global dynamics to correct a weakness of studies of Haitian migrants that veil the important details of diaspora spaces. Whereas significant changes in socio-spatial organization are taken for granted in the so-called post-Fordist state, the Haitian case makes it clear that the internationalization of capitalist accumulation creates spatial orderings and hierarchies *among* sites that justify our attention to matters of place and scale.

## THE LONGEST NEO-COLONIAL EXPERIMENT IN THE WEST

Secondly, Anglade's "La Diaspora" (1982b) alludes to a relationship between the phenomenon of diasporization and world capitalist history that helps us understand uneven distributions of people and power. This book reveals traditional power geographies that are not only maintained but enhanced by diaspora. Although Haiti achieved independence from France over two hundred years ago, the impact of colonial legacies and the influence of the United States as a twentieth-century neo-colonial power shape the Haitian diaspora. Therefore, Guadeloupe and Paris are not the only sites we consider here (see Brodwin, this volume; Mooney, this volume); North American cities, Latin American plantation zones and former English colonies also evidence traces of what Anibal Quijano calls "coloniality of power"<sup>6</sup> (see Quijano 2000; Grosfoguel, Cervantes-Rodríguez and Mielants 2009).

We maintain that a focus on the geography and history of the Americas can tell us as much about migration flows as the pull of a dynamic labor market in the United States. Haitians have been leaving Haiti since the country's birth in 1804. In the north, established links and proximity mean small boats head for the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, or Miami. In southern Haiti, the links are with France and its Caribbean departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique. In addition to François Duvalier's ascent to power in 1957, North American industrialization and the general twentieth-century expansion of American power in essentially hegemonic ways are directly responsible for the massive outpouring of unskilled Haitian labor to nearby plantations. Recall that the U.S. Marines Corps occupied Cuba from 1906 to 1908 and the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1926, fostering not only the substantial undocumented Haitian populations in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, but also the unwelcome reception, and near-total economic subordination, of Haitians in certain sites of the diaspora today. As Karen Richman (2005, 53) argues:

Haitian migrant laborers have thus followed and abetted the expansions and declines of North American capital by migrating to Cuba, other parts of Haiti, the Dominican Republic (the eastern side of the island), the Caribbean, and ultimately the United States and Canada. The U.S. occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 consolidated, rather than created, Haiti's emerging role as a source of cheap labor to an expanding American sugar empire.

After WWII, American private enterprise permeated the Caribbean region with U.S. dollars and business activity, fueling the one-crop or tourism-based economies of places like the Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos Islands and Trinidad and Tobago. American interventions helped create an economy heavily dependent upon North America as a market and Haitian migrants as a subservient workforce. Thus, even in the postcolonial period, nominally sovereign states of the Caribbean region that were never formally colonized by the United States find themselves in relations of dependence, subject to varying degrees of American controls and influence.

Similarly, migration from Haiti to France corresponds to a shift in the European colonial project in, and management of, the Caribbean. The departmentalization of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana and Reunion in 1946 as well as *les Trente Glorieuses* ("the Glorious Thirty") in the metropole encouraged the movement of some Francophone middle classes while creating positions for others at home. Middle-class Haitians migrated to France for higher education and professional opportunities until the economy slowed down its explosive growth in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis. These Haitians were outnumbered in the 1980s as migrants *d'extraction populaire* (the lower-middle classes) made their way to France. This proletarianization also affected its overseas departments. As Delachet-Guillon (1996) notes, banana industrialists in Guadeloupe called on Haitian laborers as strike breakers when conflict erupted in the banana industry in the late 1970s. As of this writing, nearly half of the immigrant population in Guadeloupe, and approximately 30 percent in French Guiana and 26 percent in Martinique, is Haitian (INSEE 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). Whereas the proportion of Haitians among the foreign-born in metropolitan France remains considerably low.

The local histories behind the establishment of diaspora communities shows very clearly that distributions of Haitians in various places that seem "natural" were in fact created under the influence of structural factors, at once economic, social and political (Labelle 2002; Laguerre 1998). Yet diaspora as an imagined community misses this important point: the diaspora is not only—or even primarily—a product of the imagination, but a fabricated space. Following Michel-Rolph Trouillot's description of the Caribbean, the Haitian diaspora can be seen as "the complex product of a long and continuous exercise in colonialism and neo-colonialism, and of the responses that this enterprise provoked among voluntary and coerced migrants from three continents" (Trouillot 1983, 216).

## REMAPPING DIASPORA

In the last twenty years, diaspora studies have become so multifarious that a reader has almost no idea what the key term is referring to in a given study. Some have lamented the term's ubiquity, and have complained that in designating everything a diaspora, the term has been stretched to the breaking point and, therefore, lost its usefulness (Slobin 2003, 289; Brubaker 2005). An awareness of the history that produced the term (see Glick Schiller, this volume) is an important counterbalance to the elasticity of the word brought about by its trendiness. Properly contextualized, we hope that contemporary diasporic phenomena will appear less "exceptional" and allow scholars to take into account Haiti's relationship to global processes of racialization and blackness. Part of the conundrum for Haitians—hailing from a place that is always already associated with blackness—is that diasporic identity has everything to do with Africanness (Sharpley-Whiting and Patterson 2009).

A historicized notion of diaspora can also help to challenge the hegemony of existing cultural metageographies (such as "the West" or "the Caribbean"—which sometimes encompasses the South American space of French Guiana) and also to analyze contested identities, the politics of memory and human rights. Just as James Clifford reminds us that theorizing the notion of diaspora is always "embedded in particular maps and histories" (Clifford 1994, 302), we use the term metageography to refer to the idea that mapping the world is always subjective and never objective (Lewis and Wigen 1997). Diaspora can be viewed as an epistemology, a way of knowing the world but, as Paasi (2004, 539) argues, this "'knowing' is always produced and used in practice/context." In other words, to see diaspora as a metageography opens up a space to challenge bounded perspectives on place and to accentuate discontinuous spaces. The coupling of New York with almost every mention of *the* Haitian diaspora, in the singular, reflects "the scales and uneven spaces of knowledge production, and the hegemonic structures that reproduce these spaces" (ibid.) at the same time that it effectively silences questions of geographic particularity and variation.

*Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora* aims to interrupt the continuity of scholarship on diaspora where binary oppositions—between diaspora and territory, or identity and place—have become commonplace. The central question of this volume is: how do we make sense of a diaspora that simultaneously represents actual physical sites where everyday life takes place as well as an imagined, indeterminate state? How can we productively work with a concept of diaspora that is layered on top of, within and between the fabric of traditional, geographical space? The pairing of geography and diaspora here acknowledges that each replicates particular forms of misrecognition. The word *of* in the title is not meant to connote a singular, undifferentiated, geographical *unit*; rather, by pluralizing

“geographies,” we approach diaspora through a perspective that is attentive to specificities.

Through geographic particularities, we respond to the idea that diaspora is an all-encompassing narrative, a seamless field of connections that overdetermines social life. The contributors do not assume that diaspora has a special meaning for the Haitians in the sites under investigation. Rather, the “place studies” assembled in this book consider how the concept of diaspora is used by various groups locally, for different agendas; how the concept of diaspora helps us understand local history and culture, or limits our understanding. This book is organized thematically into three parts: “Lateral Moves,” “Siting Diaspora” and “Diaspora as Metageography.”

Following Shalini Puri’s critique that diaspora studies “inadvertently homogenizes the peripheries, rendering invisible the differences within the peripheries” (2003, 5), the chapters in Part I consider how Haitians also move *within* a geopolitically strategic, albeit subordinated, area of the world. For many Haitians, intra-Caribbean migration is often a lateral move or a move “from misery to poverty”; at the same time, the archipelagic distribution of the region can facilitate island-hopping by powerful exiles.

In “From the Port of Princes to the City of Kings” Matthew Smith tracks the roots of Haitian settlement in Jamaica through the experiences of three former heads of state: Jean-Pierre Boyer, Faustin Soulouque and Fabre Nicholas Geffrard. Drawing on research from Jamaican and Haitian archives, Smith devotes special attention to the colonial government’s attitudes toward the exiles. This section also includes a reprint of the now seminal chapter, “The Dialectic of Marginality in the Haitian Community of Guadeloupe, French West Indies.” Paul Brodwin maps the marginality faced by the Haitian diaspora community in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe. He argues that the community elaborates its collective self-definition in direct response to denigrating images from the majority society as well as practical, everyday experiences of marginalization. Samuel Martínez also examines the injustices and exclusions experienced by Haitian nationals and their Dominican-born (Haitian-Dominican) children and grandchildren in the important context of the Dominican Republic. But “The Onion of Oppression: Haitians in the Dominican Republic” also sheds light on the rights activism pursued by two Haitian-Dominican organizations. Likewise, Yanique Hume’s chapter, “On the Margins: The Emergence of a Haitian Diasporic Enclave in Eastern Cuba,” foregrounds the rural community experience as a crucial site for understanding how Haitian cultural forms are reimagined and adapted to suit the social environment. Hume demonstrates that the construction of a diasporic subjectivity is not solely dependent upon travel across borders. An important chapter by Ermitte St. Jacques closes this section—or rather, bridges the chapters in Parts I and II. St. Jacques explores the relationship between place, identity and belonging



for Haitian migrants at the local level of the Bahamas and the global level of the Haitian diaspora. “Between Periphery and Center in the Haitian Diaspora: The Transnational Practices of Haitian Migrants in the Bahamas” describes how the incorporation of Haitians in the Bahamas and the intermediary geopolitical location of the Bahamas between Haiti and the United States situates Haitians in the Bahamas on the margins of the transnational community.

Part II takes us beyond the Caribbean to consider less explored sites of Haitian diasporic life in “the West.” In “Mediating Institutions and the Adaptation of Haitian Immigrants in Paris,” Margarita Mooney explores the paths of entry and patterns of settlement and assimilation of Haitians in a symbolically important city of the diaspora: Paris. Her work with French government data reveals that the Haitian population of France is young, mostly recently arrived in Paris, moderately well educated and concentrated in the Parisian suburbs. This chapter further shows how French Republicanism and *laïcité* constitute a top-down and state-centered view of immigrant assimilation that makes it hard for Haitians’ ethnic and religious associations to support the adaptation of Haitian immigrants in France. My work on Haitians in Boston and Chantal Verna’s chapter, “Haitian Migration and Community-Building in Southeastern Michigan, 1966–1998,” consider how Haitians outside New York and Miami use diaspora as a signifier. Chapter 7 focuses on the third largest community of Haitians in the United States and describes how a diverse group of exiles, immigrants and refugees came to define themselves as “Boston Haitians.” I highlight the local experiences that led Haitians in Boston to recognize themselves in, and take up, a diasporic identity. But in addition, the chapter describes how the strategies Haitians used to contest their racialization had important consequences for their relationship with African Americans in the city. Similar questions of the differentiated migrant networks and social relations that create diasporas are taken up in Chapter 8. Verna uses oral interviews and local organizational documents collected in three Michigan cities—Detroit, Grand Rapids and Lansing—to discuss how Haitians in Michigan strategically linked Haitian social circles and welcomed ties with non-Haitians interested in collaborating on cultural, social, educational, civic and political projects. The experiences of this small and dispersed Haitian population highlight how cross-cultural organizing (in this case, with West Africans, other Caribbean populations and with black and white Americans) can be a viable means of sustaining community-building efforts. Heike Drotbohm shifts our attention to the state-level practices that frustrate diasporic reterritorialization. “Deporting Diaspora’s Future? Forced Return Migration as an Ethnographic Lens on Generational Differences among Haitian Migrants in Montréal” uses reactions to legalized expulsions among

Haitian migrants in Montréal as a means to explore generation-specific perspectives and identity formations. Whereas elder migrants perceive deportation as a threat to Haiti and as an assault upon their personal migration projects, for the younger generation, the issue is rather one of role negotiation within the migrant community and of coming to terms with their own life prospects in Canada and in the diaspora.

New work by Elizabeth McAlister opens the discussion of diaspora as a metageography in Part III. These chapters consider how diaspora has become like—and only makes sense through—other powerful cultural metageographies. As the Haitian case contributes to larger conversations in African diaspora studies and diaspora studies in general, these chapters return to basic questions about subject formation, the production of locality, identification and the performative effects of language (Axel 2004, 26).

Whereas social scientists are typically focused on diasporas produced through the contemporary shifts and flows of globalization, in “Listening for Geographies: Music as Sonic Compass Pointing Towards African and Christian Diasporic Horizons in the Caribbean” McAlister focuses our attention on some of the limits of the concept of national diaspora in understanding how groups imagine themselves to be situated. She uses Haitian grassroots musical productions to explore how communities stake out diasporic identities in overlapping diasporic spaces and through various political registers. There are also important place-based challenges to the cosmopolitan embrace of diaspora. In Chapter 11, “The Reproduction of Color and Class in Haitian Bilingual Classrooms,” Fabienne Doucet explores the reproduction of Haiti’s class and race/color divisions in the bilingual classrooms of Boston and Cambridge. Following Ortner (1997), she points out that the Haitian diaspora is not achieved “naturally”; it is constructed out of a range of selections, exclusions and boundary-maintaining mechanisms that follow cleavages of class, culture and racialized difference. The next chapter, “Language, Identity and Public Sphere in Haiti’s Diaspora: The Evolution of the Haitian Creolists’ Internet Network,” examines the role of nongeographic space in helping Haitian Creole writers address Kreyòl literacy and cultural production. Based on three years of online observation with the Haitian Creolists’ Internet Network, interviews and meetings with group members, Angel Adams Parham shows that whereas the Internet helped members to create a cultural resource, the lack of sufficient place-based organization made it difficult to sustain. An auto-ethnographic chapter by Gina Athena Ulysse fittingly concludes the volume with attention to the messiness of diasporic experience, moving us from the collective to the personal, from structure to agency—and back again. “Going Home Again and Again and Again: Coffee Memories, Peasant Food and the Vodou Some of Us Do” explores rememories of making and sharing food and connections to

family spirits. Following the tradition of reflexive feminist ethnographers, Ulysse reminds us that scent, taste and spirit can function as homing devices in the aftermath of migration to reveal the ties that bind and the ones that do not in the growing Haitian diaspora.

## WHAT KIND OF DIASPORA? WHAT KIND OF MAP?

This volume represents an important step toward rethinking our basic vision of diasporic diversity, not just by adding points on a map, but also by elaborating the ways that geography and diaspora can be useful intellectually as critical concepts. Collectively, the chapters show that it is possible to engage diaspora as an imagined space or a subjective state without crowding out concern for the details and mechanisms linked to geography or place. The remapping of Haiti to include the diaspora—and the consequent reworkings of immigrant politics, international relations and identity formation—does not represent the deterritorialization of political power and migrant subjectivity, but its reterritorialization. It would be naïve to deny the institutionalized—but contextual and transforming—roles of bounded arenas such as the state as key scales in transnational social practice, and in diasporic discourse and ideology. Georges Anglade recognized several decades ago that different contexts provide different resources (and obstacles) for the production and reproduction of diasporic consciousness. Whereas these geographic particularities require careful ethnographic attention to the local meanings of diaspora, they also call us to pay attention to the internal structural factors lying at the source of mass migrations and the responses of migrants in the places they find themselves.

## NOTES

1. Notwithstanding the importance of the idea of the “Tenth Department” as a specific reference to Haitian expatriates, this book is organized around the concept of diaspora in an attempt to understand Haitian transnational experiences in the broader context of geographies/histories of people of African descent. Moreover, Haiti is now administratively organized into ten internal departments: L’Artibonite, Centre, Grande’Anse, Nippes, Nord, Nord-Est, Nord-Ouest, Ouest, Sud-Est and Sud. Nippes is the newest district; its split from Grande’Anse in 2003 is a reminder of how geographical changes—to boundaries and territory—call us to revise our conceptual tools, including maps and symbolic frames of reference, such as the “Tenth Department.”
2. In the wake of independence from Belgium, in July 1960, the United Nations recruited Francophone experts and technicians from all over the world (forty-eight nations by 1963) to help establish Zaire’s infrastructure on multiple levels, from agriculture and foreign trade, finance and health, labor and education (C.R.I.S.P. 1963; House 1978). Haitians made up the second largest number of foreign experts in the Congo in 1962 (see House 1978).

3. 2006–2008 ACS data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the use of a margin of error. The value shown here is the 90 percent margin of error. The margin of error can be interpreted roughly as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value.
4. Data from the most recent 2004–2005 population census were not yet available for analysis at the time of publication.
5. The very location of the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo is significant. Guantanamo is 200 (nautical) miles from Haiti and about 400 miles from Miami. As Ratner (1998, 192) wrote:
 

The location of the base would avoid many political problems the [Bush] administration might otherwise have faced if it brought thousands of Haitians to the United States, particularly in an election year. Guantanamo was outside the United States, and it was only accessible with the permission of United States military authorities. The inaccessibility of the base would prevent news reporters and others from scrutinizing the treatment of the Haitians. Additionally, the government could argue that the refugees would have no legal rights on Guantanamo. It could claim that the United States Constitution did not protect foreign nationals outside the country and that refugees could not apply for the protection of political asylum until they set foot in the United States.
6. In *Caribbean Migration to Western Europe and the United States*, the editor describes coloniality of power as:
 

The global hierarchies created during the four hundred (and) fifty years of European colonial expansion, such as the international division of labor (core-periphery), the racial/ethnic hierarchy (European/Euro-American and non-Europeans), the gender hierarchy, and the interstate system (military and political power) [that] are still with us, even though colonial and ministrations have ended. (Grosfoguel, et al. 2009, 7).



Part I

# Lateral Moves



# 1 From the Port of Princes to the City of Kings

## Jamaica and the Roots of the Haitian Diaspora

*Matthew J. Smith*

True to our national principle of protecting the oppressed, the fugitives from Hayti have found here in Jamaica a refuge.

The Daily Gleaner, February 14, 1870

Haitian migration is a phenomenon deeply rooted in the early origins of the republic. The powerful image of displaced Haitians, referred to variously as “boat people,” *diaspora* or “Tenth Department,” is a continuation of a constant movement of significant numbers of Haitians traceable to the eighteenth century. In the days following the outbreak of the 1791 slave uprising in the northern part of St. Domingue scores of French planters left for other countries, often bringing enslaved people with them. The enduring economic and political turmoil that has wracked the country for more than two hundred years hence has kept alive a steady stream of out-migration.

The history of Haitian migration to European and North American sites has attracted a great deal of scholarship. The important and well-developed literature on emigration to the United States in particular has provided scholars of the region with a better understanding of the causative factors of Haitian displacement, particularly since the Duvalier era, as well as the myriad consequences of resettlement on the communities they form in the host country (Bronfman 2007; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Laguerre 1998; Stepick 1998). Similarly, the more recent advance in historical studies of transnationalism, and the networks created between the United States and Latin American and Caribbean countries, challenges scholars of the region to consider the origins and development of these relationships over a longer period. This relatively new focus holds interesting possibilities for academics concerned with Haitian migration studies. Yet, even with such promising developments, critical gaps of historical knowledge on the evolution of patterns of Haitian migration remain. In particular, we still know relatively little about the early phase of Haitian migration to bordering islands.

Recent scholarship by Shalini Puri and others stresses the significance of these “marginal migrations” and calls for their recognition in creating a



“new configuration of inquiry in Diaspora studies” (Puri 2003, 1). According to Puri, the study of Caribbean migration to large metropolitan centers, important as it is, tells only part of the story. A more complete picture involves expanding the concept of metropolitan centers from Miami, New York, Paris, London and Montréal, to include Havana, Santo Domingo, Port-of-Spain and Kingston (Puri 2003, 5–7). This argument is especially important for Haitians who have a remarkable history of intra-regional migration. Whereas there exists studies of Haitians in the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and to a lesser extent Cuba (see Marshall 1979; Martínez 1995; McLeod 1998, 2000; Perusek 1984), the Haitian experience in other islands, particularly Jamaica—one of Haiti’s closest neighbors—is typically overlooked in the literature on Haitian migration. The absence of detailed study of Haitian migration to Jamaica is not indicative of the importance of Haiti’s Anglophone neighbor to its history. On the contrary, Jamaica and Haiti share a close history; one that was established, in fact, in the movement of peoples between the two countries throughout the nineteenth century.

What might we learn about the role the British colony played in the universe of migrating Haitians in an age when their only modes of transportation were seaborne? Equally important, what can this earlier era tell us about patterns of migration and the treatment of Haitian migrants? As this chapter argues, the study of Haitian migration to Jamaica provides an intriguing example of the benefits of comparing the histories of Haitian migration across different centuries and countries. It also suggests a need to look more closely at the historical nuances and contexts of Haitian communities.

### **SHORT PATHS TO SAFETY: PATTERNS OF HAITIAN MIGRATION TO JAMAICA**

Migration from the western half of Hispaniola to Jamaica began in the mid-eighteenth century and accelerated with the beginning of the Revolution in 1791. In a study of the period 1792–1835, Gabriel Debien and Philip Wright noted that less than three days after the August revolt broke out in the northern city of Cap François (modern day Cap Haitien), scores of French planters and officials were on a boat headed for Jamaica (Debien and Wright 1975). Debien and Wright, David Geggus and Patrick Bryan have traced the history of these first-wave migrants who continued to come to Jamaica up to the mid-1830s (see Bryan 1973; Geggus 1981). Well-known names in Jamaica today (such as Desnoes, Espeut, Duquesne and Malabre) can be traced to these early migrants (see Osborne 1988).

Most of these first arrivers to Jamaica were largely French planters who either settled in Jamaica or moved from there to other locations such as Cuba or Louisiana. Whereas the access to property and capital has allowed historians to find traces of the movements of some of these migrants, far

less is known of their successors who came in the period following the Revolution and the shaky consolidation of the Haitian state. The paths taken by later arriviers (particularly those in the period following emancipation in Jamaica in 1834) have proven difficult to follow for several reasons. The foremost problem is getting a sense of the numbers of Haitians in Jamaica. It is difficult to state exactly how many Haitians have arrived in Jamaica since the 1840s. The census records for Jamaica suggest that the numbers of Haitians in Jamaica fluctuated a great deal. In 1844, of a total of 44,511 foreign-born residents in Jamaica, only twelve were registered as Haitian. In 1861 there were 206 and in 1911 there were only 170 Haitian visitors and residents in the capital city (Higman 1995).<sup>1</sup>

The limitations of census reports in capturing the complexities of moving peoples are well known (Kasinitz 1992; Waters 1999), and when one compares these figures with reports from colonial officers and those in the Jamaican press, which consistently referred to “numerous Haitians” residing in Kingston during moments of political disorder back home, making estimates is even more problematic.<sup>2</sup> It is also unlikely that official figures include exiles or circular migrants.<sup>3</sup> A distinction should be made here between exiles and refugees in the nineteenth-century context. *Exile*, which suggests an official expulsion by the state for political reasons, was the term most often used in contemporary references to Haitians in Jamaica. British legislation supported the granting of asylum to Haitian exiles during moments of political crisis. It is not known how many Haitians chose to apply for British naturalization in colonial Jamaica, where the conditions for approval were quite different than in the period after Jamaican independence in 1962. More often than not, nineteenth-century Haitian exiles in Jamaica saw life there as temporary and held a clear longing to return to Haiti. The term *refugee* was comparatively less used and usually in reference to large groups of nonelite Haitians who arrived in Jamaica, especially during the 1840s and 1850s, and often on their own accord, i.e., not with British assistance to safe passage. Ping Hu (2005), writing about modern-day Chinese exiles, has argued that the difference between exiles and refugees is “psychological not semantic,” a point that could be applied to nineteenth-century Haitian exiles.

Still, we can make two important observations from these figures: (a) Haitians never really came to Jamaica in overwhelming numbers, although Jamaica, along with the Dominican Republic, Cuba, St. Thomas and the Bahamas, was a prime destination for Haitian migrants; and (b) most of this migration occurred during the period of the mid-nineteenth to late nineteenth century for reasons further explained.

Notwithstanding these low numbers, the presence of Haitian exiles in Jamaica over the course of the nineteenth century forces a reconsideration of the locations, history and contours of the Haitian diaspora. For the majority of Haitians who chose to leave their homeland for Jamaica, their decisions were encouraged by a series of political crises in their native

land. But their imprints on Jamaican social life are not as easily found as elsewhere. In nineteenth-century Jamaica there was no equivalent to Little Haiti in Miami or similar Haitian communities in the contemporary Bahamas and the Dominican Republic. Whereas this reality makes the search for nineteenth-century Haitian emigrants difficult, it does not obscure the fact that for them Jamaica represented an opportunity to establish a new life, no matter how semipermanent. It is instructive, therefore, to consider why nineteenth-century Haitians decided to migrate to Jamaica and the sort of profile these post-1834 migrants had. In other words, what did it mean for Haitians traveling from an independent republic to a newly freed British colony in search of political safety?

Jamaica's proximity to Haiti was doubtless a central factor in the decision to relocate there. Moving to an island a short sail from towns and cities on Haiti's southwestern coast made real the possibility of return once the political crisis that prompted the departure abated. There was also the factor of limited options for political exiles desirous of remaining in the Caribbean. Until the last years of the Civil War, the United States had not recognized Haitian independence, and although having informal links with Haiti, the relationship was quite strained (see Dixon 2000; Pamphile 2001; Plummer 1992; Seraille 1978). Similarly, Cuba was a slave colony until 1886 although the two countries were already building connections in the nineteenth century.

Great Britain, on the other hand, had extended diplomatic ties to Haiti since the mid-1820s. Moreover, the British Empire's liberal laws on asylum, which provided British protection to persecuted peoples and facilitated refuge in British dominions, had several implications in mid-nineteenth-century Haiti (Porter 2001). Because of their role in granting exile, British officials occupied a degree of importance in Haiti, even if various heads of state were wary of their involvement and comments on the nature of local politics.<sup>4</sup> Like their counterparts, British diplomats were well aware of their tenuous role as intercessors for exiles seeking safe refuge in Jamaica, particularly by mid-century when the political situation in Haiti grew increasingly unstable. The crowding of political elites in the British Consulate became a frequent scene during moments of crisis. Given the immediacy with which they needed to leave Haiti, Jamaica was a logical choice for Haitian exiles.

The British Consulate was not the only source for exiles wishing to travel to Jamaica. There was also the use that could be made of associations forged with Jamaican migrants in Haiti. Jamaicans had moved to Haiti in irregular flows since the prerevolutionary era. The celebrated Jamaican-born leader of the Haitian Revolution, Boukman Dutty, was likely not an anomaly in the eighteenth century. In the century after the Revolution, Jamaicans numbered significantly among the English-speaking Caribbean population in Haiti. Indeed, the British consul in Port-au-Prince in 1881 estimated that there were approximately two thousand British subjects,

mostly from Caribbean territories, resident in Haiti. Many of them worked on British concessions in the northern island, Ile de la Tortue, although a fair number appear to have been involved in independent occupations (Fraser 1988). Not all of this migration was voluntary. Reports from the colonial secretary in Kingston from the same decade make reference to a disturbing trade of Jamaican children taken forcibly to work as domestics for elite Haitians in the southern city of Jacmel. Although these instances were rare, this practice prompted the Jamaican government to pass a child labor law to protect children going to Haiti (Bryan 2000).<sup>5</sup> But such cases are evidence of a strong connection between Jamaica and the cities of Haiti, particularly Jérémie and Jacmel, that stretched well into the twentieth century. It is worth noting that it was not uncommon for elite children from these towns to pursue secondary education in some of Kingston's well-established secondary schools. Most Jamaicans in Haiti were likely attracted to the possibilities of employment in an independent nation, where, according to Peter Fraser, "successes and failures of emigrants had little to do with the colour of their skins" (Fraser 1988, 79).

The presence of a foreign-born community in Haiti provided critical opportunities for elite Haitians in particular to form transnational networks through marriage and business connections (see Burnham 2006). For the foreign-born spouse, marriage to a Haitian allowed for some circumvention of the restrictive laws on foreign ownership of property (see Plummer 1984); but for the elite Haitian spouses, such relationships would prove important during moments of political revolt. Not only could Haitians claim protection from Great Britain by virtue of marriage to foreign-born spouses, but marriage could facilitate a route to exile. Haitians with Jamaican family connections had a greater chance to seek political asylum with the British legation in Port-au-Prince and relocate to Jamaica when necessary. Over the course of several decades, a complex network of family and business relations was created between Jamaica and Haiti. So important was this bond that J. Montague Simpson, a Jamaican traveler to Haiti in 1902, could comment that in Port-au-Prince "there are many whose family connections have linked Haiti with Jamaica" (1905, 25).

In short, during the nineteenth century there was a great deal of movement of peoples between the two countries. More importantly, this movement meant that developments in Haiti were taken very seriously in Jamaica, as they often precipitated the arrival of political exiles. As Mimi Sheller (2007, 48) has noted, "These *intra*-Caribbean relationships are not merely incidental; Understanding Jamaican perceptions of Haiti allows us to reflect on the racism that continues to shape perceptions of Haiti, and on the ways in which racial formations inform events of both local and international significance today."

Relations between the two islands are clearly visible through a look at the historical experience of Haitian ex-presidents who came to Jamaica

as exiles between the mid-nineteenth century to the late nineteenth century. This is not to suggest that the lives and activities of nonpolitical actors were less relevant.<sup>6</sup> However, given the publicity, importance and fascination surrounding presidential exile, I have decided to restrict my examples here to that unusually sizable number of Haitian ex-presidents who sought refuge in Jamaica. A consideration of exiled Haitian heads of state, I argue, highlights some of the key intersections of both countries, and the role Jamaica played in the worldview of nineteenth-century Haitian political elites. In the period 1818–1902, Haiti had fifteen heads of state, eleven of whom spent time in Jamaica as exiles. At least two of these presidents (Michel Domingue and Fabre Nicholas Geffrard) spent their last days as residents in Kingston. This is a remarkable statistic and one that cannot be explained solely by reasons of proximity. Moreover, it should be noted that Haiti's status as the sole 'black republic' in the hemisphere meant that the peculiar case of presidential exile in a British colony would attract some international attention, a point not lost on colonial governors in Jamaica.

This pattern, therefore, raises several questions that have a bearing on historical connections between Haiti and Jamaica. Why was Jamaica a haven for so many deposed Haitian leaders? Were they politically involved while on the island? How did Jamaicans respond to the presence of high-profile Haitian exiles in their country? The remainder of this chapter offers some preliminary answers to these questions by using Jamaican and British primary sources, and secondary literature, to examine three of these nineteenth-century Haitian presidents and their exile experiences while addressing the issue of Haitian migration to Jamaica more generally.

### **ILLUSTRIOUS EXILES: BOYER, SOULOUQUE AND GEFFRARD IN JAMAICA**

In 1843 one of Haiti's longest-reigning heads of state, Jean-Pierre Boyer, was forced into exile and became the first Haitian president to seek refuge in Jamaica. To understand the reasons for Boyer's exile it is necessary to briefly consider the first three decades of Haiti's independence. In the immediate aftermath of the 1804 Declaration of Independence, the new nation plunged headlong into a fierce struggle between northern and southern generals. The highlight of this conflict came with the separation of Haiti into two republics, one in the north ruled by Henri Christophe, and the other by Alexandre Pétion—both noted veterans of the last phase of the independence war (see Dubois 2004; Geggus 2002; Trouillot 1990). The standoff between the north and south ended only with their death and the arrival of Pétion's closest ally, Boyer, to the seat of the presidency in 1818.

Boyer's notable achievements were reunifying the northern and southern regions of Haiti and uniting both halves of Hispaniola into one nation for

twenty-two years, in an effort to keep European powers out of the island. Boyer's rule, however, brought the young nation close to bankruptcy (see Heinl and Heinl 1996; Lacerte 1981; Trouillot 1990). Coffee prices declined rapidly at the dawn of the 1840s, and an earthquake on May 7, 1842, which devastated Cap Haitien, Port-de-Paix and Môle St. Nicolas, only served to strengthen his opposition. The greatest source of Boyer's unpopularity lay in his 1825 agreement with France to pay an indemnity of 150 million francs over a period of five years in return for French recognition of Haitian independence. An outrageous amount but one that Boyer, who, following the unstable early beginnings of the republic, was most concerned about Haiti's national security, felt he had no choice but to accept. Even when the indemnity was lowered it still crippled the Haitian economy. The coup against Boyer was led by a new generation of radicals in the south and blacks in the north who succeeded in overthrowing the president in March 1843 (see Baur 1947; Madiou [1847] 1987; Sheller 2001). Boyer left Port-au-Prince for Kingston that month.

Three important points stand out regarding the fall of the Boyer regime. First, the military overthrow of Boyer marked the inauguration of what would become a staple in Haitian politics stretching into the late twentieth century: the coup d'état. Indeed, Boyer's three predecessors, Dessalines, Christophe and Pétion, had died in office as a result of assassination, suicide and illness, respectively. Second, Boyer was the last Haitian president directly tied to the Revolution. Finally, when Boyer left Haiti in May 1843, he went to Jamaica and launched, according to David Nicholls (1995, 77), "what was to become a familiar presidential route into exile."

Not much is known of Boyer's activities in Kingston. He was in his late sixties by the time he arrived and apparently had little support left in Haiti. He was also struck with personal tragedy as less than three months after coming to Jamaica, his wife died (Heinl and Heinl 1996, 173 n. 9). It is likely that the death of his wife and the shocking end to his regime depressed Boyer, who soon relocated to Paris where he lived for almost a year. In 1844 his properties were confiscated by the new Haitian government led by Charles Rivière-Hérard, and Boyer returned to Jamaica where he would remain for another three years (Heinl and Heinl 1996). On his return, Boyer apparently lived a quiet life in Kingston, not concerning himself with local politics or socializing. In a September 1847 letter to London concerning the political upheavals in Haiti in which three ephemeral presidencies emerged between 1844 and 1847, Jamaica's governor, Earl Grey, commented that although Boyer had been resident in Kingston for nearly four years, he had never seen him and knew of only one person, Attorney General O'Reilly, who was close to him.<sup>7</sup>

Boyer's quiet was understandable given the conditions in Haiti at the time, his age and the fact that he was one among a handful of once powerful ex-presidents who were laying low in Kingston. Among the others were

the colorful Mexican *caudillo*, Antonio López de Santa Anna, who, after the crushing defeat at Chapultepec in the final decisive battle of the Mexican-American War in 1848, fled to Guatemala and then to Kingston where he would remain for two years. José Antonio Páez, the heroic leader of the *llaneros* who fought the royalists in 1819 in the South American revolution against Spain, and who was one of the first presidents of Venezuela, was also resident in Kingston at the same time, as was General Juan José Flores, former president of Ecuador who had been forced out of office by an anti-government movement in 1843.<sup>8</sup> Such an illustrious cast of once powerful national leaders doubtless made Kingston one of the more exciting cities in the mid-nineteenth-century Caribbean.

To further complicate matters Boyer's successor and archrival, Rivière-Hérard, the same man who had confiscated Boyer's property, was overthrown in May 1844 and found himself living in Kingston at the same time. Rivière-Hérard was a popular general, but his attempt to create a liberal constitution that restructured the administration of the country incited opposition. Prior to this, elites ran the urban centers and the army ran the rural areas, without any proper administration. Rivière-Hérard wanted to give peasants the right to vote, which also led to a split among the light-skinned elite who supported him and, eventually, to his overthrow. Rivière-Hérard would go to Jamaica and live in relative poverty. Later Guerrier, Rivière-Hérard's successor, would also set sail for Kingston (see Sheller 2001, 133–138). There are almost no references to Guerrier's Kingston exile in the colonial records, and little is known of how he spent his time in Jamaica. Boyer, on the other hand, tried in vain to recover his property, but with events in Haiti taking a turn for the worse following Rivière-Hérard's exile, gave up and resigned himself to a life of "dignified poverty" in Kingston (Heinl and Heinl 1996, 173). In 1849 at the age of seventy-four he returned to Paris where he would die a year later.

Perhaps the most celebrated period of Haitian migration to Jamaica occurred during the mid-nineteenth century, highlighted by the exile of one of Boyer's successors, the infamous Emperor Faustin Soulouque. Born into slavery two years before the 1791 slave revolt, Soulouque rose up the ranks of the Haitian military through obedience. According to Robert and Nancy Heinl (1996), when President Jean-Baptiste Riché died suddenly after less than a year in office, the elite cabinet needed someone they felt was weak and malleable to rule the country and found one in 1847, or so they thought, in Soulouque, who was then head of the Palace Guard. Once in power, Soulouque became one of the strongest presidents in Haitian history by organizing a paramilitary group he called the *zinglin*, a coterie of extremely loyal black military officers (often regarded as a model for Duvalier's *Tonton Macoute* more than a century later), and through a reign of terror, he murdered his opponents and anyone he remotely suspected of opposition. Soulouque was ruthless, tyrannical and brutal. To add to his self-aggrandizement, Soulouque proclaimed himself emperor in 1849 and,

modeling his court on Napoleon's, awarded a host of noble titles (Heinl and Heinl 1996, 286).

But Soulouque was also a skilled diplomat who played the United States, France and Spain off each other (see Baur 1949; MacLeod 1970). His main downfall, however, was his preoccupation throughout his regime to take Santo Domingo and once again reunite Hispaniola. His three attempts to do so failed. In December 1858, following his last failed campaign in Santo Domingo, he returned to Port-au-Prince, which was then solidly behind a light-skinned military leader from the South, Fabre Nicholas Geffrard, and he was eventually overthrown.

At eight o'clock on the morning of January 22, 1859, Faustin Soulouque arrived at Port Royal on board the *Melbourne* with a large retinue including his wife, daughter and members of his government. Soulouque's arrival on the island created a stir and aroused a great deal of concern on the part of the colonial authorities, who feared that the "excitement in Kingston" might lead to "unintended violence" on the part of the large number of Haitian exiles there who posed "the strongest threat of vengeance."<sup>9</sup> British novelist Anthony Trollope, then on a tour of the Caribbean, gave the following report of the scene at Port Royal. "At Kingston there were collected many Haytians . . . There were many whose brothers and fathers had been destroyed in Hayti, whose friends had perished under the tyrant's executioner, for whom pits would have been prepared had they not vanished speedily. These refugees had sought safety in Jamaica."<sup>10</sup>

Apart from Soulouque and his entourage, the *Melbourne* also carried a great deal of the ex-emperor's financial wealth. En route from the port to Kingston, the party of exiled Haitians was met by a crowd, which one newspaper account claimed, was "so dense that it was with some difficulty that the carriages . . . passed into the street."<sup>11</sup> Most of these onlookers were apparently excited that a black emperor was to take up residence in their country. For the Haitians in Jamaica, Soulouque's deposition was cause for celebration.

Not all Kingstonians were impressed with the presence of a black monarch in their city. When the two carriages carrying the regally dressed Soulouque and his entourage arrived at the prestigious Blundle Hall in Kingston, the landlady, a sister of celebrated British nurse Mary Seacole, refused to accept him in her lodgings. Anthony Trollope, who was also a guest at the Blundle Hall, witnessed the deliberation between the Haitians and the proprietress who, according to Trollope, contemptuously remarked, "I won't keep a house for black men . . . I would despise myself to have a black king. As for that black beast and his black women—Bah! . . . Queen Victoria is my king."<sup>12</sup> The royal party was then forced to seek accommodations elsewhere.

The commotion Soulouque caused on his first day of arrival was but the beginning of an interesting exile. No sooner had he settled in the Date-Tree Tavern, than several Haitian residents in Kingston, forced into exile because



of his tyranny, set themselves up in the hotel across the street, where they taunted him and held a large mass followed by a three-day ball in celebration of his fall from grace, no doubt reveling in the freedom to do such things without fear of punishment.<sup>13</sup> Evidently Soulouque grew intolerant of this. Less than a month after his arrival, Soulouque rented and then purchased a large house on King Street in Kingston, which he furnished in magnificent style.<sup>14</sup> His position no doubt eased his acceptance by the local elite, although one reporter noted that Soulouque had “few friends” on the island.<sup>15</sup> Soulouque, who spoke little English, also complained about being followed and stared at in the streets of Kingston by Jamaicans no doubt fascinated to see the notorious ex-emperor in their city.<sup>16</sup> For this reason, he appeared to have limited his social circle to the Haitian exiles who arrived with him.

Soulouque’s misfortunes and reclusion were not enough to allay the fears of the colonial authorities who cautiously watched the Haitians in Jamaica’s capital. From the moment of his arrival, the Jamaican governor noted with concern the differences in wealth and position between Soulouque and his predecessors. “Several deposed or abdicated rulers of Haiti have found an asylum in this island—Boyer, Guerrier, and Herard have all within the last fifteen years sought its shores and adapted themselves to their inevitable circumstances. But the antecedents of the present refugee monarch differ materially from those of his predecessors in political woes and fortune and render it doubtful whether he can even if disposed to do so, follow their example.”<sup>17</sup>

The Custos of Kingston, Louis Q. Bowerbank, commenting on Soulouque’s party stated, “These persons lived in a good deal of style, and externally appeared orderly and well-conducted. I believe that the presence of these refugees in Kingston has had a prejudicial effect on the minds of some of the lower classes in and about Kingston, as many of them appeared to be under the impression that the wealth of these persons had not been acquired by legitimate means, and they argued that if black men could acquire wealth and live in that style, they might do the same” (quoted in Sheller 2001, 229). By stark contrast, the *New York Times*, in an article on Soulouque, described him as living in a style of “mean and wretched poverty,” spending “most of his time gambling with a few Haytian renegades as fallen and degraded as himself.”<sup>18</sup>

Officials in London were equally concerned with the attention that Soulouque might attract in Kingston. Writing from London to Governor Darling, E.B. Lytton, secretary of state for the British colonies, cautioned that, “so long as the ex-Emperor conforms himself to the laws and institutions of the colony he is entitled to receive all the protection to life and property which these laws can afford. But it is evident that in thus placing himself under the shelter of British protection he must be considered only as a private individual, one in part of the many exiles who have been driven from their country to seek hospitality on her soil.”<sup>19</sup>

Whether or not Haitian exiles in 1860s Jamaica were involved in local political maneuvers remains a point of debate. What is most certain, however, is that there was an attempt on the part of some Haitians in Jamaica to aid anti-Geffrard insurgents in Haiti with the intention of restoring Soulouque to the seat of power. Haitian officials from as early as 1860 spread news locally, and among British officials in Jamaica, that the exiles were using Jamaica as a base to plot the overthrow of the government, although Soulouque himself denied this.<sup>20</sup> Notably, during his presidency, Soulouque shared similar fears that exiles in Jamaica were plotting against him and requested that British representatives in Port-au-Prince impress upon Jamaican authorities to keep a watchful eye on the Haitians in Kingston.<sup>21</sup>

From his assumption of the presidency, Geffrard was preoccupied with defending his office from an ever-growing number of opponents. He successfully avoided assassination and several internal coups. However, by the beginning of the 1860s a stronger resistance movement was emerging with support from the Haitians in Jamaica. That such plans were afoot in the mid-1860s, a period of heightened political agitation in Jamaica leading up to the Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, a watershed event in Jamaican history, seems most likely to have been coincidental. The Haitians, concerned as they were with political events in their homeland, nonetheless got embroiled in local political activities.

In her pioneering study of this period, Mimi Sheller has put forward the novel argument that Haitian exiles in Jamaica were somehow connected to the course of events surrounding the Morant Bay Rebellion. Sheller (2001, 237) identifies what she calls “a fascinating and little noticed aspect of the Morant Bay Rebellion: the possible intermeshing of Jamaican and Haitian activists and black oppositional ideologies.” She suggests that various political exiles in Haiti, from the camps of both Soulouque and future president Lysius Félicité Salomon, united against the Geffrard government, were in close contact with Jamaican oppositionists and may have, to some degree, influenced the political agitation that led to the rebellion in St. Thomas in the east. Although there can be no question, as Sheller (2007) convincingly proves, that many of the Haitians were friendly with Jamaican activists, the extent to which they provided inspiration or support for the conspiracy is unclear.

Even so, in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion, a number of Haitian exiles who came over with Soulouque were implicated in the events surrounding the rebellion. Soulouque’s supporters in Jamaica were planning to support the anti-Geffrard insurgency in Haiti with ammunition. General Lamothe, one of Soulouque’s aides in Jamaica, along with a German businessman, Noel Crosswell, and other Haitian exiles, chartered a schooner, the *Oracle*, and outfitted it with supplies and ammunition. Shortly after departing Kingston for Cap Haitien, the *Oracle* was spotted by a British blockading squadron and forced to land in Port Antonio on

Jamaica's east coast; not far from the site of the uprising. When the arms were discovered aboard the ship, the Haitians were taken into custody (Heuman 1994, 158).<sup>22</sup>

Typical of the panic that followed the uprising, the local press lambasted Lamothe and the other exiles, insinuating that the Haitians had intended to wage a race war in Jamaica:

It has been revealed during the late enquiries occasioned by the rebellion, that a plan for the capture of Kingston had been settled under the advice and direction of the Haitian exile, General Lamothe and was to be carried out simultaneously with the rising in St. Thomas in the East and that appointed to take place in other parishes of the island. The details of the diabolic plan make one shudder. We refrain from publishing them and can only say that had the precipitation of Paul Bogle [the leader of the rebellion in Morant Bay] not frustrated actions predetermined by the rebels it would have effectually ensured the murder of every white and colored man in Jamaica.<sup>23</sup>

It was later discovered that the Haitians had no direct involvement with the local events. An article in the *Falmouth Gazette*, December 24, 1880, written by someone who knew Salomon in the 1860s, reported that Salomon had nothing to do with the Lamothe expedition but “meekly submit[ted]” to the colonial authorities. Still, several Haitians, including future president Salomon, were arrested for plotting against the Haitian government and interred at the military penitentiary at Up-Park Camp in Kingston.<sup>24</sup> In his report of November 8 to the Colonial Office in London, Jamaica's merciless governor, Edward Eyre, claimed that he had previously warned Lamothe about using Jamaica as a base for plotting against the Haitian government. He reasoned that because “these parties have outraged the hospitality extended to them by making use of British soil to organize and fit out a hostile expedition against a government at amity with Great Britain they have forfeited all claim to the shelter and protection of the British flag.”<sup>25</sup> Eyre issued orders that all Haitians implicated in the event be deported and not to return to Jamaica “under penalty of being delivered over to the government to which they owe natural allegiance.”<sup>26</sup> It is not entirely clear whether Soulouque was among the Haitians expelled in 1865. An article in the twentieth-century paper *Public Opinion* of February 3, 1951, entitled “Jamaica Has Been the Sanctuary for Many Deposed Haitian Rulers,” notes that Soulouque's departure came in 1865 after both his and Salomon's friendship with Jamaican patriot George William Gordon brought on Governor Eyre's wrath. Heintz and Heintz (1996, 204 n. 20), however, state that Soulouque returned to Haiti only after the fall of Geffrard two years later and settled at his birthplace in Petit-Gôave where he would die shortly thereafter at the age of eighty-five. In her thorough discussion of the event, Sheller (2007) does not refer to Soulouque among the accused

Haitians. This is accurate as Soulouque's name is not included among the published list of Haitians who left Jamaica at the end of 1865.<sup>27</sup>

Eyre's paranoia led to the expulsion of a number of Haitians in Kingston, many of whom were unconnected to the Lamothe expedition.<sup>28</sup> On November 6 he issued a proclamation prohibiting Haitians from landing on the island without a passport signed by the British Consul in Port-au-Prince no more than ten days before the date of departure.<sup>29</sup>

Such measures only temporarily halted the influx of Haitians to the island. As political tensions increased in Haiti, many Haitian politicians continued to seek refuge in Jamaica. Less than two years after the incident surrounding the Haitians and Morant Bay, a new wave of Haitian immigrants arrived on the island with the fall of President Fabre Nicolas Geffrard. Geffrard had been an elite reformer and was one of the few nineteenth-century presidents who strongly supported educational reform, as well as seriously engaged in agrarian development (Baur 1954; Nicholls 1995). Still, there was a great deal of opposition to Geffrard. This opposition to Geffrard grew in the northern provinces partly because of his authoritarian rule. Sylvain Salnave, the popular major from the north, mobilized great support and launched a two-year struggle against Geffrard in the north beginning in 1865, which resulted in Geffrard's ouster.

On March 13, 1867, Geffrard left Haiti for Kingston. Geffrard's abdication disappointed foreign interests in Haiti as well as British authorities in Jamaica. His good relations with the British government guaranteed a favorable reception in Jamaica. When his boat, the *D'Estang*, arrived at Port Royal on March 14 with a party of nearly thirty people including six servants, a large group of onlookers awaited him, including several prominent exile supporters of the ex-president. A *Morning Journal* editorial commented: "Of President Geffrard we cannot speak but in terms of the highest respect, and we join in giving him a welcome to Jamaica where we are conscious he has more earnest sympathizers than any other gentleman coming here under like circumstances has ever met with."<sup>30</sup>

In exile, Geffrard commanded a great deal of international respect. In May 1871 the U.S. commissioners for the annexation of the Dominican Republic, including the famous abolitionist Frederick Douglass, traveled to Jamaica to interview Geffrard at his house in Torrington Pen. Portions of the interview appeared in the *Morning Journal* on May 2 and reveal much about Geffrard's life in exile. The correspondent offered a vivid account of the style of Geffrard's house, which was of "the richest possible description," with the "general effect indicat[ing] the highest luxury, and refined taste."<sup>31</sup> Geffrard was described as "about fifty" "a shade or two darker than [Frederick] Douglass," and of a "courteous commanding manner."<sup>32</sup> Andrew Dickson White, another member of the party, later noted that Geffrard was "in every way superior to the officials [they] had met in Port-au-Prince . . . a revelation to us all of what the colored race might become in a land where it is under no social ban."<sup>33</sup> Among Geffrard's other visitors

in Jamaica were the leaders of the Dominican insurgency against President Baez and American religious leaders.<sup>34</sup>

Geffrard, who lived a relatively quiet life in Kingston, passed away on December 31, 1878. His popularity in the city was marked by the large funeral held for him at the Holy Trinity Church. Not only did Geffrard die in Kingston, he offered the most visible legacy of Haitian presidential exile in the city in the name of the street he lived on. The existence today of a road named Geffrard's Place in Kingston and a similarly named Place Geffrard in Port-au-Prince provides an unintended memorial to an all but forgotten era when the histories of these two cities were bounded by the near-constant movement of Haitians between them.

## CONCLUSION

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century Haiti's history of political crisis and turmoil persisted. Haitian political exiles discovered a new route of exile, migrating to the eastern Caribbean. The Dutch colony of St. Thomas became a popular destination for political exiles and presidential hopefuls such as Anténor Firmin and Rosalvo Bobo. During this period, however, Haitian presidential exile to Jamaica did not slow down. In 1876 President Michel Domingue sought refuge in Kingston. His successor Salomon, who, as leader of the Nationalist Party and president, dominated Haitian politics in the 1880s, had twice spent time in Kingston. Salomon's negative experience in Jamaica in 1865 also made him cautious in his diplomatic relations with Great Britain during his presidency. François Légitime, who briefly held presidential office in 1888–1889, was also resident in Jamaica in the 1890s.<sup>35</sup>

As the long nineteenth century slowly began to fade, the presence of Haitian political exiles in Kingston continued to raise concern among Jamaicans. Indeed, after several decades of Haitian migration to the island, exiles were still associated with schemes and plots against the Haitian state. An 1880 editorial in the *Falmouth Gazette* expressed a sentiment regarding the Haitian community in Kingston that could have been uttered two decades before or after: "Have the exiles and fugitives from Haiti in Kingston made honorable requital to our Government for the safety and comfort they enjoy in Jamaica? We have heard, and very recently the truth has come forcibly to our mind, that in the Metropolis, there are numerous Haitians whose sole employment is devising plans and preparing expeditions."<sup>36</sup> In the face of these concerns, Haitians in Kingston remained defensive of their position and rights in the British colony, as evinced by the following 1879 letter to the editor of the *Daily Gleaner*:

In reference to the citizens of the Republic of Hayti, now domiciled here in Kingston, I beg to declare, both on behalf of myself and the friends with whom I am allied, that our conduct during our sojourn in

this city will never be found unbecoming our personal self-respect and patriotising [*sic*], and we are convinced that we shall receive here the same hospitable treatment extended to [previous Haitian exiles] . . . Of fulfillment of the hope, British good faith is a certain guarantee.<sup>37</sup>

By the turn of the century the pattern of Haitian exile to Jamaica had become an accepted commonplace for both countries. After a brief lull, presidential exile resumed with the 1908 exile of Nord Alexis (who died in Kingston two years later) and climaxed with the much publicized exiles of Dumarsais Estimé in January 1951 and Paul E. Magloire in December 1956. Although Haitians moved in larger numbers to other locations as the twentieth century matured, Jamaica remained a haven for Haitians in search of a better life within the Caribbean. The recent controversial Jamaican exile of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in March 2004 coupled with the unprecedented influx of over five hundred displaced Haitians on the island provided pause for reflection on a history of migration that by then was nearly two centuries old.

Some tentative conclusions may be drawn from the discussion in this chapter. Haitian migration to Jamaica can most certainly be attributed to the physical closeness of both countries. Then, as now, the short distance between the coastal zones of both countries facilitated a great deal of movement. Yet other factors appear equally significant. The British Empire's support of political asylum in the nineteenth century provided impetus for migration within the western Caribbean. The state of Haitian political affairs especially in the period following British Caribbean abolition in 1834 rendered Jamaica a suitable, if not obvious, choice for political exiles, especially deposed presidents. The British Consulate was often a first place of refuge for political elites fearful of reprisals from opponents and eager to leave Haiti during moments of crisis. For Haitians, migration to Jamaica, where commercial and family connections expanded and similar color and racial hierarchies prevailed, eased the psychological dislocation created by exile. It was clearly more beneficial to the British crown to provide exiles sanctuary in nearby Jamaica. Because most of Haiti's nineteenth-century rulers were military men, their presence in Jamaica also meant they could be monitored by colonial authorities.

Nonetheless, the fear that Haitian radicalism, or at least political intrigues, could be exported was always an underlying concern, most clearly demonstrated in the accusations of Haitian exiles in the chaos of the Morant Bay aftermath. It is also evident that the experiences of the ex-presidents, like the exiles more generally, were by no means uniform. Returning to a question posed at the beginning of this chapter, even among a seemingly homogenous group of Haitian migrants, there was notable diversity in their presence and reception. Geffrard's favorable treatment among the Kingston elite contrasted significantly with that of Salomon. Such variation in treatment had some bearing on the foreign relations between the Haitian republic and the British Empire. These distinctions

may be related to the circumstances present at the moment of exile as well as color and class antagonisms.

More research remains to be done on the social history of Haitian migrants in Jamaica after 1804, and especially the contrasting experiences of elite and nonelite arrivers. Such an exploration will provide greater appreciation for this important early chapter in the history of the Haitian diaspora and the multilayered connections Haiti shares with Jamaica.

## NOTES

1. See also *Census of Jamaica and Its Dependencies Taken on 3 April 1911* (Kingston: Government Printing Office, 1912).
2. See, for example, the comment on the numbers of Haitians in Jamaica in the *Falmouth Gazette*, December 24, 1880.
3. *Circular migration* refers in this context to Haitians who frequently traveled back and forth between the two countries for a complex variety of family, business and political reasons.
4. Two British officials in Port-au-Prince wrote books on their experiences in Haiti revealing their scathing disdain of the political system and an unabashed racism: James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti, (Saint Domingo), with Remarks on Its Agriculture, Commerce, Laws, Religion, Finances, and Population, Etc. Etc.* (1829) and Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic* (1884).
5. See also Norman to Early of Derby, June 1, 1885, Colonial Office Papers, National Archives UK, [CO] 137/521; and Norman to Earl of Derby, April 28, 1885, "Attorney General's Comments on Law 10 of 1885," CO 137/521.
6. In the larger project from which this chapter is derived, I examine the experiences of various groups of Haitian exiles in nineteenth-century Jamaica through careful exploration of a variety of sources, including family histories.
7. E. Grey to Darling, September 2, 1847, no. 94 Jamaica Archives [JA] 1B/5/18/16.
8. E. Grey to Darling, July 7, 1848, no. 61 JA 1B/5/18/16.
9. Darling to E.B. Lytton, January 26, 1859, no. 20, JA 1B/5/18/22.
10. Trollope ([1859] 1999, 111).
11. *Falmouth Post*, January 28, 1859; *Morning Journal*, January 27, 1859.
12. Trollope ([1859] 1999, 117).
13. *Ibid.*, 116.
14. *Falmouth Post*, February 1, 1859.
15. *New York Times*, December 31, 1859.
16. *Ibid.*
17. C.H. Darling to E.B. Lytton, January 26, 1859, JA 1B/5/18/22.
18. *New York Times*, July 18, 1860.
19. E.B. Lytton to Darling, March 1, 1859, CO 137/343.
20. *New York Times*, July 18, 1860; Faustin Soulouque to Darling, February 8, 1861, CO 137/354; Eyre to Duke of Early, July 23, 1862, JA 1B/5/18/26.
21. Usher to Palmerston, November 16, 1848, CO 137/305.
22. Eyre to Cardwell, November 8, 1865, JA 1B 5/8/28, 273; Eyre to Cardwell, November 8, 1865, encl. 14, CO 137/394; Bowerbank to Gordon, September 30, 1865, CO 137/394.

23. *Colonial Standard and Jamaica Despatch*, October 26, 1865. See also Sheller (2001, 46–47; 2007, 234–237).
24. On the outcome of the subsequent investigations, see, for example, Stork to Cardwell, June 30, 1866, CO 137/406.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. Eyre to Cardwell, November 8, 1865, encl. 14, CO 137/394.
28. Stork to Cardwell, February 20, 1866, encls. 1–4 CO 137/399. Some of the deported Haitians were allowed to return to Jamaica later on.
29. *Colonial Standard and Jamaica Despatch*, November 9, 1865; *Daily Gleaner*, November 9, 1865.
30. *Morning Journal*, March 18, 1867.
31. *Morning Journal*, May 2, 1871.
32. *Ibid.*
33. White (1905, 502).
34. See the interview with Geffrard by an American Episcopalian bishop regarding Vodou practices in Haiti in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 15, 1873.
35. *Daily Gleaner*, June 3, 1891.
36. *Falmouth Gazette*, December 24, 1880.
37. “Our Haytian Residents,” *Daily Gleaner*, January 10, 1879.



## 2 The Dialectic of Marginality in the Haitian Community of Guadeloupe, French West Indies

*Paul Brodwin*

Recent literature about transnational migration in cultural anthropology implies two distinct models of diasporic subjectivity. According to the first model, the tension of “living here and remembering/desiring another place” (Clifford 1997, 255) determines how people construct their collective identity: how they map its boundaries, invest in it materially and emotionally and figure its difference from other groups. Collective identity is a matter of the politics of location, but the location of diasporas is (by definition) plural, fragmented, dynamic and open. In this model, therefore, notions of group identity are calibrated to people’s fragmented, dislocated social experience. For example, people cultivate a myth about their lost homeland, and, on that basis, generate the criteria for ethnic inclusion and exclusion (Safran 1991). Or they travel back and forth in a transnational family network, pursue parallel life strategies in several places at once and on that basis generate sentiments of connection or a singular trope of collective self-definition (a process explored in the Haitian diaspora by Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001 and Laguerre 1998). They may find themselves thrown on the defensive by shifting politics in their homeland and forced to craft entirely novel and hybrid tropes of self-definition (Gross et al. 1996). In all these cases, collective subjectivity arises from, and mirrors, people’s supra-local lives, including the ideas, images and political engagements that move in transnational space (see Axel 2004).

According to the second model, diasporic subjectivity arises out of people’s present and immediate surroundings, not their global connections. This model contains the general insight that subject formation depends on processes of both exclusion and agency, that is, both othering and self-fashioning. “There are two meanings to the word *subject*,” Foucault wrote, “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (1983, 212; see also Gupta and Ferguson 1997). The two meanings are intimately related to each other because we often arrive at self-knowledge through (and even in the same terms as) particular experiences of external control. Stuart Hall makes a similar argument in his parsing of the word *identity*. Dominant discourses and practices interpolate me—hail me into place as a particular social subject—and thereby

produce my subjectivity. Identity is not the pure product of self-fashioning, but instead a position that I am obliged to take up in a determinate social world. I may know or suspect that this position is crafted by others; nonetheless I invest in it, and even recognize myself in it (Hall 1996).

At a collective level as well, members of a given diasporic enclave within a larger dominant society author their (dislocated) lives, but are also subjects fixed into place by surrounding structures and discourses (see Mankekar 1994). To privilege their agency is to emphasize globally circulating signs and practices as the basis for diasporic subjectivity. By contrast, to privilege the way people are forced to occupy particular subject positions highlights the marginality and exclusions where a group currently, if temporarily, resides. The first model of diasporic subjectivity is attractive because it promises a clean break from anthropology's myopic focus on the local. It regards subjectivity as itself a work of agency and imagination, which all members of a particular diaspora carry out in roughly the same way. According to the first model, Haitians in Guadeloupe, the United States or Canada regard themselves first and foremost as members of the same supra-local group. Their subjectivity emerges out of a single, if complex, set of globally circulating rhetorics, musical forms, religious practices, political projects, etc.

The second model offers quite a different picture. For people who travel from resource-poor societies to a wealthy First World metropolis, collective self-definition is often a practical response to concrete, near-at-hand experiences of subordination and marginality. It emerges in and indexes a particular place, even as it accommodates their global conditions of life (cf. Olwig 1997). Undoubtedly, the vehicles of diasporic subjectivity are ideas, people, money and media that circulate transnationally. But people weave them into a singular rhetoric about identity chiefly in response to the situation immediately at hand, and it is often a dangerous situation of marginality and racialized stigma. According to this second model, Haitian migrants living in Pointe-à-Pitre, Brooklyn or Montréal du Nord each develop a different notion of their group's essential and defining characteristics.

This chapter follows the second model of diasporic subjectivity. I argue that the collective identity of Haitians living in Guadeloupe, French West Indies, emerges less from their travel across borders than from their daily experience of marginalization on the streets of Pointe-à-Pitre (the island's main commercial city) and in the imagination of their literal neighbors, Guadeloupe's black French citizens. Recalling that identity is a relationship of difference, I site the collective identity of this diasporic enclave in the ways Haitians engage Guadeloupean society and conceptualize their place in it. The chapter uses ethnography in a single location to trace the origins of diasporic subjectivity in local processes of legal, institutional and symbolic marginalization, that is, both the marginalizing forces encountered by this particular group of Haitian migrants and its collective reaction against them.

## LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MARGINALITY

About twenty-five thousand Haitians live in Guadeloupe, an overseas department of France located in the eastern Caribbean (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques [INSEE] 1999).<sup>1</sup> Large-scale migration began in the mid-1970s, when Haitian men were brought in as cane cutters in the midst of a bitter struggle between plantation owners and laborers over unionization in the island's declining sugar industry. Without their knowledge, they were used by the plantation owners as strike breakers, and in 1975 this unleashed a period of violence, including lynch mobs, by pro-union Guadeloupeans. The next wave of Haitian migrants, arriving in the 1980s, consisted of small-scale merchants and unskilled laborers who came without documentation or who stayed after their visas expired. The migration that began in the 1980s is the source of today's Haitian community in Pointe-à-Pitre. Most Haitians fly from Port-au-Prince to Curaçao and then to St. Maarten, both self-governing states associated with the Netherlands. St. Maarten is separated by a lightly policed border from St. Martin (an offshore dependency of Guadeloupe), which occupies the other half of the same island. Most people told me they simply walked to the French side of the island and then purchased a plane or boat ticket to Guadeloupe, some 160 miles away. Once settled in Pointe-à-Pitre, most men work in the construction industry as masons or day laborers, and most women become *commerçantes* (Kreyòl: *madan sara*), vendors who purchase commodities in bulk—from other Haitian women who routinely travel between Pointe-à-Pitre, Miami, Port-au-Prince and San Juan—and then sell them on the streets of Guadeloupe's major towns.

All the Haitians in Guadeloupe with whom I spoke would prefer to have their papers in order, but the twists and turns of French immigration policy create enormous difficulties (see Hargreaves 1995). Their first decade on the island gave Haitian migrants a false sense of security. The sugar workers of the mid-1970s had legitimate short-term labor contracts, and, up until 1981, any Haitian with a valid passport and return ticket could legally enter Guadeloupe simply by leaving a cash deposit at the airport immigration office. They received a one-month visa, and, through timely visits to the sub-prefecture in Pointe-à-Pitre, they could eventually renew it for periods of three months or one year. During this period, Haitians benefited from Mitterand's general amnesty for immigrants who had illegally settled in France. Those with a steady job and proven date of entry could easily obtain ten-year residence permits. Exclusionary rhetoric, however, started to rise in metropolitan France in the early 1970s, and when the Center-Right took control of the government in 1993, Interior Minister Charles Pasqua promptly announced the goal of "zero immigration." *Les lois Pasqua* (the Pasqua laws) tightened entry requirements, increased identity checks and sharply restricted access to residency permits. They also authorized deportations without judicial review on the broad grounds of

threats to public order. In Guadeloupe, these deportations involve strong-arm tactics such as arrests at night and forced entry into private homes (Groupe d'Information et de Soutien des Travailleurs Immigrés [GISTI] 1996, 133).

How Haitians try to become regularized thus depends on how and when they entered Guadeloupe. Those who arrived before 1981, recalling Mitterand's amnesty policy, feel entitled to legal residency. They carefully guard their Haitian passports and their receipts for visa renewals and asylum applications. With these documents in hand, they continue to apply for residency cards at the immigration office in Pointe-à-Pitre, but are almost invariably turned away. Immigration officials tell them that an expired passport is insufficient, or that they must obtain their visa first from the French embassy in Haiti, or that a labor contract is needed, or that periods of undocumented residency disqualify them for regularization, etc. Haitians who arrived after 1981 or with false papers often follow up another provision in French law. They try to obtain a family residence card by marrying or having a child with a French citizen or convincing a citizen to adopt a child born in Haiti. Several people referred to this strategy with the popular saying "Every Guadeloupean has his Haitian." Guadeloupeans not only employ Haitians as domestic or manual laborers, they may also protect Haitians through marriage and kinship ties. Nonetheless, I knew of only a handful of Guadeloupean-Haitian marriages. Most Haitians told me their poverty makes them unattractive partners.

### EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE OF LEGAL MARGINALITY

For the preceding reasons, between 60 percent and 80 percent of Haitians in Pointe-à-Pitre lack proper citizenship or residency papers. The uncertain legal status drives their marginalization and creates a fundamental insecurity in everyday life. An immigration sweep I witnessed one evening suggests how such threats are the grounds for the group's diasporic subjectivity. During research I joined the Church of God of Prophecy, an all-Haitian Pentecostal church in Pointe-à-Pitre (see Brodwin 2003). I attended worship services and frequently traveled to revivals cosponsored with other Haitian congregations. Arriving after dark at one revival in June 1996, we pulled into a long driveway already cluttered with parked cars. Members of three Haitian churches milled about in front of the revival tent waiting for the service to begin. The area was lit by a single, weak streetlamp, and most people, preoccupied with greeting friends and watching over their children, initially did not notice the two men, each with a sidearm and a vest emblazoned "Police," moving quietly but briskly through the crowd. The police talked quickly to several randomly chosen people before beginning to interrogate Claude Antoine, a member of the Church of God who had driven with us. After a few questions, the police

led Claude away, pushing to one side someone who tried to speak with him, and escorted him to the back of an unmarked car where two other Haitian church members were already sitting.

The police worked without incident for a few more minutes, with no one raising their voices in question or protest. After the police returned to their car and backed it onto the main road, one of them got out and confronted the driver of our van, another church member in his mid-twenties named Marc Doricent. Speaking sharply in Guadeloupean Creole, instead of the official and more respectful French, he demanded Marc's papers. Without emotion, Marc reached into his briefcase and handed over the passport. But then the police demanded his residence card. Marc gave it to him, and the policeman, still dissatisfied, asked to see his driver's license and summarily told him it was out of date and that he did not have the right to drive. At this point, Marc's deference vanished and he started to argue, but the policeman simply raised his voice and repeated that he could not legally drive in Guadeloupe and must come to the police headquarters in two days at 8 a.m. Confiscating his license, the police drove away with the three Haitians they had arrested still sitting in the back.<sup>2</sup>

Extremely shaken, Marc returned to the small group of us still standing by his van, where one middle-aged woman was repeating that she had no idea what was happening until it was nearly over. Another said this was the first time she had seen such a thing with her own eyes and then urgently inquired why the police decided to ask Claude for his papers. Why did they conduct their raid tonight? Did someone in the neighborhood tip them off? A young man related that a few days ago, the French immigration service had stopped Claude from boarding a flight to Montréal. He had a valid visa for Canada but an outdated Haitian passport, and he was forced to return to his house. Did the police put Claude's name in a computer and then follow him here? In lieu of an answer, someone simply said, "I always carry my papers with me! I never forget them!"

Marc and I left the heated discussion and joined the Haitian pastors standing with a few others on the edge of the crowd. Their mood was pained and dismayed as they struggled with people's concerns. Will they return Claude? "Probably not," the head of the Church of God of Prophecy answered ruefully. "*Msyè pa an règ*" (The guy's not legal). Will the police come back after the service, now that they know where to find us? "No," said another pastor, "*yo deja pran manje yo*" (they've already had their fill). They vehemently objected to Marc's treatment, asserting that the police can make him renew the license but they cannot confiscate it outright. Arresting people in front of their revival rankled the pastors even more. They don't have the right to enter the church, the pastors said, so instead they come right up next to it. "Yes," one woman bitterly added, "they do this in front of the door of the house of God."

The speculations and debates about these events ultimately lasted several weeks. People were shocked that the raid targeted a meeting of Haitian

Pentecostal churches. About half of all Haitians in Guadeloupe have become Pentecostal. These congregations offer the only formal institutional affiliation available to undocumented migrants. The pastors are all legally resident Haitians, and their churches are registered at the prefecture. The pastors, therefore, have the right to visit their congregants who wait in jail before deportation, an opportunity denied to family or friends. Besides boosting morale, these visits address practical concerns about the recuperation of money and belongings. Moreover, because of the residential dispersal of migrants, Pentecostal churches are the only all-Haitian spaces in the city, and they offer a place to speak Kreyòl freely and are sources of job tips, friends and even marriage partners. Because their parent denominations have implanted similar churches throughout the Caribbean and North America, Haitian missionaries and pastors routinely travel from Guadeloupe to Haiti and other transnational communities. (For example, the Church of God of Prophecy has congregations serving Haitians in Miami, New York and Boston.) The regional Pentecostal network offers a low-cost and trustworthy conduit to circulate money, cassette tapes and letters (see Richman 2005). Launching an immigration raid at a Pentecostal revival thus threatens one of the major staging grounds of the Haitian community in Guadeloupe (see Brodwin 2003; Stepick 1998, 85).

The pastors are aware of this danger; in a sermon a few days later at the Church of God of Prophecy, the pastor specifically instructed his congregation on how to avoid the police:

You have to be careful. . . . When you come to the church, look to your left, look to your right to see if immigration [police] are there. Enter quickly and move to the front of the church where it is empty. Since the police don't have the right to enter the temple, you'll be safe there. . . . People are afraid, but that doesn't mean that you can stay in your little room and not come to give praise to God.

The pastor here addresses people's vulnerability along with a professional dilemma of his own. He obviously cannot ignore the raid on his own church, but he also cannot warn people to stay away entirely, because by his own reckoning, 75 percent of church members are undocumented. In any case, the pragmatic advice and limited protection offered by Haitian Pentecostal churches fill a need unmet by any other institution in Guadeloupe. The Haitian transnational community has not entered the middle class; hence, it does not have its own legal advocates or mass media outlets to educate people about immigration law.

People's reactions to the raid also emerged from their broad personal experience with legal marginalization. Most Haitians I spoke with know a relative, friend or neighbor who has been deported.<sup>3</sup> People often described the difficulties faced by those without papers: the reluctance to seek official aid or even to enter a government office and the pervasive anxiety

that makes them “sleep with one eye open.” The threat of deportation also alters how people inhabit urban space. The immigration police<sup>4</sup> typically raid areas with a high concentration of Haitians, such as construction sites and outdoor markets. Consequently, Haitian migrants do not linger to socialize after work, and some people without jobs prefer never to leave the alleys near their home. Some people try to move every few months to avoid arrest. Summing up the situation, one man told me, “It makes you never want to go outside.” He illustrated his point by squeezing his shoulders together, arms held tightly to his sides, and glancing around him in a caricature of a hunted animal.

Haitians denounce the injustice of deportations not in the abstract, but rather the particular way they are carried out. The police take those arrested to a detention center at the central Raizet Airport and then expel them within two days.<sup>5</sup> Leslie Adrien, a twenty-three-year-old Haitian man, provided the most common scenario: “They take you right to the airport, and you’re forced to leave in your dirty clothes. They don’t let you go back to your house to recover your belongings or to ask your boss for the money you’re owed.” He explained the resulting stigma:

Haitians feel shame when they’re sent back from Guadeloupe. They arrive with an old pair of pants, a dirty shirt, they don’t have anything with them, and this is how they return to their family. What is their family thinking? That they spent so much time in the other country, and have only this to show for it?

The stigma of dirty clothes and meager belongings figured in every conversation about deportation because it threatens an important diaspora ideal. Deportation destroys not only one’s own economic prospects, but also one’s reputation as a solid provider and a bridgehead for other family members to move abroad. In the ideal migration trajectory, one leaves the country poor but ambitious, finds work and supports dependents back home and returns to Haiti for a visit with the visible marks of financial success, such as expensive clothing and gifts. Returning as a ragged and penniless deportee demolishes this scenario; hence, virtually everyone singles out being denied showers and a change of clothes as the most objectionable aspects of deportation.

Depending on their economic circumstances, Haitians do not necessarily fear returning to their homeland. Leslie Adrien explained the situation to me as we sat in his sparsely furnished one-room home in a popular neighborhood wedged between a busy road and a newly built apartment complex. The neighborhood, a remnant of early twentieth-century Pointe-à-Pitre, consists of a few narrow alleyways lined by the wooden colonial-era *cases créoles*, a once ubiquitous housing style occupied now by only the poorest Guadeloupeans and migrants from Haiti and Dominica. The city already plans to raze this area and construct concrete public housing

blocks (the *Habitations à Loyer Modéré* or HLM) typical of urban zones in metropolitan France and increasingly a feature of French Antillean cityscapes. Without citizenship papers, Leslie will not qualify for an apartment in the HLM, and he will probably move to another part of the city or to a squatter settlement in the abandoned sugar fields on the city's edge. Arriving in Guadeloupe during the economic downturn of the mid-1990s, Leslie has never been able to count on construction work more than a few days per week, let alone a long-term labor contract, and undocumented workers like him do not dare protest low or withheld wages. After recounting his options, Leslie told me plainly that he would rather be in Haiti. He has entered a downward spiral of economic and residential marginality that benefits neither him nor his dependents in the homeland. In his case, structural marginality has become de facto extrusion, and no personal loyalties or dreams of assimilation impel him to stay in Guadeloupe.

To survive the interwoven forms of marginalization, Haitians learn how to gauge their vulnerability in different arenas of everyday life. The immigration raid at the Pentecostal revival confirmed people's impression that police target them when their guard is down. In the summer of 1996, several Haitian men were arrested as they arrived at construction sites in the morning or as they left after a full day's work. Police also interrogate people on the streets near their homes, and those who have lived in Guadeloupe since the early 1980s seem especially at risk. Such individuals have grown less vigilant over the years, and many of them (wrongly) believe that they are entitled to legal residence.

The need for concealment creates a pervasive anxiety about personal security in everyday life. Migrants compared their plight to being caught in a well-laid trap. They know that despite all precautions, they can easily be arrested and deported without appeal, and they describe the risk in tones of resigned inevitability. In the weeks following the arrests at the Pentecostal revival, church members privately criticized the police's surreptitious methods and their habits of bending the law as they please. For these reasons, most people do not bother to contest expulsions. Occasionally, however, people do protest less extreme types of harassment and disrespect. For example, Haitian market women verbally resist the municipal police who force them to move the makeshift stalls they set up on the sidewalks in the downtown shopping district. One woman described what she typically tells police, "I say, give me a place to sell! I live here, I had my children here, now they're at school. They [the police] say they can't give me a place to sell my things. But if they let us in the country, they should let us work." Her complaint not only makes the limited claim to pursue her livelihood in peace but also points out the contradictions of Guadeloupean immigration policy that invited Haitian workers during the labor shortages of the late 1970s and 1980s but then hounded them out in the tight economy of the 1990s. Indeed, Haitians have developed a good sense of the political processes both in the department and the French state that maintain their



marginality. Most people connect the shifting climate for undocumented migrants to both local economic forces and the policies of successive French administrations. They recall the immigration crackdown when Jacques Chirac took office in 1993 and compare their own situation to the widely reported expulsions of undocumented Maghrebians and Africans in metropolitan France in the mid-1990s (Freedman and Tarr 2000).

The French administrative apparatus in Guadeloupe interpellates Haitian migrants as disposable noncitizens who deserve neither a future nor a comfortable present on the island. Haitians' collective self-representations are calibrated to this particular form of marginality. They diagnose their predicament through striking images of abject subjectivity: a hunted animal, caught in a well-laid trap or the failed transnational migrant who is sent back home dirty and shamefaced. The images recall one aspect of the production of subjectivity underlined by Foucault and Hall: being forced to occupy a position dependent upon a dominant power, interpellated by its laws and institutions. In response to their marginalization, Haitians argue that they deserve citizenship because of their years of residence and productive labor but notice that their response is organized according to the very terms of identity proffered by institutional authorities in Guadeloupe. Even in resistance, therefore, Haitians remain in the subject position of immigrants to French Guadeloupe. If they reach for a supra-local referent at all, it is not the global Haitian diaspora, but instead the plight of north and sub-Saharan immigrants deported by police in Paris. Their diasporic subjectivity emerges as a response to marginality, but a response that incorporates the social definitions imposed upon them in Guadeloupe, not those definitions (such as member of the *diaspora* or the Tenth Department) that circulate within the Haitian diaspora (see Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Richman 1992a).

### **SYMBOLIC MARGINALITY: STEREOTYPE AND COUNTER-STEREOTYPE**

The marginalization of Haitians is produced by French immigration law, which inserts them into the category of noncitizen and then extrudes them. But it is also produced by the collective imagination of Guadeloupeans, as they insert Haitians into the local social taxonomy (compare Derby 1994). The way Guadeloupeans speak about the essential characteristics of Haitians reflects both the circumstances of their arrival and the cultural malaise within Guadeloupe itself. Responding to these denigrating stereotypes becomes, in turn, another basis for the collective subjectivity of the Haitian community.

The devalued images of Haitians circulating in Guadeloupe form a palimpsest, beginning with migrants' first appearance on the island in the 1970s. Brought in as unwitting strike breakers, they were perceived as

opportunistic foreigners opposed to the interests of the ordinary Guadeloupean worker (see Bébel-Gisler and Hurbon 1987, 71–88; Céleste 1989). The ferocity of Guadeloupeans' anger at this first wave of Haitian migrants reflects the high stakes of labor organizing at that time. After the repression of the pro-independence movement in the late 1960s, left-wing political activists turned to labor issues and so-called economic resistance. Guadeloupean unions advocated taking back the agricultural means of production and replacing sugar monoculture with food produced for the local market (Bonilla n.d.). Imported Haitian cane cutters thus bore the brunt of Guadeloupean workers' long-standing resentment of French neocolonialism.

The second wave of migrants gave rise to several other stereotypes. One portrays the Haitian as an economic drain on society, someone who takes in money through daily wages but then sends it all back to Haiti. This is the cliché of Haitians as greedy outsiders who maintain an allegiance to their home country, and thereby drain the wealth of Guadeloupean society. A second, related image emphasizes not the greed of Haitians but their sheer numbers. 'They are crowding us out' is the popular expression for this cliché, which is rooted in the tangible experience of street life in Pointe-à-Pitre. Most Haitian market women lack the capital to open their own stores. They display their wares on the sidewalks, but their tables and boxes spill into the street, stand in the way of shoppers and block the entrances to established retail stores. The competitive energy of Haitian vendors subverts the desires of longtime residents for order and cleanliness in the old colonial downtown. Guadeloupean residents of Pointe-à-Pitre consistently complain that Haitians are pushing them out of their own city. A third but more diffuse popular image dovetails with these complaints. Guadeloupeans cite news reports of political instability and violence in Haiti and conclude that Haitians are an essentially disorganized people who cannot rule themselves effectively. The fear just below the surface of this cliché is that Haitian migrants will bring this disorder with them to Guadeloupe.

Membership in Pentecostal churches serves as a foil for these stereotypes (and at least 50 percent of all Haitians in Guadeloupe belong to such congregations; see Brodwin 2003). Haitian Pentecostals project a counter-stereotype even in their visible performance while walking to and from church services. Pentecostals are immediately recognizable in the street by their erect bearing, careful grooming and clean, pressed clothes, and the Bibles they hold prominently at their sides or hug to their chests. These displays operate as a political economy of signs directed to their Guadeloupean neighbors. Shined shoes, coats and ties and modest dresses project the bourgeois norms of stability and civility that Haitians, by reputation, lack. This is an intended meaning: church members often told me that Haitians must take care to dress well, because they are guests in the country and do not want to make trouble.

Through their outward appearance, Haitian Pentecostals not only defend themselves against dominant stereotypes, but also turn the tables

and criticize the surrounding society. In particular, the dress code enables a wider critique of Guadeloupean norms for women—regarded by Pentecostals (and conservative Christians in general) as the guardians of social morality. Church members routinely criticize Guadeloupean women for dressing provocatively, and they cite the jeans, cutoff shorts and T-shirts that women wear in the street and in the cramped courtyards and alleys where Haitians and poor Guadeloupeans live side by side. The same criticism of women's dress comes up in pastors' sermons that decry the immorality of life in Guadeloupe (the loss of parental authority, the loose sexuality of teenagers, etc.). Church members thus frame the difference between themselves and the surrounding society through moralistic metaphors of holiness and sinfulness. Haitian Pentecostals accomplish several things at once by dressing modestly and vehemently criticizing local women's behavior and appearance. On one level, they proclaim their acceptance of Pentecostal doctrine. On another level, their very appearance refutes the usual Guadeloupean stereotypes of Haitians as disorganized and chaotic. Finally, they portray Guadeloupean society as morally corrupt and worthy only of disdain. They make the categories of Haitian and Guadeloupean virtually synonymous with the morally upright and fallen, respectively. By conforming to the Pentecostal code of personal appearance, Haitian congregants affirm their difference from Guadeloupeans, but in terms that work to their advantage.

Haitian migrants must confront yet another stereotype with even deeper historical roots. They are inserted into the "savage slot" in Guadeloupean narratives of modernity, that is, local residents cast them as the avatars of Guadeloupe's own discarded Antillean past (compare Trouillot 1990). The current-day majority population of Guadeloupe includes descendents, in various combinations and mixtures, of African slaves, the French planter aristocracy, poor French indentured laborers, East Indian cane-workers who arrived after abolition in 1848, Middle Eastern trading families and French civil servants (Abenon 1992). When Guadeloupe became a department of France in 1946, the entire population automatically became French citizens. As a result, the collective self-image of Guadeloupeans involves both a formal, juridical equality and the explicit acknowledgment of racial *métissage* (mixture). Contemporary residents refer to each other without malice as *bata-zendyen* or *bata-nèg* (these Guadeloupean Creole words literally mean bastard-Indian and bastard-black), and individuals openly discuss racial mixing in their family lines. Even members of the white elite (the *beke*) say they are more comfortable in the presence of black Guadeloupeans than white Frenchmen (Besson 1989). Leading intellectuals elaborate the same theme. The author Maryse Condé (1989) has declared that all of the island's ethnic communities are "equally Guadeloupean," and also that the typical islander resident is not racist. According to the sociolinguist Dany Bébel-Gisler (1989, 14), the authentic culture of Guadeloupe will be created by individuals representing all possible combinations of class and race.

Haitians, however, remain locked out of this plural, syncretic and definitionally Creole mixture, and the reasons lie in the contradictions of departmentalization (see Burton 1993). Metropolitan administration paved the way for the penetration of Guadeloupean society by French products, media, educational practices and, of course, the French language itself (Schnepel 1993, 1998). Residents have become eager consumers of French goods and dependent clients of the French welfare system. Such pressures on Guadeloupeans to assimilate to metropolitan norms consign Haitians to a particularly disempowered position. Insofar as Guadeloupeans embrace French identity and opportunities, Haitians are devalued according to the dominant axis of difference. Many Guadeloupeans told me that Haitians resemble their own ancestors: physically darker and more African-appearing than themselves. Most people know that Haitians entered the island as sugarcane workers, the quintessential slave occupation that is geographically and socially distant from the urban French-oriented worlds of business and administration. Haitian Creole (Kreyòl) is far less Gallicized than Guadeloupean Creole, and people often parody the Haitian accent. Even the homes of Haitian migrants announce their distance from French ideals. For decades, municipal authorities in Pointe-à-Pitre have systematically demolished the neighborhoods of tight-packed wooden *cases Créoles*, the vernacular architecture of the French Antilles, and erected multistory concrete apartment blocks in their place. As mentioned earlier, undocumented Haitians cannot rent the new HLM apartments, so they by necessity occupy the remnants of the older Antillean city. Urban renewal has created a moral topography that separates the national modern from the colonial past, metropolitan from local architecture and even the healthy from the sick. The first urban area to be razed and rebuilt was a malarial, swampy zone that is still called *l'assainissement* (the cleaning up). Almost all Haitians in Pointe-à-Pitre live in the socially low (and disappearing) spaces left over by urban renewal.

Having constructed Haitians as the symbols of their repudiated colonial past, Guadeloupeans are afraid that Haitians will disrupt their proud achievement of French modernity. According to one middle-class Guadeloupean social worker:

There is a fear of Haiti. People see it and they think it is like Africa. It can make us regress—that is people's fear. 'We have already been emancipated from Africa, from savagery, and we should continue to move towards France.' This is their attitude.

Such sentiments capture the fear of Haitians who, in the Guadeloupean imagination, will undercut their own tenuous modern cultural citizenship. The same cliché enters discussions about Guadeloupe's future. The possibility of independence from France continues to generate debate three decades after the violent pro-independence movement of the 1960s. The opponents of independence still invoke Haiti as the best reason to remain

a French department. They raise the rhetorical question: what will we become as a sovereign nation? The typical response is, another Haiti: poor, disorganized and politically corrupt; independent but at an unacceptable price. In the Guadeloupean imagination, therefore, Haitians threaten what Guadeloupeans hope they have achieved.

Yet, insofar as people regard assimilation into France as a species of culture loss, Guadeloupeans envy Haitians as bearers of a more potent Afro-Caribbean authenticity. For example, Guadeloupeans who parody Kreyòl for amusement have also told me that they are shocked when they hear Haitians use words that fell out of use many decades ago in Guadeloupe.<sup>6</sup> People recall that Haitian bands were the first musical groups billed as local programming on radio stations in the 1960s and 1970s, before the current wave of *zouk* and other Antillean popular styles. Haitians thus represent to Guadeloupeans a past phase of their own society, and they provoke an anxious self-recognition because they remind Guadeloupeans of the Caribbean identity they have discarded. In the words of the social worker quoted earlier:

If we had something [of our own] to preserve, it would be better. The Haitians have that. They want to preserve their history, their language. Every Haitian that I met knows the history of their country, its battles and so on. . . . So, when faced with Haitians, they are the mirror that we don't want.

Haitian migrants elicit envy and resentment because they embody what Guadeloupeans feel they have lost in the process of assimilation. They are an unwanted mirror because they reflect back not the Frenchified Guadeloupean culture of today, but the richer, more Antillean-based culture of the past. Guadeloupean attitudes towards Haitian healing power exemplify the conundrum. Many Guadeloupeans believe that the Haitian *houngan*, or Vodoun practitioner, is more powerful than local folk healers, called *gadezafè*. I heard many stories of local residents who consult Haitian Vodoun practitioners, such as the university administrator who traveled to Haiti in order to rid himself of a chronic illness caused by a curse and the politician who sought a *houngan*'s help in winning an election. Some people explicitly ranked the spiritual potency of various types of healers. They placed Africans first, followed by Haitian *houngans* (who, as one friend explained, are more powerful precisely because Haiti has preserved its African culture longer than the Antilles), Guadeloupean *gadezafès* and finally folk healers from Martinique—the nearby overseas French department that people assert is even more assimilated to metropolitan norms than Guadeloupe.

## CULTURAL INTIMACY AND THE PLAY OF STEREOTYPES

Haitians and Guadeloupeans rarely interact with each other outside the relation of laborer to boss or itinerant vendor to customer. Nonetheless,

Haitians explain their symbolic marginalization in parallel terms as do Guadeloupeans. They know quite a bit about the layering of defensiveness and nostalgia in Guadeloupeans' stereotypes of them. Haitian migrants argue that their dishonor and marginality are an effect of local residents' confusion over their own identity as both black Caribbeans and French citizens. Guadeloupeans always try to imitate the French, Haitians believe, and hence they are both intimidated by and jealous of Haitians' cultural autonomy and obvious national pride. This argument rests on a particular stereotype of the overassimilated Guadeloupean who nevertheless cannot quite shake off his Caribbean past. The stereotype pinpoints the "sore zone of cultural sensitivity" among Guadeloupeans (Herzfeld 1997, x). Haitians claim that their very presence disturbs the official ideology of French superiority by forcing Guadeloupeans to acknowledge that they acquired French citizenship at a high cultural cost.

Haitians believe that Guadeloupeans actually do recognize their commonality with Haitians but are embarrassed by it because it belies their formal identity as French; in the end, they disrespect and marginalize Haitians as a defensive maneuver. The most elaborate version of this argument concerns Guadeloupeans' surreptitious use of Haitian Vodoun healing. In Haiti, people who suffer from humanly caused illnesses must seek out the healing power of neo-African Vodoun practitioners; Western biomedicine is regarded as ineffective in such cases (Brodwin 1996; Brown 1991). Haitian migrants assume that Guadeloupeans follow the same logic of medical decision-making. For example, I asked a Haitian friend in Pointe-à-Pitre what would happen if Guadeloupeans were afflicted with an illness sent by a human enemy (a pathogenic attack caused by jealousy or hatred). He replied, "They go to a *houngan*. They find one here or they go to Haiti." Surprised, I asked whether Guadeloupeans believe in this sort of healing power. "They believe in it more than we do! But they won't tell you. You can ask them, but they keep it hidden."

The same theme appears when Haitians discuss the Guadeloupean *gadzafè* whose practices overlap those of Vodoun specialists. Like the *houngan*, these local healers perform exorcisms, lead prayer groups and specialize in illnesses caused by social conflict (see Benoit 2000; Bougerol 1983; Ducosson 1989). They emerge from the same historical matrix as Haitian Vodoun: plantation slavery, the centuries-long intermixing of West African and French Catholic religious practices and suppression by the Catholic clergy. The folk healers of Guadeloupe are, in a historical sense, cognates of those in Haiti. However, Haitian migrants dismiss them as far weaker than their Haitian counterparts, and they also state that local *gadzafè* learn their trade through apprenticeships with Haitians.

The conviction that Guadeloupeans secretly acknowledge the superior power of Haitian Vodoun enters Haitians' criticism of their employers. Certain wealthy Guadeloupeans, I was told, owe their fortune to a Faustian bargain with a Haitian Vodoun practitioner. Furthermore, the same

Guadeloupean boss who cheats Haitians on the job or disrespects them in the street will run to a Haitian *houngan* when biomedical treatments fail. As one Haitian man put it, Guadeloupeans 'know that Haiti is the original. They know Haitians are born with it. They know it's the African rite which is the strongest.' Set against the negative stereotypes attached to Haitians, this is a resistant and cynical counter-image that migrants hold of the dominant society. It asserts that despite their European Community (EC) passports and French cultural fluency, Guadeloupeans have ready recourse to Haitian healers with their neo-African practices.

What do Haitian migrants accomplish by such arguments? First and foremost, Haitians claim cultural intimacy with Guadeloupeans. Cultural intimacy refers to "the sharing of known and recognizable traits that not only define insiderhood but are also . . . approved by powerful outsiders" (Herzfeld 1997, 94). Haitian migrants claim they are the secret sharers of Guadeloupe's deep cultural essence. Moreover, the traits the two groups share undercut the Guadeloupeans' preferred, formal self-presentation, and Haitians criticize the hypocrisy of Guadeloupeans who, on these grounds, deny commonality with Haitians. Through the caricature of Guadeloupeans who secretly consult Vodoun healers and acknowledge their superiority, Haitians not only assert their own cultural vitality but also point out the embarrassing self-recognition of Guadeloupeans and the ambivalence over their joint (European) French and (neo-African) Caribbean allegiances. After all, Haitians have many opportunities to learn the everyday dimensions of ambivalence as they observe, with an outsider's eye, how the local society operates. The Creole language is still largely suppressed in schools and offices; the local media features endless debates over sovereignty while a large percentage of the island's population depends on the French welfare system, and sanitized presentations of Antillean folklore on television are sandwiched between programming from metropolitan France or the United States.

Noting Guadeloupeans' ambivalent participation in French society, Haitians encapsulate the cultural politics of the island in their stereotype of its black French residents who both repudiate and long for their Antillean past, and hence both denigrate and covertly envy the (Kreyòl-speaking, politically independent and culturally autonomous) Haitians in their midst. Stereotypes are discursive weapons of power, and Haitians use their stereotype of local residents to invert the power relations between them and the dominant society (compare Herzfeld 1997, 13). The caricature allows migrants to imagine their place in Guadeloupe on more favorable terms. It negates the clichés of Haitians as rapacious, intrusive foreigners and substitutes an (equally essentialized) image of Haitians as more authentic and culturally self-assured Caribbeans. Haitians thus use their stereotype of Guadeloupeans as grounds for their collective self-regard.

## CONCLUSION

Contemporary diasporas are typically defined as novel social formations, constituted by signs and practices that circulate in transnational space. It is tempting to take the next step and assume the collective subjectivity of people in a particular diaspora emerges from, and mirrors, their supralocal orientation. This would mean (a) that the same global exchanges and movement that produce the diaspora are also the main grounds for its self-definition and (b) that people living in different sites of the same diaspora—for example, Haitians in Guadeloupe, the Dominican Republic, the United States, etc.—elaborate roughly the same form of collective self-regard. The ethnographic argument in this chapter suggests a different conclusion: that diasporic subjectivity is finely calibrated to the experience of marginalization in a specific time and place. In Guadeloupe, the way members of the Haitian diaspora articulate their group identity, its defining marks and its boundaries depends on where they are located, their specific experience of marginality and the particular stereotypes they have confronted.

Stated as a general hypothesis, the dialectic of marginality operates differently in the separate communities of the same diaspora, in line with the historical and cultural contradictions in each surrounding society. The outcome will be distinctive forms of collective self-regard. Social scientists may still wish to speak of an overarching transnational social field encompassing all expatriate Haitians: a formulation that nicely breaks with the earlier anthropological fetish of spatially bound identities. But to explain how particular diasporic communities define themselves demands close examination of their response to local processes of marginality. Members of contemporary diasporas cultivate particular forms of self-regard not in an abstract in-between or thoroughly delocalized space, but instead in particular places and social relationships (see Guarnizo and Smith 1998). Diasporic subjectivity is locally inflected. Depending on how states control the terms of citizenship, and how social taxonomies assign value to newly arrived outsiders, diasporic groups will be simultaneously included and excluded in distinctive ways, and they will resist their exclusion with different results. Their subjectivity, therefore, will depend as much on the states and societies that immediately surround them as on a dislocated diasporic reality.

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## NOTES

1. In 1946, France's three remaining Caribbean colonies (Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana) become overseas departments (*Départments d'Outre Mer* or DOM). In administrative terms, they are near equivalents to the departments in metropolitan France; their residents are fully French citizens and now members of the European Community (EC) with EC passports.
2. The police apprehended a total of eight Haitians—three in one car and five in another. One was later released when a friend brought his identity papers to the detention center; the rest were deported to Haiti.
3. Although most Haitians in Guadeloupe do not personally experience the violence of deportation, it nonetheless helps constitute diasporic subjects in several ways. People easily recalled to me their relatives who have been sent back to Haiti; they must deal with the deportees' personal effects and obligations left unfulfilled in Guadeloupe, and their stratagems to avoid their own deportation structure how they inhabit urban space (see Axel 2002).
4. Immigration raids are conducted by the federal and municipal police as well as the *Police de l'Air et des Frontières* (PAF; Air and Border Police) a service connected to the National Office of Immigration (1987). In the mid-1990s, consistent with the anti-immigrant mood of President Jacques Chirac's administration, the PAF was renamed the *Contrôle de l'Immigration et de Lutte Contre l'Emploi Clandestin* (CILEC; the Service for Immigration Control and the Struggle against Clandestine Workers).
5. At the time of fieldwork, Haitians in Guadeloupe did not have the right of appeal or even legal counsel (Amar and Milza 1990, 119).
6. Guadeloupeans cited the Kreyòl word *rad* (clothes), which was replaced by the French-derived *linge* in the local Creole and the Haitian *kapon* (cowardly), which in Guadeloupe gave way to *lâche*.

### 3 The Onion of Oppression

## Haitians in the Dominican Republic

*Samuel Martínez*

Among the many branches of the Haitian diaspora, the Dominican Republic stands out in several respects. Only the United States has a Haitian immigrant population of comparable size: estimates of the number of Haitians in the Dominican Republic are highly uncertain and nearly always politicized but consistently number between five hundred thousand and one million (Guzmán Molina 2003; Martínez 1995, 6–7).

Paradoxically, Haitians regard the Dominican Republic as the least desirable of the going international emigration destinations. Elsewhere, I have observed that most Haitians' knowledge about their neighbor on the island of Hispaniola seems to extend little beyond its reputation as a plantation netherworld that swallows up the most desperate of the country's emigrants (Martínez 2003, 83, 95–96 n. 5). Residents of Haiti's rural southeast and frontier zones, the major rural source areas of Dominican-bound migrants, know the neighboring country better but hold little better opinions of it. In the southeast, where I have done months of ethnographic fieldwork, rumors and legends depict the Dominican Republic as a place of intrigue, treachery, magic, madness and murder. *Yon peyi terib* —“a terrible country”—was how I was told the parents of one young man characterized it, in a futile attempt to dissuade him from going there; the Dominican Republic is emphatically *not* a place most Haitians would wish to settle in, least of all at the moment they first leave home. The return orientation has been particularly strong among Haiti's Dominican-bound migrants. Based on partial life history interviews on both sides of the border, I found that of every ten men who migrate as cane-workers to sugar plantations in the Dominican Republic, nine return home within two years' time (Martínez 1995, 81).

In keeping with its geographical and economic particularities, the Dominican Republic occupies a unique space, conceptually and in social networks, among the major foreign destinations of Haitian emigration. The words most commonly used in Haiti's southeast to denote the Dominican Republic (*nan panyòl* [in the Spanish] and *Sendomeng* [Saint-Domingue]) are a category distinct from overseas destinations (*lòt bò lanmè*), in keeping with the geographical reality that the two countries share the same island. Regarding migrant networks, there seems to be very little overlap

between Haiti's migrants *nan panyòl* and those who go overseas (Martínez 1995, 79). The 275-kilometer-long land border between the two nations is highly porous and presents much lower practical and financial obstacles to passage than any overseas destination. In spite of there being a large return flow to Haiti, those emigrants who settle in the Dominican Republic mostly end up losing contact with their families at home in Haiti and rarely, if ever, return (ibid., 153). I therefore have strong reservations about applying the label "transnational" to this group, as they have so little access to the advanced transportation and communications technologies that permit other emigrants to play a continuing role in the lives of their families and communities of origin in Haiti.

Beyond this, it may even be politically problematic to call the majority of Haitian-Dominican ancestry people in the Dominican Republic "transnational migrants." Through the *Ley General de Migración* (General Migration Law) of 2004, immigration restrictionists succeeded in applying an exception to the *jus soli* right to Dominican citizenship to the children of Haitian immigrants, on the grounds that the Dominican-born children of "people in transit" may constitutionally be barred from citizenship, the Haitian population as a whole being presumed to be "in transit" on Dominican soil. Subsequent to passage of this law and the reaffirmation of its constitutionality by the Dominican Supreme Court, hundreds have been stripped of their Dominican citizenship and tens of thousands more children have been rendered effectively stateless.<sup>1</sup> One irony from the standpoint of the theory of transnationalism is that, without being able to enforce their rightful claim to membership in the Dominican state, Dominican Haitians may find themselves officially blocked from living out the fullest expression of a transnational lifestyle, having no identity documents that would permit them to travel beyond the island and not even any assurance of being able to visit Haiti and then returning without incident to their places of residence in the Dominican Republic.

Haitians in the Dominican Republic stand out equally for having been a special focus of international human rights concern. Since the 1970s, investigators from at least seven multilateral and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), along with independent journalists and human rights advocates, have repeatedly brought the plight of the immigrants to international attention, alleging that the constraints placed on the freedoms of the *braceros* (seasonal migrant cane-workers) are so severe as to constitute de facto slavery.<sup>2</sup> The *braceros'* plight has been a powerful symbol of the racist oppression of Haitians everywhere and has functioned as a rallying point for Haitian émigrés, Haitian rights advocates and the Haitian community's friends overseas.

In the human rights reportage, there has been a notable tendency to reduce the situation of Haitian nationals and their Dominican-born children (Haitian Dominicans)<sup>3</sup> purely to that of victims. Although understandable tactically—as a means of garnering public sympathy—portraying

the *braceros* as helpless dupes or kidnapped victims has led to inaccurate analyses. For many years, the focus on the alleged enslavement of male migrant cane-workers was so monolithic that the very existence of women and Dominican-born children and adults among the Haitian immigrants was virtually ignored or accorded at best secondary prominence, not just by journalists and human rights monitors but by social researchers, too. Whole classes of victims and types of abuses—involving the gamut of rights enshrined in the United Nations Human Rights Covenants—have consequently been left out of the picture. The belief that the *braceros* were slaves, and hence powerless to resist their coerced exploitation, may explain why international advocates for many years also failed to make note that there were rights advocates among the Haitian immigrants themselves. I do not think we can blame the international human rights monitors for supposing that slaves do not run their own NGOs. The larger point surely relates to the power of concepts and narratives to channel the observations of even highly experienced and concerned investigators along certain lines. The allegation of slavery seems to have blinded outside observers to a wide range of other wrongs that do not fit with that allegation's supporting narratives of capture or trickery.

More important, inaccurate analyses have given rise to faulty strategies of advocacy. Clumsy international pressure has, on at least one occasion, worsened the immigrants' problems. In 1991, international human rights NGOs recommended the imposition of trade sanctions against the Dominican Republic to a U.S. Congressional subcommittee, drawing the Santo Domingo government to retaliate by deporting tens of thousands of Haitians (Martínez 1995, 164). Local NGOs, not consulted by the international human rights professionals, were left to deal with the subsequent humanitarian and legal crisis. If we consider not only the pain, anxiety, material losses and economic dislocation caused by the deportations among the Haitian immigrant population at large but also the scarce staff time and energy spent by Haitian-Dominican NGOs in administering aid to the deportees and their families left behind, then the international NGOs' gaffe seems costly indeed.

Recognizing the risk that my comments will simply elaborate international images of these immigrants as victims of human rights abuse, my aim in this chapter is to examine the multiple dimensions of the subordination experienced by Haitian nationals in the Dominican Republic and the continuing disadvantage faced by their Dominican-born children and grandchildren.

In defining the roots of the Haitian community's subordination as my concern, many issues are necessarily sidelined. In general terms, the varied life circumstances and outlooks of the immigrants remain understudied by linguists, social researchers, historians and literary scholars. In particular, the reproduction of Haitian identity among the second and third generations, under extraordinarily adverse economic and social

conditions, cries out for more detailed study and is only tangentially dealt with in my chapter.

Even so lessons of general applicability for scholar-advocates across the Haitian diaspora may be drawn from considering the broad range of conditions and manifestations of oppression experienced by Haitians in the Dominican Republic. It is particularly important to note how seemingly disparate wrongs sustain each other and support the larger structure of oppression, each manifestation of injustice being a source of, or permissive condition for, other wrongs. An inadequate appreciation of the complexity of the situation seems to have underlain missteps committed by well-intentioned international advocates. This underscores the importance, in the study of migrant and minority rights violations, of developing analyses that are not only accurate (committing no errors of fact) but complete (omitting no major segment of the population or dimension of subordination).

The substantive findings that I report are drawn from two ethnographic projects, with distinct frames of study. The first is the fieldwork that I have done in Monte Coca, a multiethnic sugar company compound (*batey*) in eastern Dominican Republic, carried out in several stints between 1985 and 2002. Albeit limited by my “worm’s-eye view” as an ethnographer, this fieldwork, in its microscopic focus, reveals dimensions of oppression that have hitherto been insufficiently recognized by academic and activist observers alike. I give particular emphasis to the corrosive effects that wrongs committed by Haitians against other Haitians—including sexual violence and exploitation, and the complicity of certain Haitians and Haitian Dominicans with the subordination of more recent arrivals from Haiti—may have on this small community’s social fabric.

The second research project consisted of participant observation and interviews with the staff members of a handful of small Haitian rights organizations, based in Santo Domingo, combined with close readings of documents produced by these NGOs. During six months of field research in the Dominican Republic in 2002, I focused on the human rights agenda and modes of activism of two NGOs, founded and staffed by Haitian Dominicans, the *Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano-Haitianas* (MUDHA; Haitian Dominican Women’s Movement) and the *Centro Cultural Dominicano-Haitiano* (CCDH; Haitian Dominican Cultural Center). This project grows out of my concern with the exclusion of certain issues (pertaining to social and economic inequality) and categories of persons (women and the Dominican-born) from the early (1978 to 1995) reports and actions of international human rights NGOs. In the larger project, of which my Dominican-based fieldwork forms a part, I aim to compare how international human rights advocates and local “grassroots” community organizers have acted to further rights protections for the *braceros*, other unauthorized Haitian entrants and the Dominican-born children of these immigrants.

Benefiting from the academic luxury of studying the issues in depth and writing about them at length, I redefine our understanding of the constraints on the immigrants' freedom, as being sustained by poverty, racism and other socioeconomic inequalities as much as by the heavy-handed police tactics and legal exclusions, emphasized in the advocacy literature. I liken the basic rights infringements commonly inflicted upon members of the Haitian-Dominican community to an onion: a dense, layered mass of mutually supporting injustices. Wearing away at the outer, most obvious abuses simply reveals other abuses underneath, with those that remain stubbornly retaining the shape and bitter flavor of unfreedom.

I begin the main body of this chapter with an overview of the forces that cement Haitians and Haitian Dominicans into the bottom of the Dominican socioeconomic hierarchy, emphasizing the interrelatedness of the various dimensions of oppression. This analysis gains confirmation in my description of the activist praxis of the Haitian-Dominican NGOs, CCDH and MUDHA, in the second main section of the chapter. Rather than peeling away at just the outer, most obvious (civil/political) rights abuses—as the international rights advocates have done—these organizations seek to pierce the onion's core by simultaneously militating for economic development, women's empowerment, cultural revitalization and constitutional rights. Whereas these organizations do not reject legal remedies, they have mainly sought to adapt an integrated, capacity-building approach to the multiple sources of inequality against which they struggle.

## BACKGROUND

Undocumented immigrants and contract workers from rural Haiti have for generations formed the backbone of the Dominican Republic's sugarcane harvest labor force, and in recent decades Haitian men and women in the tens of thousands have taken up the bottommost jobs in other sectors of the Dominican economy. The sugar industry has recruited men from rural Haiti as cane cutters since the early decades of the twentieth century. Historically, the two main nonsugar employers have been coffee and construction, but many Haitians, particularly women, have also found work in domestic service and petty commerce (Silié, Segura and Cabral 2002). As late as the 1970s, a combination of police vigilance, social isolation and widespread discrimination restricted the employment of Haitian labor mainly to a few trades (Martínez 1995, 7–12). Now, Haitians are employed not just in the sugar and coffee industries but also in agricultural sectors where they were previously rarely found. A variety of informal income-generating opportunities, including petty commerce and domestic service, are also attracting Haitians to the city in growing numbers. Sugar is no longer as central to the economy as it once was, significantly reducing this industry's demand for cheap harvest labor.

Over a span of many decades, the immigrants have suffered flagrant infringements of their freedoms of mobility and of association at the hands of Dominican law enforcers and sugarcane growers (Martínez 1999). The concerns of the international human rights reportage in this case have been both narrow and changeable over time: narrow, in concentrating nearly exclusively on civil-political rights and on the *braceros*, and changeable in that, as certain abuses have come to an end, international observers have always been able to find other wrongs to denounce. The earliest denunciations that Haitian migrants were enslaved on the sugar estates, starting with the Anti-Slavery International Report of 1978, referred primarily to the flagrant corruption and restrictive clauses in the bilateral labor contract that each year sent between ten and fifteen thousand Haitian men as harvest laborers to the state-owned estates. Following the suspension of the guest worker program, with the overthrow of Haitian President Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986, the charge of enslavement was maintained by international human rights monitors, even as their primary grounds for this allegation shifted to testimony concerning the use of force and fraud in informal channels of labor recruitment. Following the suppression of these practices by the government of Dominican President Leonel Fernández in 1997, Human Rights Watch dropped the charge of new slavery in its 2002 report, moving on to highlight deportation irregularities and denial of citizenship rights. Other well-informed observers continue to liken the *braceros*' conditions of work to slavery (Plataforma "VIDA"-GARR 2003, 9; Wilentz 2001). The larger point is that, at each moment when certain abusive practices have been abandoned, international monitors have turned their attention to one of the many other problems that have existed for decades but have not yet become foci of denunciations. The ready availability of "new" problems for human rights scrutiny itself indicates the abuses are many.

## THE ONION OF OPPRESSION

I think nearly everyone who has been observing this case for as long as I have (beginning in 1983), would agree that Haitian-ancestry people enjoy a climate of unprecedented liberty in the Dominican Republic today but that their freedoms still fall far short of what international human rights standards would require. It is no longer the case that a chance encounter with a policeman or military officer can lead to being forcibly relocated to a sugar plantation or that a company boss can prey on the wives and daughters of his Haitian workers with impunity because they lack any other employment options. Yet my guess is that relatively few Haitian descendants would say without reservation that they feel *better off* than before and a great many would say their overall situation has worsened. In this they surely share a great deal with others in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere in Latin America who sense that gains in political freedom during the last two decades have gone hand in hand with increased physical and economic

insecurity. Yet Haitian Dominicans are also beset by problems particular to their social status as members of a derogated minority group.

Any complete overview of the human rights challenges confronting Haitian immigrants and Haitian Dominicans should consider at least the following layers of oppression:

### **Poverty and Economic Decline**

Haiti's crushing poverty still compels tens of thousands to cross the border for meager wages and backbreaking labor with virtually no social security provisions in the Dominican sugar and construction industries. Tens of thousands of Haitians and Haitian Dominicans remain trapped in the lowest jobs. On the state-owned sugar estates, workers' incomes have shrunk as sugar production has declined.<sup>4</sup> *Batey* housing and services have fallen into terrible disrepair through government neglect and the destruction caused by Hurricane Georges.

### **Economic Dislocation**

In the name of freeing the market and maximizing economic growth, the government of the Dominican Republic has introduced a set of economic restructuring and industrial privatization initiatives directly affecting the livelihoods of sugar plantation workers. These measures have included currency devaluation and deregulation of foreign exchange, the reduction of subsidies and price controls for food and other essentials and cuts in government spending on health care and education. Surely the most important of these measures for people residing on state-owned sugar plantations has been the sale or private lease of state corporate properties, including the sugar plantation on which Monte Coca is situated, a process set in motion in 1997 by the enactment of the *Ley General de Reforma de la Empresa Pública* (Public Enterprise Reform Law). With quasi privatization, *batey* residents fear that they may no longer be permitted to retain even the meager assets they have customarily relied upon to avoid starvation during the leanest two or three months of the "dead season,"<sup>5</sup> such as free access to company-owned housing and unofficial permission to cultivate subsistence crops on unused parcels of company land. On the positive side, grassroots community development initiatives have become possible for the first time, as the grip of the sugar companies on the *bateyes* has weakened. A heightened division of individuals and communities into winners and losers is taking shape as the race for access to increasingly scarce and concentrated economic resources runs its course.

### **Community Disunity**

In even remote and low-income settlements, consumer goods have a great allure and constitute a powerful medium for people among the bottommost



tiers of the social hierarchy to assert claims to superiority over those who stand at the very bottom, the Haitian immigrants. The very worst treatment—involving verbal disrespect, segregated housing, physically coercive forms of labor discipline, as well as assignment to the dirtiest, most dangerous, worst remunerated and most physically debilitating work—is meted out not to ethnic Haitians or to Haitian nationals generally but to the seasonal workers, the *braceros*. Among women, Haitians more often than Dominicans do work that is widely considered degrading, including not only cane work but also sex work in Monte Coca's brothel (where all of the prostitutes are Haitian or Haitian Dominican). The seasonal migrants' lower standard of living and the degradations imposed by the company are all too readily interpreted by the *batey*'s permanent residents as evidence of the inherently degraded human character of the migrants themselves. Possession of material tokens of decency and a sense of marginally greater control over one's conditions of work and residential space are perceived as evidence of in-group superiority, weakening community solidarity and playing into management's divide-and-rule labor control strategy (Martínez 2007).

### Women's Subordination

Worsened poverty seems to be heightening tensions within households, producing an upswing in domestic violence.<sup>6</sup> Poverty may also be obligating more *batey* women to engage in survival sex and to put up with abusive domestic situations in order to stave off the threat of starvation. As certainly and remorselessly as the most impudent figure of authority of the past, poverty and economic uncertainty are compromising women's basic freedom of control over their sexuality.

### Trafficking

The vast majority of the women who live in Monte Coca were born there or arrived there of their own volition. But company bosses also pay recruiters to bring Haitian women to the *batey*.<sup>7</sup> The reason the company pays for women to be brought to its estates when it will not give them employment in the cane fields is, in a word, control—not over the women but over the *braceros*. Recognizing that it would be absurdly expensive to maintain continuous surveillance over each *bracero* for the duration of the harvest, company bosses think women are one of the “carrots” that attracts *braceros* to their *bateyes* and then keeps them in place. As one of Monte Coca's top bosses once told me, “A *batey* without women will soon be a *batey* without men.” The one fundamentally important difference in how the company treats women versus men is that newly arrived Haitian women are not given living quarters of their own but must share rooms with people already living in the *batey*. A woman who has just arrived from Haiti for the first time must either stay with any friends, relatives or fellow villagers she might find in the *batey* or take up union with a man just to get a roof over her head.

## “Conjugated Oppression”

Philippe Bourgois (1989) uses this term in reference to the ethnic hierarchy of a Panamanian banana plantation, in which the members of each ethnic group aid the exploitation of their fellow laborers of other ethnic groups further down the occupational ladder. Even though they are themselves excluded from important rights protections, Haitians and Haitian Dominicans on the sugar estates comply with or are at times active entrepreneurs in the subordination and exploitation of the most recent immigrants from Haiti. For recruiting laborers in Haiti, Haitian and Haitian-Dominican men are paid in cash and rewarded with low-level supervisory jobs, in which they serve as immediate agents of company surveillance and control. A handful of Haitian-Dominican men in Monte Coca have also become particularly notorious accomplices to the traffic in women, by making special trips to Haiti to recruit prostitutes for the *batey*'s brothel. Victims turned victimizers in the struggle for survival, their oppressive actions undermine the principle that all people hold certain rights.

## Inadequate Health Care and Sanitation

Lack of medical care and health education, inadequate sanitation and unhealthy water are well-known facts of life in the *bateyes*, villages and slums where the majority of the Haitian immigrants reside (Verrijp 1997). Solange Pierre and her coworkers at MUDHA have had ample opportunity to gauge the health effects of poverty, sexual exploitation and spouse abuse, as they have sought to train *batey* women how to claim their rights. She remarks:

“The mortality rate [among *batey* women], resulting as much from disease as from violence, is much higher [than in the population at large]. The incidence of prostitution among adolescents, after having been used by the bosses and then abandoned, and the rate of adolescent motherhood are extraordinary.”

Rates of HIV infection are significantly higher in the *bateyes* than in the immigrants' rural Haitian places of origin, suggesting that it is the immigrants and not the host population who come under increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases as a result of immigration from Haiti (Brewer et al. 1998).

## Low Levels of Educational Attainment

Poverty forces many children of Haitian immigrants to work, slowing their educational progress or even prohibiting them from attending school at all. Data on schooling and educational achievement also provides reason to worry that many children are inheriting the below-average job skills that have confined their parents to low-paid agricultural labor. In

one-third of the *bateyes* of the province of San Pedro there is no school at all (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales [FLACSO] 2002, 19). Nationally, slightly more than half of *batey* residents are illiterate (Méndez 2001, 62). Even when Haitian parents surmount these obstacles, lack of official citizenship documents may prevent their children from registering for school or bar them from receiving the diplomas they have earned (MUDHA 2002).

### **Anti-Haitian Prejudice**

Many Dominicans hold attitudes about Haitians that contrast radically with the ready welcome they have extended to other immigrant groups, going so far as to question whether Haitian Dominicans really are Dominican (Dore Cabral 1987, 62). This attitude forms part of a larger complex of prejudices, widely known in the Dominican Republic as *anti-haitianismo* (anti-Haitianism; see Sagás 2000). Anti-Haitianists among the Dominican social elite have long held that Haitians cannot be assimilated into Dominican society, but, like extraterrestrial body snatchers, will instead *Haitian-ize* the Dominicans in their midst.<sup>8</sup> Whereas there is room for doubt about how many Dominicans hold such virulent and unredeemed prejudices (Martínez 2003), expressions of anti-Haitian opinion are tolerated at all levels of Dominican society. These misconceptions ignore evidence that Haitian Dominicans have largely assimilated Dominican culture and learned the Spanish language (Dore Cabral 1995; Martínez 1995, 152–153).

### **Racism**

Even some dark-skinned Dominicans make racially prejudicial remarks against blacks and, in particular, against Haitians. Among both Haitians and Dominicans, there is a huge amount to overlap in physical appearance, yet it is widely accepted that Haitians differ visibly from Dominicans. I once asked a Haitian-Dominican woman whether she considered herself Haitian or Dominican, and she answered, “Both.” Then, after a moment’s pause, she added, “You cannot hide that [being Haitian]. People see it in you.”

### **Official Harassment**

The specter of forced relocation to distant sugar estates has been lifted, but in its place the Fernández government immediately instituted large-scale deportations of undocumented Haitians. Now numbering in the tens of thousands each year, the deportations continued under the administration of President Hipólito Mejía (MUDHA 2002). Worse, the deportations generally do not follow the process stipulated by Dominican law. Generally, people determined at the point of arrest to be Haitian, on the basis of their appearance or

accent, are quickly transferred without legal proceedings to buses for transportation across the Haitian border (Human Rights Watch 2002).

### Denial of Citizenship to the Dominican-born

Under the Dominican Constitution's principle of *jus soli*, the second generation ought to have automatic right to citizenship by having been born on Dominican soil. Yet the Dominican government is now on record denying that *jus soli* applies to Haitian Dominicans, who are commonly denied official citizenship documents.<sup>9</sup> An exception to *jus soli* in the Constitution, whereby citizenship may be denied the children of people in transit or foreign diplomatic personnel, has been invoked to justify denying Haitian Dominicans the right to Dominican citizenship, apparently on the (factually incorrect) grounds that they are all children of seasonal *braceros* and the (highly debatable) interpretation that the *braceros* are not residents but people in transit (Cedeño Caroit 1992, 139–140). When refused official residency and citizenship papers, Haitian Dominicans are quasi-stateless persons, with limited rights to education, no voting privileges and restricted foreign travel (MUDHA 2002). When you add that Dominicans are legally required to carry the national identity card (*cédula*), the lack of official documentation also imperils individuals' right of free transit within the country. As Haitian-Dominican interviewees told one researcher, "When we show the *cédula*, the soldier tells us, as he rips it up, 'The *cédula* is Dominican, but you are Haitian'" (Dore Cabral 1987, 62).

### Illiberal Democracy

Weak democratic institutions generally have their worst effects on the politically weakest of people, and even when these institutions work as they should, their determinations may be flouted by power-holders. In December 2002, a Dominican court issued a ruling ordering the issuance of official identity papers to two children who were being barred from registering for school for lack of birth certificates. Government officials have since refused to comply with the court's order, and higher government authorities have yet to intervene decisively on these plaintiffs' behalf (Red "Jacques Viau" 2003). That government bureaucrats could simply defy this order suggests not just the tenacity of anti-Haitian prejudice but is a sign of a general weakness of the judiciary and the rule of law. In this domain, poverty intrudes again to erode official probity and accountability. Badly paid police and other state authorities prey on the even poorer people of the sugar estates, who, without outside help, are virtually barred from seeking redress not just by fear of retribution but by the high cost of legal counsel and court fees (MUDHA 2002). The legal system is rigged against the poor also because of the susceptibility of Dominican judges to the pressure and blandishments of the wealthy and powerful.

## HAITIAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Starting in the 1980s, a new front of Haitian rights activism opened in the Dominican Republic. Domestic NGOs, founded by Haitian nationals or by Haitian Dominicans, with substantial grassroots support, took a lead role in militating within the Dominican Republic for greater official respect for the rights of Haitian-descendant people. Although not without important overlaps, the concerns and strategies that have guided their advocacy differ substantially from those followed by the international organizations, in ways that reflect the complex contours of their community members' subordination.

CCDH was the first Haitian rights organization to be founded in the Dominican Republic, established in July 1982, in the southeastern sugar port city of San Pedro de Macorís. Its main goals are: (a) to promote recognition, in law and in fact, of the Dominican nationality and citizenship of all Haitian Dominicans, and (b) to affirm and valorize the Haitian origin of Haitian Dominicans. MUDHA spun off from CCDH in 1983 but was not officially incorporated as an organization until 1992. Its coordinator, Sonia (Solange) Pierre, has always been a dominant presence in the organization and has emerged in recent years as the leading voice in international forums for her community's rights. MUDHA's main mission is to defend and promote the rights of female Haitian immigrants and to attain rights of full citizenship for their Dominican-born children. MUDHA's mission statement defines these rights in the widest terms: "civil, political, economic, social, cultural and human."

The Haitian-Dominican NGOs' methods go well beyond the shaming tactics, litigation, government lobbying and letter-writing campaigns used by international human rights NGOs. Both CCDH and MUDHA work along the community-participatory lines first theorized and developed by the Brazilian educator and community activist, Paolo Freire. These involve, first, meeting with local residents to determine what their needs are and to identify underlying problems. Through joint consultation, community members decide which of their many needs to try to address first. In each community project, CCDH and MUDHA organizers also attempt to promote consciousness of the wider social context. If a community group identifies a need for sanitary facilities, for example, group members are encouraged to reflect on the conditions that make it possible for employers and the state to neglect this basic need—e.g., that because they are Haitians, they are expected to accept any work, anywhere, regardless of the conditions. As CCDH director, Antonio Pol Emil, summarizes

in the *bateyes*, in the neighborhoods where we work, we promote the participation of Haitians and Dominicans, and in that participatory work, we carry out a labor of consciousness-raising, of struggle against racism, at the community level [*a nivel de pueblo*].<sup>10</sup>

CCDH and MUDHA have in general terms developed an alternative, grassroots model of rights activism that aims primarily at building their constituency's ability to promote and defend its own rights. Both organizations will take legal action and publicly denounce wrongs when circumstances, such as mass deportations or unjust detention, demand an immediate response. Their staff members are also called upon more or less constantly to intervene with the authorities on behalf of individuals or families in need of immediate legal or medical assistance. Outside of such emergencies, both CCDH and MUDHA prefer to avoid taking the responsibility for formulating an effective path of action out of the hands of the wronged parties. The preferred strategy is to accompany the sufferers of injustice along their chosen path of action, limiting intervention to encouragement and advice along the way. Rather than just getting a hearing from the competent authorities, rights claimants may thus grow in awareness and in skills that may be of use to them in confronting some of the many other problems in their lives.

CCDH's and MUDHA's broad aim is to support efforts by all people of Haitian ancestry to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to realize their human rights. These organizations' community-based and participatory approach is premised on the idea that, in order to avoid the worst abuses, members of the downtrodden Haitian minority must be prepared to stand up for their rights, whether this involves resisting attempts by soldiers or the police to evict and deport them, demanding admission to schools or service at health clinics or gaining the literacy skills needed to decipher a property deed or other legal document. Presupposed by the Haitian-Dominican NGOs' grassroots, participatory model of intervention is a concept of the Haitian targets of oppression that is substantially different from what the international human rights reportage would suggest. From the Haitian-Dominican advocates' perspective, the immigrants are sooner seen potential agents of change than as beings who must be rescued from slavery-like conditions.

By contrast with their international counterparts, the Haitian-Dominican NGOs have not focused solely upon legal issues but have charted a broad agenda, working simultaneously on the fronts of constitutional rights, cultural preservation, socioeconomic development and women's empowerment. They have reached out, through community education and organizing efforts, to the *braceros* working under conditions likened to slavery on the country's sugar estates but have also worked with Haitian nationals and their Dominican-born offspring in other poor rural and urban locales throughout much of the Dominican Republic. Only in recent years have international human rights advocates begun to recognize the broad scope of the community's struggle for rights, which includes not just humane treatment for the *braceros* but claims for official documentation and permanent residency permits, due process in deportations of unauthorized entrants and rights of citizenship for their Dominican-born children.

When you consider the small size and meager resources of the Haitian-Dominican NGOs, it is astonishing how broad a range of problems these organizations confront. Examples of their community development and educational initiatives include establishing elementary schools and pre-schools in *bateyes*, as well as cooperative pharmacies and stores to provide basic medicines and nutritious, inexpensive foodstuffs. Both CCDH and MUDHA operate a network of health promoters and midwives, who, in house-to-house visits and group meetings, deliver general health information and discuss sexuality, women's self-esteem and domestic violence issues. Human capital-oriented workshops focus not just on "bankable" skills, such as training *batey* women as seamstresses or aiding the establishment of community bakeries, but touch on civil rights, such as procedures for obtaining birth certificates and dealing with the police and judicial system. Community development activities at times take an added cultural dimension, as when a meeting to build solidarity and cooperation between community groups from different *bateyes* is topped off in the evening with games, storytelling and Haitian folk dancing and drumming. Similarly, preschools and after-school programs not only meet a major underserved need for basic education and a physically, mentally and emotionally healthy school environment but also promote respect for Haitian culture and involve parents in cooperative planning and support work.<sup>11</sup>

By organizing Haitian cultural and artistic events, and otherwise helping Haitian artists and crafts producers, CCDH has given particular emphasis to the support of activities that convey a more positive image of the Haitian immigrant than that projected by the national media.<sup>12</sup> Cultural revitalization projects aim not just to counteract widely prevailing anti-Haitian prejudices but also to combat Haitian-Dominican youths' rejection of Haitian culture and internalized perception of inferiority—what Pol Emil calls, "auto-racism"—that discrimination and harassment tend to inculcate.

The great importance attached to cultural revitalization by Haitian-Dominican advocates is explicable in great part by the need they perceive to resist the social pressure to "pass" as members of the Dominican ethnic mainstream. They began to overcome a basic hurdle on the road to organizing in their own defense when potential leaders, like Pierre and Pol Emil, first refused the easier option of "forgetting" their Haitian ancestry, once they attained the educational credentials to achieve social ascent. Only if more young Haitian Dominicans express pride in being Haitian, and find cogent arguments to counter prevailing prejudices against Haitians, can the group avoid losing its natural leaders through quasi-coerced assimilation.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, Haitian-Dominican advocates consider legal and constitutional reform to be a crucial aspect of their struggle. MUDHA and CCDH belong to the *Red de Encuentro y Solidaridad Jacques Viau* (Jacques Viau Meeting and Solidarity Network) that gathers various Haitian rights advocacy groups to define priorities and action campaigns. Perhaps the most salient of this network's activities has been a nationwide Campaign

for the Right to a Nationality, uniting diverse sectors of society around the right of all persons born in the Dominican Republic to a Dominican nationality. MUDHA has organized and conducted an international conference on the subject every year since 1995, while carrying out a host of related activities throughout the country, such as workshops, marches and the publication of background and advocacy materials.

In the late 1990s, the struggle for Haitian rights assumed a major new dimension with the presentation of claims before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) by MUDHA, in collaboration with the Berkeley and Columbia University law clinics and the Washington-based Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL). These international legal cases have become the main avenue where the agenda of Haitian-Dominican rights activists meets up collaboratively with the civil/political rights-oriented methods and priorities of international human rights professionals. The plaintiffs in these cases have sought remedies from the Dominican state on behalf of Haitian nationals who were repatriated without due process and for Haitian Dominicans who were deported in spite of carrying valid legal identity documents identifying them as Dominican citizens. Partial victories have been won in the IACHR and the Dominican government has been forced to facilitate the readmission of certain unjustly deported plaintiffs (Pierre 2001). Starting in 1998, MUDHA, CEJIL and the Law Clinic of Berkeley's Boalt Hall Law School argued a second case before the IACHR on behalf of two girls who had been denied their Dominican nationality despite being born in Dominican territory of mothers who held valid Dominican identity documents. In March 2003, the commission ruled in favor of the girls and that decision was upheld and elaborated by the IACHR in November 2006.<sup>14</sup> Important as these court rulings in favor of specific injured parties are, it is of comparable significance, in my opinion, that now at last international advocates are working as partners with Haitian-Dominican advocates who are active on the ground. Forging ever-closer consultation and increasingly complementary advocacy activities between international organizations and their Haitian-Dominican partners will not be easy, but fortunately the days are past when international advocates decided priorities and strategies of action entirely on their own.

## FINAL OBSERVATIONS

The rights infringements, injustices and social exclusions that comprise the onion of oppression are not just discrete types of abuses. They are interrelated. Each wrong is also a source of other injustices, permits other wrongs to occur or acts to block the targets of abuse from obtaining protection or redress.

Denial of the right of citizenship, for example, may bar the way for a child of Haitian parents to remain in school past the secondary level,



effectively shutting off access to skilled employment. Being thus unfairly deprived of economic opportunities is likely to prohibit him or her from becoming an economic leader for his/her family, helping parents, siblings and extended family members rise out of poverty and abandon the socially and physically unhealthy environment of the *batey*. Multiply this injustice hundreds or thousands of times and the aggregate effect is to cement the Haitian minority into its present subordination and relative powerlessness.

Poverty also facilitates the perpetuation of all the other injustices. It opens the door to the flagrant abuses of civil-political rights, so amply documented by international human rights observers, by compelling people in rural Haiti to “decide” to cross the border, even when they know what substandard living and working conditions and constraints on their freedom likely await them on the Dominican side (Martínez 1996). Poverty, too, closes access to education to many Haitian-Dominican children, stunting their chances for social advancement and reproducing a labor force that is ill-prepared to defend its own rights. In the hands of an underpaid and inadequately administered police and judiciary, justice becomes a commodity, for sale to the highest bidder. Without public defenders and confronted by high court costs and legal fees, low-income people are virtually barred from seeking legal redress.

Interviews with Haitian-Dominican rights advocates suggest that poverty can even hinder efforts at consciousness raising and community organization. According to Antonio Pol Emil, it was not any ideological commitment that brought CCDH to address community development issues and more generally develop a broad, integrated activist agenda. Rather, they realized at an early date that their mission, of community organizing and consciousness raising, could bear fruit only if combined with initiatives that might yield tangible benefits to members of target groups. As Pol Emil phrases it

We understood that, in the context of great misery . . . the work of organizing was not so easy, because a hungry group neither gains awareness nor, even less, does it organize. . . . For the people to develop consciousness of their reality, it was necessary to help them, even if only minimally, to resolve some of their many problems.”<sup>15</sup>

The larger point is that it was out of a practical struggle for change, and not a priori philosophical commitments, that the Haitian-Dominican NGOs developed their rigorous adherence to the principle of the indivisibility of civil-political and economic, social and cultural rights.

In its cultural and feminist dimensions, also, the agenda and practice of CCDH and MUDHA transcend the division of human rights into distinct civil-political and economic, social and cultural bundles. For them, cultural revitalization and women’s empowerment activities are central to challenging hegemonic concepts of cultural citizenship that ideologically justify

exclusionary practices. Like Maya cultural rights activists in Guatemala (Nelson 1996), Haitian Dominicans contest axiomatic pairings of modernity and backwardness with dominant and subordinate racial identities. As in other ethnically divided states in the Americas, notions of who belongs to the nation in the Dominican Republic give pride of place to “mixed-race” and Euro-American citizens, and exclude or marginalize “darker” Indians and African Americans. At the same time, determinations of who belongs to what race are based on social status markers. For Haitian Dominicans, as for Indians in Central and South America, getting schooling and attaining a higher occupational status have permitted a select few to distance themselves from the subordinate racial/ethnic identity of their ancestral group. In this context, refusing to pass as Dominican is neither an empty gesture of defiance nor a romantic displacement of political energy toward ethno-nationalist aims. It is a necessary precondition for Haitian immigrants to organize as a group, for without it the most able of their people would cease to identify openly with the group. Cultural change—specifically, acceptance of the idea that a person can be both Haitian and a member of the national mainstream—is therefore crucial to the Haitian struggle for rights and justice.

On similarly practical grounds, the feminist approach, developed particularly strongly by MUDHA, rejects a narrow concept of human rights as consisting primarily of individual, civil-political liberties. Recognizing that the line between coercion and consent is thin, and having learned from experience that the survivors of the intimate wrongs of coerced sex and domestic violence are hesitant to tell their stories to outside investigators, MUDHA staffers know that a positivist, legal approach will on its own be ineffective in promoting women’s rights. It bears noting that whereas Dominican law gives ample protections to women, these have to date been ineffective in diminishing violence against women, generally. It may be particularly unrealistic to expect that violence against poor, economically dependent women, who belong to a derogated ethnic group, can be adequately prevented or redressed by encouraging wronged individuals to press their cases in legal venues. When working among a downtrodden group, social and economic interventions—aimed, for example, at raising awareness of women’s rights issues and building women’s economic capacities—seem to be a necessary complement to legal approaches.

My analysis is premised on the idea that praxis—as reflected in the agenda and practice of the Haitian-Dominican NGOs—provides as solid a basis for validating or disproving explanations and interpretations as any social research methodology. From both the scholarly and activist standpoints, the proof is in the practice. The programs of action and community-participatory methods of the CCDH and MUDHA are not overtly guided by ideology of any stripe, but have developed largely through their activists’ practical engagement with Haitians and Haitian Dominicans in the Dominican Republic’s *bateyes* and urban slums. Haitian-Dominican community

organizations work against a highly pervasive system of racial/class domination, a system that is, even so, highly fluid, multifaceted and not easily visible in all its aspects. The leadership of these organizations is convinced that the struggle for more just treatment of Haitian immigrants cannot be restricted to an appeal for civil-political liberties, as international human rights NGOs prescribe. They recognize that allegations of neo-slavery, so effective in catching the attention of Northern audiences, not only oversimplify a complex system of domination, but ignore the immigrants' need for economic uplift and social acceptance. The idea that economic development must pass a certain threshold before civil-political liberties have any meaning has no validity for these advocates. Yet their overall strategy of change starts from the assumption that leaving the sugarcane fields is more than a positive achievement in its own right; it is a step whereby skills and strength are accumulated that may help each individual and the group as a whole gain a wider hearing for their grievances on the Dominican national scene. Time will tell whether international rights advocates are flexible enough to match the Haitian-Dominican NGOs in patiently working with base communities and transcending the boundaries between human rights, development aid and women's empowerment, within which international solidarity is conventionally packaged.

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## NOTES

1. This process of nationality stripping has occurred "below the radar," without being formally declared as a state policy and without mechanisms being provided for injured parties to appeal decisions made by the state organ that issues the *cédula* (national identity card), the Junta Central Electoral (Central Electoral Board). Nationality stripping has typically occurred when a person has lost his or her *cédula* or needs to renew it in order to apply for a new job, register for college classes, obtain a marriage certificate or get a passport because they have been invited to travel overseas (author's interview with Solange Pierre, March 6, 2009, Bloomfield, CT).

2. The northern NGOs most active in this case have been Human Rights Watch, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights and the National Coalition for Haitian Rights. A fairly complete list of the human rights reports and academic studies published prior to 1994 can be found in Martínez (1995, 193–194 nn. 1, 2). Important subsequent publications include Cuello (1997); Gavigan (1996); Human Rights Watch (2002); Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ([IACHR] 1999, chap. 9).
3. The Spanish language term for the Dominican-born children of Haitians is *dominicano-haitianos/las*, commonly, if infelicitously, translated into English by international observers as “Dominico-Haitians.” In addressing an English-language readership, I prefer the term *Haitian Dominican*, because it conveys more clearly that these people are, culturally and by legal right, as much Dominican as they are Haitian.
4. It was estimated in 2001 that the cane cutters earn an average of sixty Dominican pesos per day (roughly three U.S. dollars; see Méndez 2001, 59). This is better than the slightly more than one dollar per day that I found most cane cutters earned in 1986 but increased unemployment and rising consumer prices render the wage increase almost insignificant. A Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales ([FLACSO] 2002, 52) survey done in 2000 on former state-run estates found that more than a quarter of permanent residents earn less than RD\$1,000 (U.S.\$50) per month. Almost one-fifth of the respondents who live in rural company compounds no longer work for the sugar company, two-thirds of these having been dismissed from their plantation jobs, surviving mainly on handouts and money earned through odd jobs and petty commerce (*ibid.*, 45–47).
5. As is common among Caribbean sugar industries, the yearly cycle of sugarcane cultivation comprises two periods, *zafra* (harvest) and *tiempo muerto* (“dead season”), coinciding respectively with the drier and wetter months of the year. The harvest runs four to six months, from December through June, and is the peak period of employment. Money changes hands freely, old debts are repaid, people eat a better diet and spend money in ways, practical and frivolous, they could not afford during dead season. The dead season lasts six to eight months, and is, as its name implies, a time of reduced employment and, for many *batey* people, real hunger.
6. Interviews that I organized in 2002 with Haitian and Haitian-Dominican women yielded an outpouring of accounts of domestic violence. Other sources include FLACSO (2002, 43); author’s interview with staff of MUDHA, Santo Domingo, May 22, 2002.
7. To my knowledge, I am the only outside observer to have recorded firsthand testimony concerning the forced relocation of Haitian women to the sugar estates (Martínez 1995, 122–123), even though Haitian-Dominican activists will readily speak in detail about this practice and a gamut of other human rights abuses against women. In an interview that I recorded in 1999 with Sonia Pierre, she recalled the following kind of scene played out every year in her childhood on a sugar plantation in the Dominican Republic’s Cibao Valley, when truckloads of new migrants would arrive from Haiti: “For example, in the *batey* where I was born and raised, a head *batey* on the old Ingenio Catarey . . . in the corral . . . they would unload seven or eight trucks—the famous ‘Catareys,’ old flatbed Mercedes-Benzes, that was the mode of transport!—there, four, six, even eight trucks would unload an enormous quantity [of people]. And then, after the boss and the authorities of the place picked their women, then . . . the *viejos* [‘old-timers,’ resident Haitian cane-workers] would come by to pick among the ones who were left

there to live with them. Many of those women, besides serving the guy, [he] automatically became their pimp.”

8. According to former Dominican president, Joaquín Balaguer (1985, 45), for example, “The morals of the Dominican peasant in the rural areas where commerce with Haiti has been greatest tend to decline visibly to approach . . . those of their [Haitian] neighbors.”
9. Often, the children of Haitian immigrants are born at home, obligating their parents to take a special trip to obtain a birth certificate. Work obligations may delay parents in seeking a birth certificate for their newborn. Or the parents may lack the self-confidence, Spanish-language skills or trust of officialdom necessary to go to a government office at all. Even if they surmount all these obstacles, they may get the runaround or be openly rebuffed by a bureaucrat, just because they are Haitian.
10. Author’s interview, July 4, 1997.
11. These examples are drawn from the CCDH’s news bulletin, *La Isla*, and its successor publication, *El Carril*; also personal e-mail correspondence with MUDHA intern, Karl F. Swinehart, January 15, 1998.
12. Pol Emil observes, “It is said that all the immigrants have made great contributions to the economic and cultural development of the Dominican Republic. On the other hand, [it is thought that] what Haitian immigration has brought [with it] has only been misery and a distortion of Dominican culture” (author’s interview, July 22, 2002). CCDH has helped Haitian artists and crafts producers request official permission to operate within the Dominican tourist industry (in the past, they have had to deal with occasional, arbitrary reversals of government policy and frequent instances of police harassment).
13. Author’s interview, Antonio Pol Emil, July 22, 2002, Santo Domingo.
14. See [http://www.law.berkeley.edu/cenpro/ihrhc/social\\_rights.html](http://www.law.berkeley.edu/cenpro/ihrhc/social_rights.html).
15. Field research that Jocelyn Linnekin and I carried out, on popular concepts of democracy, strongly confirms that the denizens of the sugar plantations have difficulty looking beyond their poverty. In response to the question, “What are the basic rights and liberties of a citizen in a democracy?” residents of one *batey* named “employment,” “housing,” “security,” “respect” and “liberty of expression,” in that order. By contrast, a sample of respondents in the Dominican capital city, Santo Domingo, most frequently mentioned, “liberty of expression,” followed by “health,” “education,” “food” and “employment.” The fact that liberty of expression trailed behind employment in the *batey* sample but stood considerably ahead of employment among the answers given by inhabitants of the capital city seems in keeping with the dire economic deprivation and uncertainty confronted by the *batey* population.

## 4 On the Margins

### The Emergence of a Haitian Diasporic Enclave in Eastern Cuba

*Yanique Hume*

There is much of Haity, in its own right, in Cuban history and culture. Haity was present in the drumming ceremony with the Tumba Francesa presided over by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes on October 9, 1868. Haity was present in the Baraguá Protest, a moment in which those who rescued Cuba's national dignity took cognizance of each other by speaking in the Creole language. Haity was present in the holocaust that Flor Crombet faced in the Yateras mountain range. And now Haity is also present here in Cuba, in our festival through the revolutionary presence of those Haitian descendants who have found their voice through the day-to-day struggles on behalf of the Revolution's consolidation in face of an inveterate enemy, who nonetheless, shall be defeated. It is in that day-to-day presence, in the context of that struggle that Haity's presence becomes one and the same with our spiritual sense of being, with our sense of solidarity in the organizing of life. Haity is present in the drumbeats of Gagá, in the invocation of the Radá and Petro—lwa-s who were always on the side of Fidel and the Revolution.

(Joel James Figarola, "Palabras inaugurales," 2004)<sup>1</sup>

In the inaugural speech opening the twenty-fourth annual Festival of Caribbean Culture in Santiago de Cuba, Joel James, the late director of Casa del Caribe, evokes the long-standing relationship, solidarity and historical links between Haiti and Cuba.<sup>2</sup> From the advent of the protracted struggles against Spanish colonialism through to the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, Haitians have been a part of Cuba's long journey towards self-actualization and they continue to exist as a defiant symbol of freedom and an ally in the fight against U.S. imperialism. The Haitian presence is also recognized in the existence of century-old cultural institutions, experienced as part of the rich spiritual tapestry, and entangled in the revolutionary and cultural history of Cuba, and more specifically, the eastern provinces or Oriente.<sup>3</sup> Whereas such accolades are now proudly pronounced by some Cuban officials and heard by both local and international audiences, this has not always been the case. For

the most part, the presence of Haitians and their descendants has been demonized, undervalued or obscured within the historical narratives and discursive constructions of *cubanidad* (Cubanness).

From the early nineteenth century both Spanish colonial authorities and Cuban elites perceived Haiti as an inferior black space that achieved political independence at the expense of material progress. As a result, both modernity and civilization were considered beyond its reach. The discourses on race that developed around the specter of another Haiti and the positivist arguments that situated blackness outside of the ambit of civilization impacted the very ways in which the early Cuban nation would be imagined (de la Fuente 2001; Fischer 2004; Sheller 2001). In short, Haiti entered the Cuban imagination as its ultimate “Other.” The self-conscious quest for modernity and ways to express a distinct Cuban identity and nationality in the early nineteenth century was juxtaposed against that which was created in Haiti. The connection between the two islands was not necessarily defined by consistent contact and influence, as in the case of the relationship between the United States and Cuba. Instead, the link was established through, and grounded in, a philosophical and ideological idea of *difference*. “Only crass ignorance,” said José Martí, “would lead someone to draw comparisons between the two islands” (Martí quoted in Ferrer 1999, 134).<sup>4</sup>

According to historian Ada Ferrer, “For almost a century, analogies to Haiti and allusions to black revolt and social chaos served to compromise the appeal of a political sovereignty won through widespread mobilization” (1999, 112). The potential threat of social ruin and the brandishing of Haiti as an “icon of fear” (Helg 1997) were further amplified by the ethnic and nationalist chauvinism of the 1930s. This hostile period bore witness to exclusionary immigration policies directed against the influx of Afro-Caribbean labor migrants and the subsequent repatriation of approximately thirty-eight thousand Haitians from 1933 to 1939 (see Alvarez Estevez 1988; Carr 2003; Knight 1985; Lundahl 1982; McLeod 1998; Pérez de la Riva 1979).

The ubiquitous references to Haiti in the discursive construction of Cuban identity are particularly intriguing given the marginalization of the Haitian presence in Cuba. In fact, the repatriation campaigns invariably silenced the past (Trouillot 1995) and temporarily erased from popular memory the presence of one of Cuba’s largest Afro-Caribbean immigrant populations.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the historical narratives of Haiti and the cultural practices of their descendants tend to be discussed as discrete temporal phenomena that do not reflect the realities of contemporary Cuba. But if this is the case, how do we begin to understand the formation and existence of diasporic enclaves in the rural hinterlands of eastern Cuba? How do we account for the large presence of Haitian descendants that represent their cultural forms, histories and identities in their everyday lived experiences and in local and regional festivals today? What do the mechanisms of

survival deployed by generations of Haitians and their descendants reveal about issues of diasporic identity formation in a peripheral micro-locality?

To answer these questions, this chapter, in its ethnographic attention to processes of diasporic identification, foregrounds the rural community experience as a crucial site for understanding how Haitian cultural forms are reimagined and adapted to suit the social environment of eastern Cuba. It investigates how Cubans of Haitian descent construct an alternative space of belonging by ordering their social worlds around an insider–outsider duality. I demonstrate that the construction of a diasporic subjectivity is not solely dependent upon travel across borders, but is in fact elaborated in response to a sense of invisibility and marginality and through cultural practices grounded in Haitian peasant sensibilities. Although not a transnational community in the contemporary sense, an examination of the descendants of Haitians in Cuba affords an opportunity to expand and disturb the metropolitan focus of Diaspora Studies.

### THE HAITIAN DIASPORA, THE TROPE OF MARGINALITY AND THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

Although the diaspora experience is one that is organized around notions of travel, continuity, belonging and re-rootedness, the almost exclusive emphasis placed on transnational flows between home and host societies impedes an examination of diaspora as a condition of dwelling. Whereas the construction of the metropolitan Haitian diaspora is organized around what would appear to be a consistent migratory flow between the various localities of home, not all diasporas sustain an ideology of mobility. The primacy afforded to travel thus elides a careful examination of the strategies of those who remain rooted in their new homes. I take as my lead Stuart Hall's assertion that diaspora is determined not solely through "return" or mobility, but also through "difference" (1995, 235).

The particular configurations that structure the Haitian diasporic experience in Cuba differ dramatically from its metropolitan counterpart. In many ways, the descendants of Haitians in Cuba resemble those in Guadeloupe, who, as Brodwin maintains, use their marginality to structure their diasporic subjectivity (see Brodwin, this volume). With long-distance nationalism essentially out of reach, the descendants of Haitians in Cuba have had to construct their own imagined communities steeped in remembered and redefined cultural practices. The concept of marginalization is particularly germane for the current consideration, as the question of negotiation is critical to understanding how people attempt to self-consciously fashion their individual and collective identities while mediating the constraints of their specific (structurally and spatially) bounded realities.

In the case of the descendants of Haitians in Cuba, the marginality that is experienced today is not one of political uncertainty (e.g., lack of



legal documentation or citizenship). Neither is it a strict matter of economic exclusion, although this is impacted by their physical isolation on the island. Instead, the marginality of those of Haitian descent takes on spatial and societal dimensions. The physical remoteness and poor infrastructure of the *bateyes* and rural areas the majority of Haitians inhabit, and their existence outside of mainstream understandings of *cubanidad*, is represented in their invisibility as a sociocultural entity or body of people.

Further, whereas the geopolitical location of Havana as the gateway to the Americas and Europe situated the west as intrinsically cosmopolitan, the geographically isolated and mountainous environs of the east resulted in the perception that the region was overwhelmingly provincial in character and lacking metropolitan sensibilities. From as early as the eighteenth century the reliance on small-scale subsistence farms, a localized mining and cattle ranching sector and a rather antiquated sugar industry illustrated a distinct local economy not fully integrated into the island as a whole. Additionally, with capital and technological resources being siphoned to the administrative centers in the west, an illicit but vigorous contraband trade of goods and enslaved peoples primarily from Saint Domingue, Puerto Rico and Jamaica emerged (Pérez 1988). Although most of the enslaved were sold to planters in Havana and neighboring provinces, the large proportion of free blacks and coloreds in the east had always outnumbered the numbers found in the west, serving to engender Oriente as backwards and outside the ambit of a progressively modern and civilized nation.

The extensive establishment of free settlements known as *palenques* in the vast mountainous environs above Santiago de Cuba perpetuated Oriente's sociocultural difference from occidental Cuba. Matthias Röhrig Assunção and Michael Zeuske correctly highlight, "A 'black' land of freedom developed in Oriente" (1998, 414). Outside the gaze and reach of colonial authorities, *cimarrones* (enslaved Africans who liberated themselves from enslavement by establishing their own self-governed communities) from across the island forged ties with other fugitives from neighboring Haiti who fled from nearby coffee estates (see Corzo 2003). As the locus of Cuba's revolutionary stirrings and home to highly syncretic cultural traditions, the rural hinterlands of Oriente, and Santiago de Cuba more generally, developed a distinct localized identity and eclectic cultural mix with a uniquely Caribbean ethos. With the consistent influx of Caribbean migrants, the eastern provinces became known as the most Caribbean part of Cuba, and the nation's second largest municipality, Santiago de Cuba, was locally dubbed "the capital and crossroads of the Caribbean."

The marginalization of Oriente, expressed in the common labels used to refer to the region, e.g., *palestino* and *el monte*, speaks to the manner in which the east is imagined to be culturally "Other." These names capture the cultural and ethnic distinctiveness of the region and at the same time suggest a sense of alienation and devaluation. "Palestinian" is a form of racist designation for *orientales* (i.e., specifically blacks who live east of

Camagüey) that evokes the highly contested and racialized Jewish–Palestinian situation. It is used in reference to the preponderance of the region’s black residents and connotes “dark-skinned intruder” or “dangerous dark-skinned” person.

The term emerged among the white and racially mixed populations of the west (chiefly Havana) who were resentful of the blackening of the capital city by an influx of poor, dark-skinned migrants from the east. The expression was adopted into the vernacular in the 1980s, when the economic situation began to deteriorate and scores of *orientales* moved to the capital in search of a livelihood and survival. It became a full-blown epithet in the 1990s during the *periodo especial*<sup>6</sup> and thereafter.

The relationship between *los capitalanos* or those from the capital with residents from the eastern provinces is colored by racial ambivalence and in some cases an outright denigration of the supposed inferiority of *orientales* (see Fernández 2001; Sarduy and Stubbs 2000; Sawyer 2006). As one Santiaguero (Santiago-born resident) chided, “You, as a stranger to my country holding a foreign passport have more rights than I have to travel around my own Homeland, but if you were to carry a  *carnet* [national ID card] you would be treated just like the rest of us black easterners.” His rebuke was in reference to the revolutionary regime’s enactment of a law in the 1990s that strictly curtails and polices population movements to the capital, in an attempt to control migration into Havana. The law thus added currency to the label *palestino* and greater legitimacy to the historical othering of a substantial segment of the society.<sup>7</sup>

Paradoxically, whereas Santiago and the eastern region of Cuba is often acknowledged as being the cultural home and cradle of the Cuban nation (Pérez 1988), the administrative center of Havana and the west becomes the face of the nation, the Cuba the world sees and knows. Furthermore, in Cuba’s plural society the rural hinterlands are marked as racially, ethnically and culturally Other, thus making it difficult for the white occidental elite to reconcile the view that “the rural inland areas are the quintessential guardians of national culture” (Davíla 1997, 93). As a direct consequence of this, the descendants of Afro-Caribbean immigrants, although born and reared in Cuba, are often not recognized as being a constitutive element of the nation.

## MARGINAL MIGRANTS: THE MOVEMENT OF HAITIANS TO CUBA

Well before the dynastic Duvalier dictatorship and subsequent widespread out-migration of political refugees to the metropolis, Cuba and many other neighboring Caribbean territories became temporary and permanent residences for Haitians fleeing the upheaval caused by the Haitian Revolution. Haitian migration to Cuba did not exist as an isolated case, but in fact followed a

wider pattern of movement that was triggered by land displacement, the acute shortages of cash and resources in the countryside, as well as consistent political and civil unrest. Over a period of three centuries, the introduction of new migrants helped to fortify the Haitian cultural presence in the east and indeed contributed to the transformation of Oriente's sociocultural landscape.

Intra-Caribbean migration and travel to Cuba began on the heels of the collapse of colonial Saint Domingue. French émigrés and their domestics, known locally as *franceses*,<sup>8</sup> began to arrive on the island in 1792 and continued for the next twenty-two years (see Bettelheim 2001). Although initially envisaged as a way station, Santiago de Cuba soon became a significant socioeconomic and cultural hub for this migrant class (see Alvaréz Estévez and Guzman Pascual 2008, Debien 1992; Portuondo 1938). The French refugees, Haitian mulatto elite and enslaved blacks brought to Cuba the first wave of industrial modernization through advanced techniques for the cultivation of coffee. But their most noted contribution and lasting legacy to Cuba's cultural patrimony are the fraternal, mutual aid associations known as *Sociedades de Tumba Francesas*.

Declared by UNESCO in 2003 as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, these cultural institutions were critical to establishing cross-cultural and ethnic links as well as building and affirming social cohesion between the diverse classes of free and enslaved blacks and mulattos. They became the vehicles for harnessing a distinct Franco-Haitian culture, and at the same, facilitated the integration of the first wave of Haitians into eastern Cuba.

Typically, *Tumbas* (which was the name given to the drum and activity associated with its playing) would form part of the festivities to commemorate the feast day of saints San Juan and San Pedro, or ironically on the birthday of the plantation owner. The Wars of Independence, however, served to politicize these associations. They thus became the loci of exchange and subversive activities, including the planning of military tactics and as a camouflage for revolutionary activities.<sup>9</sup> The fact that the three principal revolutionary icons of the Wars of Independence, Quintín Bandera, Antonio Maceo and Guiller món Moncada, were noted Freemasons and members of the *Tumba Francesa*, point to the importance of these associations for consolidating support across ethnic lines during the protracted liberation struggles of the nineteenth century.

The eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century influx of *franceses* drastically differed from the second and more significant wave of labor migration of the twentieth century. This is so in part because they were of a different character and magnitude. These movements also represented two rather distinct historical, national and economic moments, which in turn impacted the ways Haitians and other Afro-Caribbean foreigners were integrated into Cuban society (McLeod 1998). Additionally, as a result of the cessation of migration following the influx of French émigrés and their enslaved population after the 1820s, migrants of the twentieth century did

not have an established community or social network of kinfolk to ease their transition. Instead, the mostly unlettered laborers were left to create new social fields and strategies of survival in an alien and increasingly hostile environment.

Between 1902 and 1913, Cuban government officials identified 6,956 Haitians and 5,344 Jamaicans on the island.<sup>10</sup> By 1911 the Haitian consul in Santiago de Cuba estimated that approximately ten to twelve thousand Haitians resided in eastern Cuba (Cenicharo 1994). In the period following, 1913 to 1931, however, more than three hundred thousand laborers from Haiti and the British West Indies (e.g., Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago) migrated to Cuba (Pérez de la Riva 1979; Alvarez Estevez 1988). Although the introduction of these laborers was organized around a seasonal pattern of movement based on the *zafra* or sugar harvest, many of these Antilleans remained in Cuba.

As their presence grew steadily in the U.S. franchised mills, Cuban officials marked the black *braceros* (field hands) as a threat that would obfuscate the civilizing mission of white immigration. Haitians, shrouded in a cloak of fear and objectification, would become the most legally, economically and sociopolitically disenfranchised population during this period (see McLeod 1998). In a direct response to this marginality and as a means of securing their safety, those who remained engaged in a practice of cultural *marronage*. To safeguard their continued existence on the island, Haitians were forced to retreat into an alternative world physically and socially distant from the dominant cultural matrix. As a result of their marginalization during the first four decades of the twentieth century, Haitians began to forge diasporic enclaves in the insular environments of Oriente that exist to this day.

Although the large-scale movements of the early twentieth century subsided at the end of the 1930s, Cuba received two other waves that were radically different in composition and character. The political turmoil experienced under the tyrannical Duvalier regime and its subsequent uprooting (*dejoukaj*) precipitated a sporadic wave of migrants or *refugios* (political refugees). Many of them were detained in Cuba before being shipped back to Haiti whereas approximately three thousand were able to seek amnesty (Hurlich 1998).<sup>11</sup>

From 1994 to the present, the newest wave of temporary migrants to Cuba constitutes a significant break from the past migratory trend—not just demographically, but also in the amicable Cuban environment the contemporary migrants have entered and the consistent contact they are able to maintain with Haiti. Furthermore, these transnational students become the tangible link with the homeland for the descendants of Haitians living in Santiago de Cuba.

Unlike the refugees of the nineteenth and late twentieth centuries—and the labor migrants who traveled seasonally and/or established permanent residences in eastern Cuba—contemporary Haitian students are not exclusively coming to escape or secure economic opportunities in Cuba. They

are for the most part concerned with getting an education and the technical/professional tools so that they can return to Haiti and better serve their communities. To date, Cuban universities accommodate more than three thousand Caribbean students, with Haitians representing the majority of that number. Over seven hundred students in the medical schools of Santiago alone are from Haiti.<sup>12</sup> With continued bilateral communication it is likely that these numbers will increase over time.

Presently, there are no accurate calculations of the numbers of Haitians and their descendants living in Cuba, although the figures range from 350,000 to 600,000.<sup>13</sup> As there is no space accorded to nonnationals or Afro-Caribbean ethnicities to be represented on the census, Haitians and their descendants are often absorbed into racial categories and not identified as a distinct ethnic group in their own right. Also, due to the nationalizing efforts after 1959, which universalized the political rights of illegal immigrants and workers, all Haitians and their descendants were granted citizenship. Notwithstanding the vagueness of contemporary figures, it is clear that the flow of Haitian migrants into Cuba did not represent a closed, discrete moment in Cuba's labor history.<sup>14</sup> In fact, movement roughly corresponded to the larger historical chronology of Haitian migration globally.

#### LIVING ON THE MARGINS: LIFE IN A HAITIAN-CUBAN BATEY

Over time Haitian Cubans were able to forge a collective hyphenated identity and presence in eastern Cuba. Critical to this process were the rural settlements known as *bateyes* where Haitians historically made their living.<sup>15</sup> *Bateyes* in Cuba commonly functioned as a company town consisting of barracks and other dwellings and communal spaces located close to the cane fields (*campos de caña*). Structured by race, ethnicity, class and national origin, *bateyes* were built around a massive base of Afro-Caribbean laborers (who themselves were highly stratified with Haitians occupying the lowest rung); a small middle strata occupied chiefly by poor rural white Cubans (*guajiros*) and a few English-speaking Afro-Antillean migrants; and white American and Cuban businessmen at the pinnacle of the social structure.

In many respects, *bateyes* represented discrete self-contained satellite communities whose principle purpose and infrastructure centered on the efficient cultivation and management of the sugar crop. The class of predominantly black laborers served as the pillar around which the *batey* functioned, yet they were not socially, economically or politically enveloped into the broader society.

Due to the horrific and inhumane treatment of Haitians living and working in the sugar fields of the Dominican Republic, *bateyes* have been identified as deplorable spaces of extreme exploitation and abuse wherein

Haitians are legally subordinated and operate within a system of neo-slavery (Wucker 2000). However, as Martínez's chapter in this volume shows, this view does not take into consideration the work and infrastructure NGOs in the *bateyes* of the Dominican Republic are currently putting into place in order to redress the marginalization of Haitian workers. Through their efforts, these organizations have been moving towards securing better living conditions, revitalizing Haitian culture and restoring their human rights. In a similar fashion, the revolutionary mandate to eradicate the discrepancies across the classes has positively impacted the structure of Cuban *bateyes*. In Cuba today, *bateyes* are communities in and of themselves. They are socially constructed by their residents around an ideology of communal cooperation and as such are envisioned and experienced as an extended family compound or village.

Located to the east of the Sierra Maestra mountain range, Barranca is one of a chain of rural settlements linked to the dozen or so sugar mills still in operation along the eastern corridor between Santiago de Cuba and Holguín. The antiquated railway tracks, traversing the western end of the *batey*, serve as the artery of communication between the loosely populated communities in the rolling valleys and hills, connecting the interior sugar and highland coffee areas to the commercial town of Palma Soriano (approximately 45 kilometers outside of Santiago de Cuba). From oral history accounts, we know that the land in which Barranca now sits was a large amalgamated estate (*finca*) owned and operated by a powerful U.S. multinational sugar company. From as early as 1906 they began to enlarge the labor supply with seasonal male migrants primarily from three principle recruiting centers in the Haitian coastal towns of Port de Paix, northwest of Cap-Haïtien; Ley Cayes in the south; and the Plaine de Cul de Sac area, northeast of the capital Port-au-Prince.

The population composition of Barranca continues to reflect the racial and ethnic identity and relative homogeneity of the initial settlers. Educational opportunities provided by the revolutionary government have meant that many of the young descendants of Haitian cane cutters are leaving the confines of the *batey* to better their lives and the lives of their families. However, first-, second- and third-generation Haitians still dominate the community. Of the 520 residents divided among approximately 110 households, Haitian Cubans account for all but fifteen of the community's residents. The other residents are the descendants of *campesinos* (white Cuban farmer/small landholders).

Architecturally, the assortment and arrangement of the buildings are quite bewildering, making it difficult to grasp the lay of the land. The rather rigid nucleus of buildings in the center contrasts with the circuitous collection of houses on either side of the main road. The deceptively insular core of buildings spills out from the center, radiating to the far reaches of the compound towards a wall of untamed vegetation. The wild foliage that hugs the periphery of the village along three sides functions as a natural

border reducing the view of the cane fields and separating the space of living from the space of working.

This particular distinction between these two frames of reference and conceptions of space and time become part of the lived environmental reality, which indeed orders and defines distinct social spheres and the relationships that take place within these areas. Whereas work does occur within the boundaries of the domestic space of the home and the plot of land that surrounds the home, work for self is not in the same category as work for others.<sup>16</sup>

The cultural spheres that divide the inside, private family yard space from the outside, state-controlled farming area is quite fluid.<sup>17</sup> This is in part because life in Barranca is quintessentially a public affair. It unfolds in the daily chores associated with peasant village life linked to the working of the land. Seldom do you find residents living strictly behind closed doors. In fact, the intimate private inner domain of the house/yard complex spills out quite naturally into the public. Secondly, given the social and architectural organization of Barranca, the gender boundaries that help define the distinguishing sensibilities and activities associated with inside and outside are quite porous. Although women dominate the domestic space of the house, men and women equally share the weight of the agricultural tasks in the *bateyes*. Hence, the women continually traverse the outdoor spaces, which in the Caribbean have traditionally been considered the domain of males (see Burton 1997).

Despite the fact that the community is comprised of first- and second-generation Haitians who categorically identify with their hyphenated identities, or even at times view themselves as Cuban, language is the principle marker of ethnic and cultural difference. Language further orders and separates the zones of existence. Many of Barranca's residents speak Spanish fluently, albeit with a heavy French Creole accent, but Kreyòl tends to be the lingua franca of the home and within the confines of the community. Spanish, on the other hand, is the language of choice for engaging work for others and for the general Cuban community living on the outside. Notable shifts in register or tone accompany the distinct languages, further separating the intimate spheres of domestic life among kinfolk from the distant, anonymous existence of a field laborer.<sup>18</sup>

This interest in guarding their ethnic and cultural identity goes beyond that of wanting to maintain a link to their country of origin. Indeed, Haitian migrants were left few options to deal with the severe marginalization of their existence in Cuba. Separated from their extended families and homeland, Haitian labor migrants relied on reestablishing kinship and social networks as part of their process of integration into Cuban life. Significantly, the concern was not to assimilate, but to establish and maintain ties within one's own ethnic group. As they were the most despised and subject to the harshest of treatment by Cuban and U.S. officials alike, Haitians had few allies and thus maintained an assiduously separate identity

from locals. Even among other Afro-Caribbean migrants, the supposed negative implications that would arise from their association with Haitians were perceived as a threat that had damaging social ramifications.<sup>19</sup> With no political clout and with their fate in Cuba being one that was wedded to the land, many of these migrants saw the establishment of social networks as a matter of urgency.

The terms *family* and *kin* took on new expansive meanings in Cuba, which removed them from their dependency on blood ties. Today, one's kin, whom many Haitian Cubans identify with the Kreyòl words *kousin* (male)/*kousen* (female) (cousin) do not necessarily denote a familial connection. Instead, the term is used to designate people from the same region in Haiti and/or those who work in the same *central*. It is also used to suggest an intimate friend, not necessarily sharing the same ethnicity/nationality, but someone who is sensitive, yet not patronizing to the plight of Haitians and their descendants.

One's family or *famille*, on the other hand, often refers to those who work, and perhaps share garden plots, engage in a conjugal life, live under the same roof (including outside children raised by the female head of the household and live-in house guests) or those who serve the spirits together. In many cases the actual names of individuals are dropped in place of these titles. Thus, the constellation of *kousin* and *famille*, enveloped within the expansive social network Haitians and their descendants have constructed, complicate strict genealogical bloodlines.

Historically upon arrival, the sugar estate operators would replace the birth names of Haitian laborers with offensively grandiose, infantile and racist epithets, such as "Hercúles," "Tómas Hayti," "Juan el Grande" and "Alejandro el Magnífico."<sup>20</sup> In the reappropriation of titles commonly used within the network of ritual kinship, an attempt was made by these displaced Haitians to reclaim their own identities and sense of agency. Although blood ties were cut, new relationships were forged using titles common to the Haitian peasant social structure and Kreyòl language. These titles took on a new significance because their use was critical for reestablishing social networks that were fragmented.

In many ways the prerogative to rename provided Haitians and their descendants the means to construct an alternative reality rooted within Haitian folk practices. Even words that were developed by Cubans to express the Antillean immigrant's extreme alterity (e.g., *pichón*) were reformulated by Haitians and at times used as terms of endearment, suggestive of a shared historical and collective identity or a marker of their cultural authenticity. In so doing, they reduced their negative potency, charging them with new meaning.

This process of naming continues into the contemporary era with those of Haitian descent claiming the terms *haitiano*, *haitiano-cubano*, *cubano-haitiano* and *pichón haitiano* as markers of their collective and individual identity. These labels are at times used interchangeably, but they each carry



their own set of meanings and thus will be used in specific contexts. They reveal the multiplicity of identities those of Haitian descent adopt as they attempt to navigate their space in Cuba. The privileging of one title over another reflects the different configurations of national and ethnic belonging Haitians experience and attempt to negotiate over time.

## MAKING A LIVING

The history of the early movements of seasonal laborers into Barranca corresponds with the persistent reading that the Haitian presence in Cuba was temporary. Residents maintain that as early as 1906, Haitians worked the sugar harvest. The migration expanded over the course of the next two decades with numbers reaching their peak in 1928 and dropping off after 1934. Contracted as field hands for approximately eight months, migrants would divide their labor respectively between the planting season in September and the harvest from December to May. The traffic of incoming migrants was determined by this agricultural pattern and was constituted by two principle waves of migration—1906 to 1912 and 1915 to 1934. The first influx of predominately elder males maintained homes and worked across two national territories. Later, younger men and families disillusioned by the possibilities of life at home in Haiti, under the U.S. Marine occupation, attempted to reroot themselves in the hinterlands of eastern Cuba. This latter group tended to remain in Cuba after the *zafra*, engaging in a range of income-producing activities based primarily on working the land.

One such practice involved traveling into the mountains to the coffee estates to work the harvest during the *tiempo muerto* or dead season (i.e., end of sugarcane harvest). Not all were successful, due to the great distances one had to cover to get to the *cafetales* and the challenges of not being adequately compensated. However, out of the desperate need to support themselves and their families, Haitians began to establish permanent communities based on the patterns of the agricultural seasons. With the close of the sugar harvest in May, farmers would pack a generous supply of goods and trek to the interior mountain areas in search of employment. To secure a job, they would use the food supplies brought from the *batey* as a bargaining tool. The rugged terrain and considerably cooler climate made planting a challenge. As a result, the hills were known to have periodic shortages of staple foods that they would have to source from the *bateyes* or town markets. Knowing this and armed with food to trade for work, men made this annual pilgrimage to satisfy their need to secure an income until the start of the new sugar season and to fulfill the demand for cheap laborers in other more localized industries.

In the same way that the residents of Barranca have all experienced cutting cane, the maintenance of small subsistence plots has been the defining activity that has, historically and presently, maintained this community and

its people. Nearly all residents work a small piece of land dedicated to the cultivation of ground provisions (e.g., cassava, yams and sweet potatoes), as well as plantains, bananas and field peas that are consumed as domestic staples and sold in neighboring towns. Historically, excess produce would be sold in area markets or traded for coffee. However, although this pattern persists, since 1959 there have been economic reforms that have both hindered and assisted the ability of small-scale farmers to sell their crops. Typically, surplus food is brought to Palma and Santiago where it is sold to the state-run markets or to farmers that need to make up their quota of goods to be sold to the state.

Since the food shortages of the early 1990s and the persistent drought of the mid-1990s small farmers find it increasingly difficult to produce excess crops to sell to the government and have therefore depended on subsistence farming primarily to meet domestic demand and/or to supply the sale of crops through more lucrative clandestine circuits of trade. Usually female centered, the network of vendors traverse the rural communities and towns selling and bartering goods. When asked why primarily women of Haitian descent engage in this activity, rural residents respond, "It has always been that way," and agree that since the economic crisis of 1989, men, and black men in particular, are more of a target for police harassment and may be accused of loitering city streets.<sup>21</sup> With most of the supplies being siphoned to the tourist sector, as well as administrative centers and cities around the capital before the meager remains make their way back to the east, *orientales* are indeed quite disenfranchised and left to find creative, and in turn illicit, means to *lucha diariamente* (struggle daily).

One example that I witnessed weekly involved two young ladies, simply dressed, each carrying shoulder bags filled with approximately five pounds of fresh coffee beans, that they sold for ten pesos. It was not necessarily the sale that was intriguing but the actual circuits in which the coffee moved. Once acquired from coffee farms by bartering root crops in the rural hinterlands, the coffee would be sold to the owners of *casa particulares* (guesthouses), who then would offer it to their foreign guests as part of a continental breakfast at an extra cost. The surplus would later be given to the neighbor who worked as a physician in the international clinic, which exclusively serves tourists who need, for example, to fill a prescription or get a tetanus or allergy shot. These same tourists would be encouraged to support the local economy by purchasing something unique to the eastern region, coffee. Simply packaged in a rather quaint, rustic manner (a tin can wrapped in a banana leaf) the coffee would become a tourist souvenir to be enjoyed by others miles away. The money from the sale of packaged coffee, approximately three to five U.S. dollars, would then be redistributed to the owners of the guest house, with a small portion going back to the original vendors (approximately fifty cents). The circuit of trade, however, was not closed with this monetary exchange, as the original vendors often took their earnings to purchase prized items (soap, toothpaste, cooking oil) in

Santiago's dollar stores or clandestinely in the streets and resell them in the *batey* or supply their own homes.

This contemporary movement and exchange of goods had its antecedent in yet another female-centered, income-producing activity, interestingly not dependent on working the land. The selling of sweets and pastries in neighboring *bateyes*—which at the time were discrete self-contained company towns with a potential consumer population of not only laborers but also mill operators, drivers and administrators—was a customary practice. Many of the women I spoke to recount this type of activity as being a critical supplement to the meager wages they earned from cutting cane. Monetary payment was not the only transaction that took place from these exchanges, and in fact it was secondary to the rather sophisticated bartering system that had developed. In exchange for sweetbreads, coconut drops, peanut brittle, vendors were able to secure soap and toothpaste that they then resold in the *bateyes*. Although selling sweets has lost the significant place it once held, the process of reselling is still quite common.

Unlike the loud and boisterous example of the traditional *machann* (market woman), *Madame Sara* (Haitian hawker) or *revendeuses* (reseller) that link the economy of the Haitian countryside and cities, the contemporary descendants of Haitian migrants clandestinely reconstituted in the hills above Santiago de Cuba a livelihood strategy that has helped define the peasant economy. Although life on the plantation compound attempted to dehumanize them, they developed creative strategies to survive and overcome their marginal economic position. In their private lives, Haitian laborers and their descendants have instituted a peasant-based economy and work ethic grounded in the principles of collective work and reciprocity that, in turn, encouraged the emergence of a “reconstituted peasantry” in the remote environs of Oriente (see Mintz 1985).

The link between agricultural production, the market and larger regional circuits of exchange is just one part of the household economy. The cutting of cane, agricultural production and marketing/trading form three of the four pillars of the rural household economy. The fourth is livestock, specifically the raising of sheep, goats and pigs, which has given many of these laborers a certain amount of financial and social security. In times of shortages, of which the contemporary era has seen plenty, these farmers have been instrumental in filling the gaps in agricultural production and distribution. They also are in demand to furnish the animals needed for annual celebrations and *Vodú*<sup>22</sup> ceremonies. To this end, the raising of livestock, while supplementing household income, also forms a critical component of serving the spirits and the ritual economy of reciprocity that spiritual work requires (Brown 1995).

Perhaps one of the most distinguishing features of this community and others inhabited by descendants of Haitians is the persistence of *Vodú*. Due to the familiar spiritual topography of eastern Cuba, Haitians and their descendants were able to assimilate their religious practice into their new

environment rather seamlessly. Indeed, *Vodú* was reconstituted as the principle social institution that has ordered the lives of the displaced and served as the agent of rooting them and their successive generations in Cuban soil.

Vodou was able to take root in Cuba because the ritual practices were started with individual priests who established religious family networks in the communities they settled. That men founded most of the initial religious houses reflects the gender configuration of the migratory movement of laborers. Due to the particularities of the labor requirement in Cuba, the majority of migrants during the first three decades of the twentieth century were men. For example, of the 165,567 *haitianos* entering Cuba officially between 1912 and 1927 only 10,495 were women. In contrast 20,838 women of 110,450 migrants came into Cuba from the British West Indies during this period (McLeod 2000, 207). I have found that it was this very gender imbalance that inculcated a sense of urgency in guarding one's traditions jealously and authoritatively. In fact, most of the Cuban women who married Haitian men or men of Haitian descent tended to adopt the culture of their husbands, learning the language, participating in and helping to maintain Haitian cultural practices, while in many cases suppressing their own identities as Cuban.

The relative absence of Haitian women, however, has meant that men have been the main purveyor of the religious practices of *Vodú* in Cuba.



Image 4.1 Tato Milanes in his *cai mama*—interior room of the ritual space or *peristile*—Santiago de Cuba, July 2009. Photo by the author.

They have not only become the authority, voice and leaders of the communities, but, interestingly enough, male divinities in the pantheon, such as Ogou, Damballah, and Gran Bwa predominate. The female *lwa*, although acknowledged, do not occupy the same prominent position and their syncretic creolized saint names rather than their Fon or Haitian names are readily utilized. This has troubled the accepted narrative of the inherent egalitarian structure of *Vodú*. In fact, of the approximately twenty-five Haitian-Cuban settlements I visited, only two had women leaders or *manbos*. Notwithstanding the implication of this discrepancy, Haitians and their descendants made a living as traditional *Vodú* healers in Cuba, servicing their communities and those who sought them out (see James, Millet and Alacrón 1998).<sup>23</sup> More poignantly, serving the spirits has ensured continuity over time and a tangible connection with a past and generations of Haitians. As an icon of tradition, Vodou becomes a source of instruction and the link that as David Scott argues, “makes the past intelligible and legitimate” (1991, 279).

#### CONCLUSION: FROM AGRICULTURAL OUTPOST TO HAITIAN-CUBAN COMMUNITY

Barranca’s complex identity as a Haitian-Cuban diasporic community and distinct cultural enclave has been in formation from the first influx of labor migrants and as a consequence of the broader shifts in the sociopolitical national landscape since 1959. In the century that has elapsed from the introduction of migrant laborers to Cuba, very little in terms of how Haitian Cubans structure their lives has changed. Like other Haitian diasporic communities, residents of Barranca use the traditional markers/tropes of Haitianess to reconstruct their social worlds in the hills of Cuba. Their societal and spatial marginality, and hence, invisibility, allowed for the creation of an alternative space within the interstice of the *batey* that would contribute to the process of redefining their identities and sense of community. Outside of the gaze of the state, Haitian Cubans actively engaged in a process of harnessing a distinct social world founded on the premise of cultural and ethnic difference. This concept of difference was one shaped not only by marginality but indeed formulated through a self-conscious effort to remain a distinct ethnic group and as a community unified by a shared sense of cultural identity.

The descendants of Haitian labor migrants have been engaged in a constant process of redefining their identities, and the land has been pivotal to this process of self-definition. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the reestablishment of informal institutions that help farmers collectively structure their labor output. The *konbit* is one such structure that has been transplanted and serves to anchor generations of Haitian Cubans to their roots and demonstrate their acute appreciation of communal work and living. As

a livelihood strategy in Barranca, the *konbit* dates back to the first decade of the twentieth century and continues to the present.

The traditional organization of rural life in Haiti was premised on the centrality of the family and the cooperative, collective sharing of the responsibilities of the household and working of the land. The *lakou*, or residential site, comprised of several homes where members of the same family shared in the maintenance of garden plots, supplies, food and livestock. In many ways the structure of the *batey* spoke to a communal existence as it was the locus of all types of collective labor—both for self (this is not used in its singular sense but self as community) and others (the state). Brought together by capitalist exploitation rather than lineage, Haitians and their descendants found themselves reengineering the concepts of family land to suit their new environment, so as one farmer maintains, “Barranca is one big *lakou* . . . We are all joined, some by blood but all by sweat.”<sup>24</sup> The reality that some households are comprised of extended families that work the land together and share in the domestic duties and products of the intimate family unit does not disrupt the view that Barranca functions as an expansive work cooperative and at the same time a *lakou*. However, in consciously renaming the environment, residents reinscribe a localized meaning that validates their present existence as well as historical legacy and experience. It links and reroots these descendants of migrants to their predecessors, thus forging a bond between then and now and there and here. The communal “we” thus envelops *all* and makes each and every individual accountable for the other. This concept of a shared collective identity in its extension beyond the confines of the *batey* articulates a diasporic consciousness that conjoins distinct spaces/places and generations.

Furthermore, the specificities of the local social taxonomy of eastern Cuba, and particularly the rural hinterlands, prohibit, to a large degree, the types of global encounters that give rise to the hybridized identities formed in the metropolis. This is not to suggest that Cuba has not been impacted by cultural flows. The influence of Rastafari, reggae, reggaeton and hip-hop is unquestionable and points to this cross-cultural fertilization of culture. But these forms tend to take root in urban spaces, in either Havana or the city of Santiago; the provinciality and insularity of the interior has meant that outside influence have been slower to penetrate.

In this redemptive reading of life in a Cuban *batey*, it is not my intent to belittle or negate the historical and present hardships Haitians experience. Although entitled to the benefits of full citizens, residents of Barranca exist on the peripheries of Cuban society and experience their marginality daily. Whether in food shortages, isolation and immobility due to transportation or petrol shortages, or lack of electricity and running water, the insularity of Cuba is magnified in these desolate enclave communities. Two popular sayings often used in tandem express both the reality and resilience of Barranca’s residents: “when things are bad in the town, people are near death in the *batey* . . . God chokes but never strangles.” Through these proverbs

we glean an understanding of the very real implications of the persistent marginality of these communities. At the same time, Barranca's residents have not resigned to their fates, but are indeed actively engaged in a constant process of reconstructing their social worlds in a manner that gives credence to their historical experience and hyphenated identities.

## NOTES

1. Joel James, "Palabras Inaugurales" (inaugural speech delivered at Teatro Heredia on July 3, 2004, commencing the twenty-fourth annual Festival of Caribbean Culture dedicated to the Haitian Bicentenary), tape-recorded, transcribed and translated by the author. Speech also available online, "Palabras de Bienvenida de Joel James Figuerola, director de la Casa del Caribe" at [www.cultstgo.cult.cu/festivalcaribe04/articulos](http://www.cultstgo.cult.cu/festivalcaribe04/articulos). Casa del Caribe (Caribbean House) is a leading cultural institution that functions as the principle agency for collecting, archiving and disseminating knowledge about the Caribbean and specifically the constitutive elements of Antillean and Haitian culture as it is preserved in eastern Cuba.
2. This chapter forms part of my forthcoming manuscript entitled *Haiti in the Cuban Imaginary: Culture Identity and the Performance of Diaspora*. The Social Science Research Council and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research supported ethnographic and archival research conducted in 2002–2004. The Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts and the Institute of African Studies, Emory University, provided additional funding for preliminary research in the summer of 2001.
3. Before the Cuban Revolution, Las Tunas, Granma, Santiago, Guantánamo and Holguín comprised a single geographical region known as Oriente. After the 1976 governmental rezoning, the east was divided into these discrete provinces. However, the distinctive cultural and multiethnic tapestry of the east remained part of its distinguishing character. As home to Cuba's maroon settlements or *palenques* and refuge for repeated waves of Caribbean migrants, Oriente has earned the reputation of not only being a space of blackness, but also of being a site of freedom and autonomy.
4. In the note following this quote by Martí, Ferrer points to his ambivalence over the Haitian question and the ways in which Martí altered his views according to his audience. Thus, as Ferrer states, "In this article addressed to Cubans, [Martí] stresses the differences between Haiti and Cuba, in articles he wrote for Latin American newspapers, he stressed the similarities," making it important to "consider audience when reading Martí" (1999, 233 n. 76).
5. This silencing is most noted in the occidental (western Cuba) portrayal of Cuban history that tends to dismiss the history of Afro-Caribbean immigration to Cuba. However, in Oriente, where the Haitian influence is palatable in the architecture, speech, cuisine, religion, as well as music and dance forms, the Afro- and Franco-Haitian presence is recognized and celebrated as being part and parcel of Santiago's history and identity.
6. In 1990 Fidel Castro declared that the island had entered a "Periodo Especial en Tiempo de Paz" (Special Period in Time of Peace), which in turn bore witness to an extensive and austere restructuring program that aimed at reducing national consumption and expenditure while also consciously adopting a neoliberal dollar economy and tourism as a means of stimulating Cuba's depressed economy.

7. I am grateful for the clarification of this term provided by my Cuban colleagues and friends in Santiago de Cuba and in particular Carlos Moore. So pervasively used is this labeling that even now in Barbados, where I reside, the growing Cuban community, primarily from Havana, use the term to describe me and my particular connections to Cuba. Privately, they refer to me as *la palestina*, adding the disclaimer, *ella vivía en cuba por años pero es una palestina, estaba bien metida con los orientales* (she is a Palestinian, she lived in Cuba for years, but is a Palestinian who was well embedded in the lives of easterners). Similarly, the term *pichón* also speaks to this concept of a racial *Other*, but in this particular case, the “Other” was also culturally and ethnically different. Simply put, *pichón* refers to a scavenger bird, what in Jamaica we call johncrow, or what is commonly known as a vulture. In its popular usage then, *pichón* refers to the perspective that Antillean migrants were living off of others and foraging the scraps they discarded. They were despised by whites who saw them as less than human, not only through their existence being one based on dependency, but also relating their black skins to that of the bird, and the small head and shifting eyes to the lack of intellectual capacity and inherent dishonesty. For more on the term *pichón*, see Moore (2008).
8. The term *franceses* refers to black and French-Haitian *mestizos*. The name poignantly demonstrates the deliberate alignment to the primacy of power and status of a French identity in colonial Cuba. The appropriation of the title gave these twice-displaced Africans symbolic prestige that they were able to use to negotiate a space within the rigidly stratified social structure. Most certainly the label, as well as their cultural practices and French Kreyòl language were used as markers of distinctions.
9. José Millet, author’s interview, tape recording, May 4, 2003, Santiago de Cuba.
10. Source: “Pasajeros, comprendiendo los inmigrantes, clasificados por países de procedencia o destino, 1902–1913. Anuario estadístico de la República de Cuba (1914): 24–25.”
11. Reportedly, three hundred thousand immigrants arrived in the *dejoukaj* period from 1984 to 1996; it is unclear, however, the numbers of Haitians who remained in Cuba.
12. Faculty of Medicine Handbook (2003, 6).
13. These figures are taken from a newsletter issued by the Association of Haitian Residents and Descendants in Cuba, *Los Haitianos en la Cultura Cubana*, 2002.
14. There are few studies of the post-1959 composition of Haitian-Cuban communities, but generally speaking, this body of literature does not speak to the influx of refugees in the post-*dejoukaj* period or the contemporary flow of transnational students. The lack of studies on these two more recent waves of migrants is in part a result of the difficulty in finding archival evidence to support oral history accounts (see Díaz 1984; Guanche and Moreno 1988; James, Millet and Alacrón 1998). There is also a significant selection of articles published in *Del Caribe* that feature the Haitian presence in Cuba from the vantage point of their religious practices and participation in the annual Festival of Fire in Santiago de Cuba.
15. Haitians tended to retreat into isolated rural communities in the provinces of Santiago de Cuba, Las Tunas, Camagüey and Holguin. Some of the communities they settled include: Cadije, Thompson, Cueto, Caridad, Guanamacá, Loma Azul, Pilón del Cauto, La Serfina, Songo la Maya, Buena Vista and Barranca.
16. In this case, “others” have historically been U.S. sugar barons, but with the land reforms of 1961, which resulted in the nationalization of farmlands, and industry, the “other” became the Cuban state.



17. According to anthropologist Henrietta De Veer, the concepts of inside and outside are among the “primary organizing principles” of the Caribbean social order (quoted in Douglass 1992, 184–185). This dichotomy has served as a critical conceptual framework for understanding the social structure and gender-based social relationships and activities in the region. As an example, the prevailing thesis maintains that the inside–outside binary in essence represents two complementary but distinct worldviews that are ideologically grounded within a value system organized around the concepts of respectability and reputation. The former is female centered and associated with the domestic, private sphere of family life and the home/yard, whereas the latter refers to the male-centered public sphere of the street (Wilson 1973). Burton (1997) also argues that this duality extends beyond the mere issue of spatial orientation but speaks to the reputation/respectability opposition developed as part of “the ‘Crab Antics’ school of Caribbean anthropology” (162–168).
18. This is not at all to suggest that individuals do not forge intimate relations through working the fields, but instead to argue that the level of intimacy created through this “work for other” is markedly different from the tone of relationships established by creating a shared collective identity through community.
19. I noted this particular snubbing of the Haitian “Other” by descendants of Jamaicans during the period of my fieldwork (2001–2004). I was often questioned and scolded for abandoning my country folk in defense of “de backward Haitian people dem, who will sooner or lata, obeah me.” The fact that I was a Jamaican conducting research on the Haitian presence in eastern Cuba was seen as a great offense that betrayed my own identity and people. As a consequence, many of the elder Jamaican Cubans would try to convince me to change my focus by alerting me to the supposed proclivity Haitians had for “witchcraft.”
20. In a genealogical survey I conducted on seven families currently living in Barranca, the parents of all of the forty-five interviewed had their names replaced by the sugar boss.
21. The rise of prostitution (*jiniterismo*) has challenged this presumption. As black women make up a growing number of those strategizing or jockeying to secure a livelihood in Cuba, the traditional vendors have had to develop new tactics and routes so as to alleviate suspicion and the inevitability of being caught and fined.
22. This particular spelling of “Vodou” as “Vodú” speaks to the process of syncretic transformations the Haitian religion underwent upon being brought to Cuba by Haitians and maintained by their descendants.
23. I was struck by the number of people, of a particular generation, in Oriente who either sought the counsel of a *oungan* or who had been treated by a Haitian healer. Additionally, in Santiago de Cuba it is commonly reported that “los brujos verdaderos son los haitianos” (the true sorcerers are the Haitians).
24. Tomas Dupuy, author’s interview, tape recording, March 12, 2003, Barranca, Cuba.

## 5 Between Periphery and Center in the Haitian Diaspora

### The Transnational Practices of Haitian Migrants in the Bahamas

*Ermitte St. Jacques*

Jean-Bertrand Aristide's designation of the Haitian diaspora as the Tenth Department in 1990, an extension of the nine departmental regions of the country, illustrates the collective political, economic and cultural importance of Haitians living abroad (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001). However, the individual power of the different Haitian communities that comprise the Tenth Department is not uniform. The destinations that form the geography of the Haitian diaspora demarcate central places as Miami and marginal locations as Nassau that correspond to their position within global and regional geopolitical hierarchies. Power dynamics within the Haitian diaspora, then, mimic the geopolitical configuration of the settlement countries as well as represent the uneven status of migrants within the transnational community. At the same time, local conditions in the different countries of settlement structure transnational identities and practices. The specific social conditions of these destinations speak to the plurality of the transnational experience within the Haitian diaspora.

This chapter explores the relationship between place, identity and belonging for Haitian migrants at the local level of the Bahamas and the global level of the transnational Haitian community. How has the incorporation of Haitians in the Bahamas informed their transnational practices and defined their membership within the larger Haitian transnational community? How does the intermediary geopolitical location of the Bahamas between Haiti, the home country, and the United States, the preeminent destination, situate Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas on the margins of the Haitian transnational community? What importance does such a position hold for identity and membership in the Haitian diaspora?

The transnational practices of Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas are continuities of their responsibilities to family members in Haiti. Glick Schiller and Fouron refer to these familial and social bonds as "blood ties to Haiti" (2001). In addition, Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas maintain familial and social ties with relatives and friends in South Florida and elsewhere. The transnational ties that Haitian immigrants maintain are shaped not only by membership in cross-border familial and social networks, but

also by the particular context of the Bahamas. In this way, the sociocultural and economic context of receiving countries and their position within global networks inform transnational practices (Guarnizo and Smith 1998). Understanding how both the geopolitical relationship between countries of settlement and the particular context in which each Haitian community is situated in the Haitian diaspora is fundamental to rethinking belonging in transnational communities. The case of Haitians in the Bahamas reveals the importance of place in shaping membership in transnational communities for migrant populations spread across different countries of destination.

Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas have faced comparable racialization as Haitians in the United States, although the emphasis is on social and cultural markers such as language and religion rather than phenotype. What is unique about the Bahamas that makes the transnational practices of Haitian immigrants different from their compatriots in the United States is the intermediary geopolitical position of the Bahamas in the region, together with the unlawful nature of the migration and the reception of Haitians. Specifically, racialized practices of difference and exclusion configure the scope and intensity of the transnational practices of Haitians in the Bahamas.

### **THE INTERMEDIATE SPACE OF THE BAHAMAS: LINKING NORTHWEST HAITI AND SOUTH FLORIDA**

The Bahamas is an intermediate space between South Florida, the preferred destination of many Haitian migrants, and northwest Haiti, the sending area. The geographical location of the Bahamas expresses its intermediate position. The islands and cays of the archipelago stretch between Haiti and the United States. The most southern island of the chain, Great Inagua, is approximately 55 miles from the island of La Tortue off the northern coast of Haiti. The islands of Bimini are about 50 miles east of Miami Beach. Due to its proximity to South Florida, the Bahamas is a conduit for smuggling migrants and illicit drugs to the United States. Haitians are the largest group smuggled through the Bahamas, followed by other Caribbean nationals, mainly Cubans, Jamaicans and Dominicans. In recent years, smuggling operations have expanded to include Chinese, Indians and Brazilians. The use of the Bahamas as a transit country is more specific to northwest Haiti because migrants embarking from the South usually follow the Cuban coast to reach South Florida.<sup>1</sup> Transiting through the archipelago also increases the possibility of prolonged stopovers in the Bahamas. Haitian migrants en route to South Florida may find themselves unintentionally stranded in the Bahamas as unscrupulous boat captains and smugglers abandon them on the islands.

As a transit country, the Bahamas has become a stage in the migration to South Florida (Craton 1995; Louis 2008; St. Jacques 2001). Haitians who are “in transit” find work in the Bahamas in order to raise the funds

needed to continue to South Florida. Paradoxically, the regularization of status in the Bahamas through the acquisition of a work or resident permit promotes migration to South Florida. Work and resident permits allow migrants to find better-paying jobs that will enable them to save money for future migration and to apply for a visa to enter the United States. In addition, Bahamian citizens with valid passports do not need a visa to enter the United States. A priest at Our Lady Parish in Nassau summarized the role of the Bahamas in Haitian migration to South Florida:

The Bahamas has turned into a territory of transition where people make a stopover, like stopping for gas en route or going to a restaurant to eat and refresh yourself before continuing on your trip. They [Haitians] stop to make money to pay for the boat or airfare to Miami.

Because the ultimate goal is to reach the United States, many Haitians view their stay in the Bahamas as temporary although they may reside in the country for a number of years as in the case of Patrick. Patrick, who was from Port de Paix, found himself stranded in the Bahamas when the ship captain whom he paid three thousand U.S. dollars refused to take him to Miami, where his brother lived. Patrick's stay had not been a short layover. At the time of fieldwork in 1998, Patrick had been living in the Bahamas for ten years. For eight of those years, he resided and worked in the Bahamas without authorization. When I met Patrick, he was trying to raise three thousand U.S. dollars to pay smugglers to take him to Miami.

The geographical location of the Bahamas between Haiti and the United States not only symbolizes its function as a transit point on the migration route, but also represents its geopolitical status in the region. As one of the more prosperous countries in the Caribbean, the Bahamas attracts economic migrants from across the Caribbean. At the same time, the Bahamas is a sending country. According to the U.S. Census of 2000, 28,075 people born in the Bahamas live in the United States, which accounts for about 9 percent of the Bahamian population.<sup>2</sup> The intermediate position of the Bahamas is also conveyed in the dependency of its tourist-based economy on the United States. In addition to economic power, cultural influences of the United States, such as television and cable programs, dominate the Bahamian media. More indicative of the relationship between the United States and the Bahamas are the numbers of middle-class and affluent Bahamians who make regular shopping trips to South Florida, especially at the beginning of the school year and before Christmas.

Given its intermediate geopolitical position in the region, Haitian migration to the Bahamas is unlike "peripheral migration." Martínez (1995) has coined the phrase "peripheral migrants" to describe the situation of Haitian cane-workers in the Dominican Republic, or migrants "who circulate between distant rural areas in the world's economic periphery" (Martínez 1995, 26). Likewise, Grasmuck (1982) interprets the migration of Haitians

to work in Dominican sugar and coffee industries in terms of the nature of peripheral economies that have a labor surplus while concurrently experiencing labor scarcity in specific sectors. Whereas Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas encounter similar hostile reception as their compatriots in the Dominican Republic, the migration does not conform to Martínez's definition of "peripheral migration."

First, the paltry wages of these "second-tier" migrants in the Dominican Republic do not facilitate economic and social mobility in their countries of origin as compared to the earnings of migrant workers in industrialized countries (Martínez 1995, 26). The wages of agricultural migrants in the Bahamas, however, are comparable with those of the United States, which enables Haitian migrants in the Bahamas to accumulate savings for investments in Haiti or for future migration to the United States. Second, whereas the Bahamas is a transit country to the United States for recent Haitian migrants, the Dominican Republic is not a gateway to a more preferable destination (Martínez 1995).<sup>3</sup> The meager wages of migrant workers in the Dominican Republic do not allow for savings to fund further migration. Third, peripheral migrants are not typically from households that have members in the United States, whereas those who migrate to the Bahamas usually have familial ties in the United States. Martínez (1995, 79) suggests that the Dominican Republic attracts "mainly those rural people who are too poor to emigrate elsewhere." Rather than migrants who are "too poor," the Bahamas draws those who are not rich enough or otherwise unable to migrate to the United States. As a destination in the Haitian diaspora, then, the Bahamas falls between peripheral locations such as the Dominican Republic and central places like the United States.

The intermediary position of the Bahamas is reproduced in the Haitian diaspora. The transnational networks of Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas connect them to the provincial towns of northwest Haiti and to the metropolitan areas of South Florida in particular. The direction of remittance flows from the Bahamas to Haiti and from the United States to the Bahamas mirrors its position within the hierarchy of countries that comprise the Haitian diaspora. Most Haitians in the Bahamas have immediate relatives in Haiti whom they support through remittances, especially those with children in Haiti. At the same time, many also depend on relatives and friends in the United States for assistance. As Haitians in the Bahamas migrate onward to the United States and leave relatives behind, the social ties between the two communities deepen.

Along with familial relations, social ties bind together Haitians in the Bahamas and South Florida. As mentioned earlier, media from the United States, especially South Florida, eclipse Bahamian media. This is seen in the case of Haitian radio stations from South Florida whose broadcasts reach the Bahamas. Through these broadcasts, Haitians in the Bahamas gain knowledge of Haitian life in South Florida and are connected to the community. The radio personality Piman Bouk on WLQY (1320 AM)

is just as popular in Nassau as he is in Miami. Such social connections also facilitate migration to the United States as in the case of Guy. Guy was smuggled into Nassau from Saint Louis and had been in transit for two months. He arrived in Nassau with plans of contacting his cousins in Miami to facilitate the second leg of his journey. However, Guy was unable to contact his relatives in Miami. The only phone number he had was disconnected. Guy, therefore, engaged me to deliver a note to Piman Bouk asking him to broadcast his arrival in the Bahamas and to request that his cousins contact him at a particular telephone number. I delivered his note to WLQY when I returned to Miami in August after completing fieldwork in Nassau. Together with other communication technologies such as e-mail and phone services, radio broadcasts from Miami cement community ties between Haitians in South Florida and the Bahamas and enable Haitians in the Bahamas to maintain contact with nonmigrants in Haiti, creating an indirect channel of news and information. Patrick, the migrant who was living in transit for ten years, often called his brother in Miami to find out about things in Haiti because placing calls to South Florida was cheaper than to northwest Haiti.

#### **ON THE MARGINS: HAITIAN MIGRANTS IN THE BAHAMAS**

In addition to the geopolitical position of the Bahamas in shaping the direction of transnational flows within the Haitian diasporic community, local definitions of citizenship and belonging inform the intermediary position of Haitian migrants in the diaspora. Restrictive immigration policies have made the regularization of status for unauthorized Haitian migrants virtually unattainable. A large number of Haitian migrants have lived unlawfully in the Bahamas for many years, some for decades, without means of acquiring residency or citizenship, contributing to their social and economic marginalization in the Bahamas.

Present notions of citizenship in the Bahamas are countermeasures to the racial colonial structure. Before the realization of majority rule in 1967, race relations in the Bahamas typified colonial social organization in which a white minority maintained political and economic power through racial segregation. With the growth of tourism in the late 1940s, practices of racial segregation in public places intensified to satisfy tourists coming from the United States (Saunders 2003). The platform of the young black nationalists of the People's Liberation Party (PLP), which governed the country in the transition to Independence, sought to redress past discriminatory practices that excluded the majority of Bahamians who were black by promoting equality in political participation and employment opportunities through a policy of Bahamianization. With unprecedented levels of immigration, the struggle for black empowerment extended discursively and in practice beyond opening economic and social possibilities for black Bahamians to

protecting these opportunities from immigrants. The growth of tourism and offshore companies on New Providence and Grand Bahama attracted white professional expatriates from North America and the United Kingdom as well as unskilled laborers from across the Caribbean, particularly Haitians (Craton and Saunders 1998). To achieve Bahamianization, the PLP supported strong immigration controls, which was a pivotal issue in their struggle with the established white oligarchy of the United Bahamian Party (UBP) for political control. Upon majority rule, the PLP government aggressively took action against the immigration of foreigners (Craton and Saunders 1998). Through the policy of Bahamianization, the PLP government attempted to phase out the hiring of foreigners by giving employment priority to qualified Bahamians. The logic of Bahamianization and the transition to Independence, which was achieved in 1973, necessitated a reconsideration of the definition of citizenship. The Independence Constitution made all persons born in the Bahamas before Independence eligible for citizenship. For persons born after Independence, at least one parent had to be a citizen for eligibility. The separation of Bahamian citizenship from birth in the country prevented migrants and their offspring from establishing themselves in the Bahamas. Moreover, subsequent legislation made it difficult for visitors to gain employment and for foreign workers to take up legal residence in the Bahamas (Craton and Saunders 1998). The actions taken by the PLP government on immigration was linked to its national project, which involved the preservation of economic and social resources for Bahamians.

With large-scale Haitian migration to the Bahamas coinciding with the transition to Independence, the objectives of Bahamianization came to stand for protecting social and economic opportunities for Bahamians from Haitian immigrants. Haitian migration to the Bahamas began in earnest in the mid-1940s when offshore agricultural and lumber companies initiated recruitment efforts to meet labor shortages.<sup>4</sup> After initial recruitment efforts, Haitian workers began migrating on their own. By 1957 the Bahamas Immigration Department compared the uncontrolled migration of Haitian workers to a “flood,” and the migration became known as “The Haitian Problem” (Marshall 1979). The scale of Haitian immigration exacerbated concerns for national and cultural sovereignty and prompted a Bahamian identity against perceptions of what it meant to be Haitian in the postindependence era.<sup>5</sup> For a newly independent country immersed in the process of nation building, the Haitian presence has had unparalleled significance in defining Bahamian identity. Craton argues that Haitian immigrants have served to define the Other for Bahamian national identity (1995). Statements from politicians, government officials and union leaders in the decades after Independence reveal the role of Haitian immigrants in shaping immigration policy.<sup>6</sup>

At the Labor Day celebrations in 1992, the president of the National Workers Council, Thomas Bastian, claimed that the problem of unauthorized

Haitian immigrants was “having a dominating force influencing our [Bahamian] eco-culture system” (Symonette 1992, 1). Bastian urged that:

All steps should be taken with deliberate speed to guard our people and ensure that the Haitian population is diminished and protect the Bahamian sovereignty in order that it doesn’t develop for 50 years down the road we could have a different kind of structure in our country. (ibid.)

In demanding a solution to the problem of unauthorized immigration, Bastian clarified that he was not Hitler (Symonette 1992). In distinguishing himself from Hitler, Bastian acknowledges the ethnocentrism and nationalism in his appeal to reduce the Haitian population and safeguard Bahamian sovereignty. His warning of a Bahamas with a different type of structure within fifty years if immigration continued unchecked articulates the general fear of many Bahamians. A few months later at the national convention of the opposition, Free National Movement (FNM), the leader of the party, Hubert Ingraham, stated:

These illegal immigrants are a burden on the economic, health and welfare resources of this country, especially in these hard money times. But more than that they pose a serious threat to the political sovereignty of the Bahamas. (Burrows 1992, A1)

He then noted that the great majority of unauthorized immigrants were Haitian nationals (Burrows 1992). Almost a decade later, Errol Ferguson, the senior immigration officer in Abaco, explained unauthorized Haitian immigration, “It’s a serious problem because I think we are overcrowded with Haitians” (Kane 2003, A1). In response to the publication of an International Organization for Migration report on the status of Haitians in the Bahamas, the Minister of Labor and Immigration, Vincent Peet, urged:

The Bahamas is for Bahamians and legal residents of the Bahamas. The Bahamas is not being ‘Haitianised,’ or whatever word they want to use . . . And so while we deal with this problem, we should not use any word that would incite, any words that may cause people to over-react. (Lightbourne 2005, A1)

Minister Peet’s plea not to use “Haitianized” to describe unauthorized Haitian migration to the Bahamas is not a departure from the long-standing popular xenophobic rhetoric. Government officials and politicians have become savvy with their choice of language to express Haitian migration, particularly in light of charges of human rights violations from organizations such as Amnesty International. For example, after a raid in Abaco in 2003, the senior immigration officer clarified, “We don’t call them raids. We call it the removal of illegal immigrants” (Kane 2003, A1). In official



discourse, “removal” replaced “raid,” just as Haitianize is the antithesis of Bahamianization. The perceived threat to national and cultural sovereignty has given weight to stopping the unauthorized migration of Haitians and removing those residing in the Bahamas without authorization.

Bahamianization was not initially a response to a perceived threat of the Haitian presence. Rather, it was a discourse of empowerment that grew out of colonial race relations and only later became associated with Haitian immigrants. The protection of employment opportunities, the safeguard of social services for Bahamian citizens and the preservation of national identity have been presented as primary reasons for controlling the unauthorized immigration of Haitians.

As in the Dominican Republic and Guadeloupe, in the Bahamas Haitians are subject to widespread racial discrimination, are denied basic rights, including due process in deportation procedures and access to citizenship status, and are held responsible for social and economic problems such as crime and unemployment (Brodwin, this volume; Craton 1995; Louis 2008; Martínez 2003; St. Jacques 2001). In the case of the Bahamas, Haitian immigrants are blamed for economic problems and are viewed as taxing public services such as education and health care. At critical moments of economic downturns and election periods, anti-immigrant, or anti-Haitian, sentiment is elevated. During economic crises, Haitians are blamed for exacerbating economic conditions. In run-ups to elections, the opposition usually promises to resolve the “Haitian Problem” and points to the immigration blunders of the party in government. Furthermore, the stigmatization of Haitians in the Bahamas is based on their poverty, characterized by menial employment and substandard housing (Fielding et al. 2008, 49). The menial work that Haitians perform in agriculture, landscaping, construction, hotels and restaurants is commonly referred to as “Haitian work” (Craton 1995; Fielding et al. 2008; Louis 2008; Saunders 2003; St. Jacques 2001). Like in Guadeloupe where the risk of deportation leads to residential segregation (Brodwin, this volume), many Haitians live in shantytowns where basic utilities such as running water, toilet facilities and electricity are absent. Shacks are constructed from scraps of lumber and corrugated tin. The concentration of Haitians in shantytowns not only reflects their poverty, but also symbolizes their marginalization in the Bahamas.

Practices of exclusion also involve managing Haitian migration to the Bahamas through strict limitations on residency and citizenship and repatriation of Haitians residing without authorization in the country. Government policy towards controlling the unauthorized entry of Haitian migrants has not significantly changed since the end of the 1950s when “the Immigration Department found it necessary to organize ‘round-ups’ of Haitians for deportation” (Marshall 1979, 99). Successive governments since Independence have continued to control immigration through a policy of apprehension and repatriation. The current



*Image 5.1* Shantytown home on New Providence. Photo by the author.

framework for Bahamian policy on the repatriation of Haitian immigrants is based on a 1985 treaty with Haiti. Under the treaty, Haitian nationals who entered the Bahamas prior to December 31, 1980, had no criminal record and were either employed when the treaty was signed, married to a Bahamian citizen or owned real estate in the Bahamas were eligible to obtain lawful status (Damianos 1985b; Shannon and Colon 1985b). The date of entry was later amended to January 12, 1985, in a 1995 accord between the Bahamas and Haiti, but the stipulations were upheld in a 2003 agreement.

Initial eligibility for regularization of status can be viewed as a methodical means of exclusion. The large majority of Haitians did not meet the entry date, marital status or investment requirement for regularization. In reaction to the 1985 treaty, a Haitian-Bahamian lawyer, Elizier Regnier, opined that qualification for legal status was a “piece of trickery” because few Haitians owned real estate in the Bahamas or were married to Bahamian citizens (Damianos 1985a). Regnier estimated that only five hundred Haitians at most were eligible under the conditions of the 1985 treaty (*ibid.*). The director of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Perry Rivkind, also remarked that most of the Haitians in the Bahamas did not meet the requirements for residency (Shannon and Colon 1985b). The ineligibility of most Haitian immigrants for lawful status suggests that the objective was to exclude rather than include Haitians in the national project.

Despite the specific conditions for lawful status, many long-term Haitian immigrants have been denied due process and have not been able to regularize their status. The process for regularization is characterized by backlogs and unresponsiveness. In 1992 the backlog of applications for permanent residence and citizenship was nearly ten thousand, a quarter of the total estimated Haitian population at the time (*Nassau Tribune*, October 3, 1992). A special committee on unauthorized Haitian migration to the Bahamas estimated the backlog of citizenship applications at ten thousand in 2005 (Kongwa 2005). That the estimated logjam remained the same for over a decade while repatriation efforts increased indicates the priority of the Bahamian state. Between 1995 and 2005, the Bahamas repatriated more than forty-two thousand Haitians (Economist Intelligence Unit [EIU] 2007).

The response of the Labor and Immigration Minister, Vincent Peet, to a 2005 newspaper feature on squatter settlements, or shantytowns, in Abaco illustrates the intangibility of residency and citizenship for Haitian immigrants. He stated that the government was dealing with applications from Haitians who had been in the Bahamas “20, 30, 40 years” and who were born in the country (Rolle 2005, A1). More recently in 2007, an immigration audit was organized to identify applicants who had not received notification. In explaining the reason for the audit the Minister of State noted “there were many long-standing applications for permanent residency and citizenship” and the delays were for “some of them 10 years, some 12 years, some not quite so long” (Nancoo-Russell 2007). On New Providence alone, more than twelve hundred applicants attended the audit (Rolle 2007).

Adding to the backlog of citizenship applications are petitions by descendants of Haitian immigrants born in the Bahamas after Independence. The right to citizenship for this group has also been compromised. They have a one-year window to apply for citizenship upon their eighteenth birthday. However, successive government administrations have been slow to grant citizenship to persons born in the Bahamas to noncitizen parents (Kongwa 2005). A 2005 report by the International Organization for Migration printed respondents’ comments on long delays in citizenship application. The right to citizenship is also compromised when minors under the age of eighteen are deported along with their parents. These legal and bureaucratic barriers to residency and citizenship have safeguarded hegemonic constructions of Bahamian national and cultural identity by maintaining Haitian migrants as other and foreign. The right to citizenship has been a contested issue for Haitian migrants, particularly the second generation. For many Haitians residing unlawfully in the Bahamas, obtaining legal status has been nearly impossible.

## CONFIGURATIONS OF TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE BAHAMAS

The following ethnographic sketches of Joseph, Rose Marie and Jean illustrate the range of transnational practices among Haitian immigrants

in the Bahamas that connect them to the Haitian community in South Florida and to their communities of origin in northwest Haiti. Because the immigration status of all three vary, each vignette illustrates how citizenship in the Bahamas, specifically lawful status, informs engagement in transnational practices. The significance of the life course and gender in determining participation in transnational activities is also evident in the three vignettes.

In the summer of 1998, Joseph had been living in the Bahamas for forty-five years and was a Bahamian citizen. He arrived in the Bahamas in 1953 to visit his brother and decided not to return to Jean-Rabel, a small town west of Port de Paix. Joseph was deported two years after his arrival, but did not stay “three weeks” in Haiti before returning to the Bahamas.

Joseph's immediate family was spread between South Florida, Nassau and northwest Haiti. He lived in Nassau with his wife, with whom he had four adult daughters. Two of his daughters were living in Nassau and the other two in Fort Lauderdale. Because Joseph did not have many relatives left in Jean-Rabel, only a sister whom he supported with remittances, he identified more with Saint Louis du Nord, the town where his wife was from. When I met Joseph, his wife was on an extended vacation in Saint Louis for four months. Because of her extended stay, Joseph had to send provisions of rice and foodstuff with confidants who were traveling to Haiti by ship. Joseph complained that he spent four hundred Bahamian dollars on supplies for his wife.

Joseph made yearly trips to Haiti; he also traveled to South Florida for weekend trips to visit his daughters and grandchildren. He joked that there was no room for stamps on his passport because he traveled so frequently to Miami. He was once stopped by immigration officials at Miami International Airport and questioned about his business dealings because of the frequency of his weekend trips.

Joseph had five years left before he could retire on a government pension. For twenty years Joseph worked in the main hospital in Nassau, Princess Margaret. His retirement plans involved increased mobility between Saint Louis, Nassau and Ft. Lauderdale. Because his pension would go much further in Haiti, he planned to live in Saint Louis with his wife and spend extended periods in Ft. Lauderdale and Nassau.

Not all long-term Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas travel as frequently as Joseph. Rose Marie, who had been living in the Bahamas for twenty-eight years, had traveled to Port de Paix only three times and to South Florida twice. She came to the Bahamas to reunite with her fiancé who had migrated earlier to find work or *chache lavi* (find a life). She and her husband had seven children, all of whom were born in the Bahamas, and nine grandchildren.

Rose Marie maintained close ties with her relatives in Haiti. She had four brothers back in Haiti with whom she frequently communicated. When possible, she would “scrape up something” (money) to send them by way of friends traveling to Haiti. Her first trip to Port de Paix was due

to her mother's illness and death. Her second trip also involved a family crisis, the illness of her brother.<sup>7</sup> Rose Marie's third trip did not involve a family crisis. When her husband decided to visit his family, she also took the opportunity to travel to Haiti.

Although she did not have relatives in Miami, she had a good friend who was "like a relative" with whom she stayed during her visits. Her trips to Miami were for shopping and only lasted a few days. Rose Marie wished she could have traveled more often to Haiti, but money had been difficult for her to save because "the children always needed something."

When her children were young, she sold candy from her house to people in the neighborhood. After her youngest child started primary school, Rose Marie went to work as a maid and cook. She worked for one Bahamian family for many years until diabetes and hypertension forced her to retire. Because Rose Marie was not employed, her work permit was void and she was currently out of status. Rose Marie had no plans of returning to Haiti because all her adult children and grandchildren were in the Bahamas and her parents were dead.

Jean's family network stretched across Haiti, the Bahamas and the United States. Whereas most of his family members were in Haiti, his father and a brother-in-law lived in Miami. A schoolteacher in Port de Paix, Jean had been in the Bahamas for a year and a half. Because he could not support his wife and two children on a teacher's salary, he decided to migrate to Miami. However, Jean was abandoned in Nassau by a ship captain. Jean's father had paid the captain five thousand U.S. dollars to bring him to Miami. After Jean was stranded in the Bahamas, his father came to Nassau from Miami to help him get settled. His father came to Nassau a second time after Jean was arrested in an immigration raid to arrange for his release from the Carmichael Road Detention Center.

Jean spoke to his father in Miami at least once a week. Jean called his wife in Port de Paix more often. He sent remittances to his wife once a month and less frequently to his mother who was also in Haiti. Although he was working for a landscaping company, Jean did not have authorization to reside or work in the Bahamas. In addition to his landscaping job, Jean worked as a tailor to supplement his income. He explained that obtaining a work permit was "too expensive," especially because he did not plan to remain in the Bahamas. Jean was in the process of saving money to continue his journey to Miami. He recently sent his father one thousand U.S. dollars to help arrange passage for him to Miami.

The three vignettes of Joseph, Rose Marie and Jean depict the range of the different transnational practices and ties of Haitians in the Bahamas. The snapshots also reveal the different trajectories of social and economic integration for Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas. Joseph was a citizen of the Bahamas and had a formal job that would provide him with a pension when he retired. His Bahamian citizenship and income supported his transnational projects and his mobility between northwest Haiti and

South Florida. In comparison, Rose Marie's economic situation and irregular immigration status in the Bahamas did not afford transnational projects. The transnational activities of Rose Marie were limited to infrequent remittances to her brothers in Haiti and occasional telephone calls. In the three decades that Rose Marie had resided in the Bahamas, she had not acquired residency status or citizenship. Due to her irregular status, she did not qualify for a pension or disability benefits although she suffered from diabetes. Compared to Joseph's upward mobility in the Bahamas, Rose Marie experienced limited economic advancement. Like many Haitians from northwest Haiti, Rose Marie had no formal education and could not read or write, which constrained her livelihood prospects in the Bahamas, and consequently, her engagement in transnational activities.

Although Jean was unlawfully residing in the Bahamas, he was part of a transnational family network that resembled Joseph's ties. The lack of a work permit did not prevent Jean from earning enough income to support his family in Haiti and to save for future migration to South Florida. Similar to Joseph, Jean could have secured a livelihood in the Bahamas if his immigration status was regularized. Yet, Jean chose to save his money to fund his move to Miami rather than invest in a work permit. Although Jean would have comparable job prospects as an undocumented worker, he preferred migrating to Miami rather than staying in the Bahamas. Jean was typical of recent migrants who viewed the Bahamas as a gateway to the United States.<sup>8</sup>

### **COMING TO THE AID OF HAITIANS IN THE BAHAMAS: COLLECTIVE TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM**

Although Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas are embedded in transnational networks that span Haiti and South Florida, their membership in the Haitian diaspora has not translated into a political presence. As in the case of Guadeloupe, transnational collective organization among Haitians in the Bahamas have centered on religious affiliations, primarily Pentecostal churches (Brodwin, this volume; Louis 2008). At the local and diasporic levels, the political organization among Haitians in the Bahamas has been limited, encumbered by exclusionary practices of citizenship. The Haitian community in the Bahamas does not hold collective political power as in the case of their compatriots in the United States. Rather, the community has depended on the political weight of Haitians in South Florida.

Examining the transnational mobilization that brought Aristide to power and later restored his presidency from the vantage point of the Bahamas reveals the measured impact of the political activities of Haitians in the Bahamas in comparison to the influence their compatriots in the United States exert. As members of the peasant class from the rural northwest, many Haitians in the Bahamas represented Aristide's political base.



*Image 5.2* Floats from the 25th Anniversary of Independence Parade on the corner of Market Street and Wulff Road Nassau, Bahamas. Photo by the author.

Although they supported his campaign for presidency, Aristide did not tour the Bahamas. After the coup, Haitians in the Bahamas held public demonstrations in support of Aristide (Craton 1995). The organization *Kombit Ayisyen Bahamas* (KAB) was founded in 1991 with the mission of restoring Aristide's presidency.

However, in his campaign to garner support for his reinstatement, Aristide did not hold any rallies in the Bahamas. The formation of KAB and the public demonstrations illustrate local mobilization for Haitian nation building. However, the absence of the Bahamas on Aristide's itinerary suggests that the local Haitian community was not fully incorporated within the transnational political process. Their political voice on the diasporic level was mute. Aristide's visit to the Bahamas to attend the annual Caribbean Community summit in 2001 represents the nominal influence of the transnational political activities of Haitians in the Bahamas. During his visit, Aristide spoke at the Church of God of Prophecy Auditorium, which was filled to capacity. In addition to the four thousand people who packed the auditorium, thousands gathered outside to hear Aristide (Robinson 2001). The turnout reflected Aristide's continued popularity among Haitians in the Bahamas. Given the degree of support for Aristide, the negligible impact of the nation-building activities of Haitians in the Bahamas on the transnational political process conveyed their marginal position in the Haitian diaspora. As with individual transnational practices, the status of

Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas conditioned their collective transnational activities.

The development of transnational organizations among Haitians in the Bahamas and the United States shared fundamental elements.<sup>9</sup> Haitians in the Bahamas experienced similar stigma: they too were blamed for unemployment, accused of burdening social resources and classified as AIDS carriers. As a result of the negative characterization, many Haitians were also unwilling to identify themselves as Haitian (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fournon 1990). What distinguished Haitians in the United States from their compatriots in the Bahamas was their incorporation in the local political process. The influence of the transnational projects of Haitians in the United States was to some extent determined by their status as a political constituency (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994).<sup>10</sup> Compared to Haitians in the Bahamas, who were procedurally denied residency and citizenship, many Haitians in the United States were able to regularize their status through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). In 1990, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated the number of unauthorized Haitians at sixty-seven thousand, which was 30 percent of the total recorded for the Haitian foreign-born population by the U.S. Census, which was 225,393. In comparison, over two-thirds of the estimated sixty thousand Haitians living in the Bahamas were unauthorized residents (Schopp 1993). The Bahamian Census recorded 16,567 residents of Haitian citizenship, which meant that only 28 percent of Haitians had regular immigration status. Although the census figures did not include naturalized Haitian residents, only a handful of Haitians were Bahamian citizens as described in the previous section.<sup>11</sup>

The impact of the transnational political activities of Haitians in the United States was further enabled by the United States' position as a superpower. The reinstatement of Aristide depended on U.S. foreign policy. Aristide spent his exile in the United States, where he was able to garner the most support for his return. Rather than a political force in the nation-building process, Haitians in the Bahamas were—and continue to be—reliant on the mobilization of the more influential Haitian community in South Florida on their behalf.

Transnational collective organization by Haitians in South Florida on behalf of Haitians in the Bahamas preceded mobilization for Aristide's presidential campaign and reinstatement. One of the first collective actions on behalf of Haitians in the Bahamas occurred in the aftermath of the immigration raids following the 1985 amnesty when Haitians in South Florida organized against the deportation of Haitians in the Bahamas. The Bahamian government conducted several high-profile raids across the Bahamas in 1986. The raids followed a sixty-day amnesty that required immigrants "who [did] not qualify for immigration status under a recent treaty between the Bahamas and Haiti . . . to leave voluntarily after having registered with the Immigration Department" (Forbes 1985, 1).<sup>12</sup> During



the final days of the amnesty in the fall of 1985, the director of the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami, Reverend Gérard Jean-Juste, appealed to the Bahamian government to confer “the same humanity that the Commonwealth people have been asking for the black South Africans” to the Haitians living in the Bahamas (Damianos 1985c, 1). Haitian radio stations in South Florida broadcast messages to Haitians in the Bahamas advising them “not to panic and not to leave in unseaworthy vessels” and informing them of their legal rights (Damianos 1985c; Shannon and Colon 1985b). The broadcasts not only spoke to the Haitian audience in the Bahamas, but also signaled the fact that Haitians were leaving the Bahamas for South Florida and not returning to Haiti. In late December of 1985, the *Miami Herald* reported that hundreds of “Bahamian Haitians” were caught trying to reach South Florida and the Florida Coast Guard had turned back “half a dozen boats” (Shannon and Colon 1985a).

As the arrests and deportations began in 1986, Haitian community leaders in South Florida became more engaged in defending Haitians in the Bahamas. After the raids on Cat Cay and Bimini on February 21, 1986, in which over 260 Haitians were detained, Reverend Jean-Just organized a two-day demonstration to protest the actions of the PLP government. On the first day, about forty protesters picketed the Bahamian tourist office in Coral Gables, Florida, to demand the release of Haitian immigrants detained in the raids (*Nassau Tribune*, March 6, 1986; *Miami Herald*, 1986). The number of protesters fell to about twenty on the second day (MacGill 1986). The protesters wore the national colors of red and blue, which also symbolized the fall of the Duvalier regime earlier in the year. In wearing the national colors while picketing the Bahamian tourist office, protesters were in solidarity simultaneously with Haitians at home and in the Bahamas.

A few months later in July, Haitians in Miami gathered at Notre Dame d’Haiti Catholic Church after Haitian radio programs broadcast the arrest of Haitian Consul General Evans François in Nassau. François, who had criticized the immigration raids in the Bahamas, was briefly detained by Bahamian police for a parking violation (McCarthy 1986). The Haitians who gathered in Little Haiti demanded action from the transitional Haitian government. To the attendees’ dissatisfaction, the Haitian consul general for Miami, Antoine Jean-Poix, confirmed that the transitional government would honor the 1985 treaty with the Bahamas and would use diplomatic channels to address the harassment of Haitian Consul General François by Bahamian police (McCarthy 1986).

The manner and conditions in which Haitians were rounded up and detained outraged the general Bahamian public as well as Haitians in South Florida. The public outcry in the aftermath of the raids on Cat Cay and Bimini reflected the ambivalence of Bahamians towards Haitian immigration. On the one hand, Bahamians wanted a solution to the problem and called on the government to get tough with unlawful immigration.

On the other hand, Bahamians did not approve of the manner in which the raid was carried out.<sup>13</sup> Many Bahamians felt that the abuses of the raid violated the basic human rights of the Haitian immigrants. The raids were indiscriminate and lawful Haitian residents were also detained. Homes of detained immigrants were looted. Children were separated from their parents and detainees were held in overcrowded unsanitary detention facilities (Damianos 1986a). A demonstration calling for the protection of the human rights of the detained immigrants was organized by Pastor Sweeting, the director of L'abri Ministries, and Father Dunstan Burrows, chairman of the Bahamian Coalition for Human Rights (Forbes 1986a). About one thousand people, including politicians, clergymen, teachers and unionists, participated in the demonstration on March 11 (Damianos 1986b). The demonstrations also attracted speakers from diverse sectors of Bahamian society, from representatives of labor unions to human rights organizations. The presence of representatives of labor unions, whose leaders usually lobbied for the protection of employment opportunities against Haitian migrants, clearly illustrated the ambivalence of Bahamians to unauthorized immigration.

Haitian community leaders in South Florida also cooperated with members of the local Bahamian community to rally on behalf of Haitian immigrants. Deserving particular attention was the attendance of Jacques Despinosse, president of the Haitian-American Democratic Club and representative of WVCG AM Voice of Haitian Americans in South Florida, at the rally. His presence affirmed the link between Haitians residing in the Bahamas and the transnational Haitian community. WVCG AM was not simply the voice of Haitians in South Florida, but also that of Haitians in the Bahamas. Despinosse addressed the crowd on behalf of the Haitian-American community of Miami and informed them that the "struggle [would] be carried out in Miami, in Washington, D.C., and at the Bahamian Consulate in Haiti" (Forbes 1986b, 1). Whereas the actions taken by the Haitian community in South Florida did not rival the organization behind Aristide's presidency, their transnational activities on behalf of their compatriots in the Bahamas were illustrative of the strong ties between the two communities. The Haitian community leaders in South Florida also represented Haitians in the Bahamas and in this way the Haitian community in the Bahamas drew political support from the community in South Florida.

## CONCLUSION

Haitians in the Bahamas are part of social networks that link northwest Haiti, South Florida and the Bahamas. As the intermediate location of the Bahamas conveys the direction of transnational flows, the social and economic incorporation of Haitians in the Bahamas partly determines the scope of their transnational practices. The marginalization of Haitians in

the Bahamas, specifically the denial of citizenship, has limited collective organization and political influence in the diasporic community. Due to their exclusion from citizenship and the country's geopolitical position in the region, Haitians in the Bahamas lack a political voice in the nation-building process of Haiti. In contrast to the social progress of Haitians in the United States, Haitians in the Bahamas are not incorporated in the country's political process.

The collective representation of Haitians in the Bahamas has to do with both the country's intermediate status in the region and their integration in the Bahamas. Haitian marginalization in the Bahamas provides for a perception of the Bahamas as merely a temporary location for Haitians, whereas it is above else legal integration that facilitates transnationalism among Haitians in the Bahamas. Moreover, Haitians in the Bahamas lack ethnic media outlets that support collective organization and community building. There are no Haitian radio stations or print media in the Bahamas. Only in recent years have some Bahamian radio stations instituted Haitian radio programs, like *Rendezvous* and *Calling Haiti* on Island FM. As Haitians in the Bahamas listen to radio broadcasts from South Florida, they are more informed about the community in Miami than local events.

Beyond the irregular status of many Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas, the function of the Bahamas as a transit country for the United States has discouraged collective organization. Aristide's presidential campaign and the restoration of his presidency were distinguished moments of transnational mobilization among Haitians in the diaspora. Whereas the mobilization of Haitians in the United States was critical to the transnational political process of his election and reinstatement, the collective activities of Haitians in less central countries like the Bahamas were not as influential.

In short, whereas conditions in Haiti shape transnational activities, differences in participation and outcome suggest that the status of the country of settlement within the international order determines the reach of transnational practices. Interpreting difference between the various communities that make up the Haitian diaspora calls for examining the local context in which these communities are situated and the geopolitical position of each country.

## NOTES

1. Personal communication from Jeffery Kahn.
2. The Triennial Comprehensive Report on Immigration (2002) estimated the population of unauthorized residents from the Bahamas at seventy thousand in 1996. The report acknowledged that the estimate appeared "too high" but stated that there was no "basis for making downward adjustments" (INS 2002, 38). However, the inclusion of people of Haitian descent

who were born in the Bahamas may have inflated the report's estimation of unauthorized Bahamian residents.

3. As a transit country to the United States, the Bahamas is comparable to Guadeloupe, where most Haitian immigrants expect to move on to the United States or Canada (see Brodwin, this volume).
4. The departure of Bahamian workers to the United States under the Bracero Program and the decline of Bahamian labor in agriculture created labor shortages, which Turks and Caicos Islanders and eventually Haitians filled.
5. As the uncontrolled nature of the migration suggests, the vast majority of Haitians enter the Bahamas clandestinely. Therefore, estimations on the number of Haitians in the Bahamas have differed considerably. Estimations in the last two decades ranged between thirty thousand and sixty thousand (Craton 1995; International Organization for Migration 2005; Schopp 1993). Two-thirds of the Haitian population was estimated to be unauthorized residents (Schopp 1993). Although large numbers of Haitians continue to migrate to the Bahamas, the transient nature of the migration and the repatriation efforts of the Bahamian government most likely curbed the growth of the Haitian population. Despite the uncertainty of the total number of Haitians residing in the Bahamas, the relatively small size of the country's population, 303,611 in 2000, makes the estimations of the Haitian population demographically noteworthy.
6. An International Organization for Migration report found that the print media largely contained reports on the apprehension, detention and repatriation of Haitians and the opinions of politicians, organizational leaders and the general public were negative focusing on problems. The report recommended that the media should try to portray Haitian residents in a more balanced light (International Organization for Migration 2005; Louis 2008).
7. Olwig (2002) suggests, funerals and weddings are occasions for migrants to affirm kinship ties and notions of home and belonging. In returning to Haiti during these critical moments of illness and death, Rose Marie confirmed her membership and familial ties to Port de Paix.
8. Haitian migration to the Bahamas can be classified in three phases. Initially the migration was temporary, consisting of seasonal labor circulation of primarily male target earners (Marshall 1979). The late 1950s marked a turnaround in Haitian migration to the Bahamas. Haitians now came with the intention of remaining in the Bahamas for the duration of their working life and returning to Haiti for their retirement. Since the 1980s, however, the Bahamas has transformed from a destination to a transit country for the United States, particularly South Florida.
9. The class divisions that slowed collective organization among Haitians in the United States, however, were not present in the Bahamas. As the large majority of Haitians came from northwest Haiti, they shared a peasant culture and were primarily economic migrants (Craton 1995; Craton and Saunders 1998; Marshall 1979).
10. One of the explanations for the initial lack of ethnic organization of early Haitian immigrants in New York was their irregular migration status (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994).
11. The size of the Haitian population in the United States partly accounted for its influence in the election and reinstatement of Aristide. The absence of the Dominican Republic on Aristide's campaign trail suggests that the size of the community was not the only factor in determining its influence in the transnational political process. Estimates of the size of the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic were higher than in the United States, yet as a community they were not represented in the transnational mobilization for

Aristide's presidency and reinstatement. Similar to Haitians in the Bahamas, Haitians in the Dominican Republic have been denied access to citizenship status and are not incorporated in the political process of the country.

12. According to the Ministry of National Security, the vast majority of Haitian migrants, an estimated thirty-one thousand, did not register with the Immigration Department; only 9,392 (or 23 percent) of Haitians registered during the amnesty (Forbes 1985, 1).
13. Most of the problems and abuses of the Cat Cay and Bimini raids were not isolated and typified the roundups and repatriation efforts organized by the Bahamian government. One weekend in April 2006, over three hundred people, mainly Haitian migrants, were arrested in coordinated night raids on Eleuthera, Exuma and Ragged Island (Charles 2006; Smith 2006). About half of the Haitian migrants taken into custody were released because they had proper documentation to reside in the Bahamas (Charles 2006; Smith 2006). The Chief Councilor of Eleuthera, Abner Pinder, condemned the raid, saying, "they took the poor people out of their beds. . . some of them were even children." Mr. Pinder further defended the migrants caught up in the raid by remarking, "life in Eleuthera depends on immigrants, as they pick up the slack and do the jobs that many Bahamians turn down" (Smith 2006, A1).

Part II

# Siting Diaspora



## 6 Mediating Institutions and the Adaptation of Haitian Immigrants in Paris

*Margarita Mooney*

This chapter contributes to the gap in knowledge about Haitians in a symbolically important city of the diaspora: Paris. One might expect Haitians in France to integrate easily because Haiti has been profoundly influenced by French language, culture, the Catholic religion and the ideals of the French Revolution. Little is known, however, about the paths of entry and patterns of adaptation of the approximately twenty-five thousand Haitians living in metropolitan France. In this chapter, I present data collected during the spring of 2003 for a comparative study of how religion influences the adaptation of Haitian immigrants in Miami, Montréal and Paris (Mooney 2009).<sup>1</sup> Of the three countries where I conducted research, France apparently offers immigrants a very friendly welcome to immigrants: according to the ideology of French Republicanism, one must simply become a French citizen and all other differences of race, education and culture will fade into the background.

However, the 2005 crisis in the immigrant French suburbs—*la crise des banlieues*—once again thrust France's immigrant adaptation challenges to the forefront of national debate. The qualitative and quantitative data I present here demonstrate glaring evidence that Haitian immigrants to France are not becoming indistinguishable from the French, neither in terms of culture nor socioeconomic standing. In the wake of the 2005 riots, numerous French scholars and American observers of French immigration trends and politics clamored for more data on immigrant adaptation in France and for a renewed discussion of immigrant adaptation that goes beyond the tenets of Republicanism.

In response to these calls, first, I present data I collected from numerous official French government sources to investigate the paths through which Haitians have entered France, the neighborhoods where they settle and the types of jobs they hold. Taken together, I show that, due to the limited availability of legal channels for Haitians to enter France, their low levels of education and their spatial concentration in the Parisian *banlieue* that isolates them from mainstream French society, Haitians face an uphill battle to earn equal footing with native French. Second, my interviews with Haitian immigrants and my observations of religious and



secular community events demonstrate that leaders of community groups often mediate between individual immigrants and the state. However, the ideology of French Republicanism and the set of state policies it has influenced—including *laïcité*—overlook that immigrants frequently rely on intermediate structures to navigate the complex path towards adaptation. Although for reasons of space, I do not explicitly draw comparisons with Haitians' adaptation patterns in the United States or Canada, my argument that mediating institutions in civil society contribute to immigrant adaptation undoubtedly comes from my immersion in the lived experience of Haitian immigrants in the United States, Canada and France.<sup>2</sup> The French state's relative indifference to such mediating institutions weakens one important source of support Haitian immigrants rely on elsewhere.

## FRENCH REPUBLICANISM

French Republicanism emphasizes a unified national identity based on citizenship. It encourages immigrants to replace their identity with French values and culture and discourages political representation based on national origin (Horowitz 1992; Lamont 2000). This model of integration contrasts with the models found in other places where large Haitian communities exist. For example, the American melting pot and Canadian multiculturalism both embrace ethnic diversity and sanction political representation based on race or ethnicity.

French Republicanism has influenced legal and political structures in France in several ways. For example, even as ethnic diversity has increased in France, the French Census does not ask about race, illustrating a broader trend in which “racial and ethnic identities . . . have not been generally understood as legitimate political, or even statistical categories” (Lieberman 2001, 35). Many politicians and commentators on the immigration debate argue that France must protect itself from the disintegrating effects of the United States' model of the cultural melting pot, structural pluralism for ethnic groups, ethnic political mobilization and residential segregation of immigrants (Kastoryano 1996).

Closely related to French Republicanism is the principle of *laïcité*, which was established at the time of French Revolution. *Laïcité* aimed to remove the established church of France, the Catholic Church, from its role in politics and social services. In general, in the United States, private associations, including religious associations, have a large role in providing social services; whereas in France, because of *laïcité*, the welfare state has gradually developed to be the main provider of services (Esping-Andersen 1990).

A second meaning of *laïcité* refers to public expression of religion. As in the development of U.S. ethnic identities, religious identity and associations with a religious inspiration form part the community of North Africans in France. According to one of France's foremost scholars on North African

mobilization France, Catherine Witthol de Wenden, “Undoubtedly, Islam as a religion, as well as a collective identity, is now part and parcel of the French political space” (1998, 275). Some actors in the French government view such religious expression as a threat to *laïcité*. One poignant example of this sentiment is the overwhelming support given to a 2004 law prohibiting the Muslim head scarf (and all “conspicuous” religious symbols) in public places.

### **Haiti and France: From Eighteenth-Century Independence to Twentieth-Century Migration**

To what extent do Republicanism and *laïcité* guide our understanding of contemporary Haitian immigrants’ adaptation in France? First of all, the Haitian Revolution of 1804 rejected the notion that France’s colonies would really benefit from the universal egalitarian ideals of the French Revolution and Republicanism. Haitian slaves acted on their belief that race, language and culture would continue to divide them from their colonists unless they earned full independence from France, even if they were granted French citizenship, as eventually happened in other French colonies of the Caribbean such as Guadeloupe and Martinique. Although relations between Haiti and the Vatican were strained right after the revolution, an 1860 Concordat reestablished relations and the Haitian Constitution granted the Catholic Church special rights and privileges, in particular regarding education (Nérestant 1994). To the present, the Catholic Church in Haiti is engaged in a wide variety of social activities in addition to its strictly spiritual mission. Thus, Haitians who immigrate to France expect the Catholic Church to function in a similar way there as it did in Haiti. However, they encounter a vastly different environment of religion–state relations. As one Haitian leader in France put it:

In Haiti, we learned Christianity from the French. But when we get here, we find a society where few people believe and the church doesn’t have much influence.

In the 1980s, when large numbers of Haitians began arriving in France, the *banlieue* of Paris were used in public debates to symbolize the failure of immigrant assimilation (Body-Gendrot 2000; Noiriel 1996; Weil 1995). Although the government provided many services to immigrants, such as public housing, economic recession and deindustrialization reduced labor market opportunities for immigrants. Government housing projects in the *banlieue* of large French cities like Paris, Lyon and Marseilles came to enjoy a reputation comparable to American ghettos—characterized by high crime rates, youth delinquency and school violence (Body-Gendrot 2000). Although changes in the economy were responsible for much of the unemployment and social decay of the *banlieue*, opinion polls of the French

public find support for the argument that some immigrants are too culturally different to assimilate in France (Hargreaves 1995).

## MEDIATING INSTITUTIONS AND IMMIGRANT ADAPTATION

Works from classical immigration theory in the United States such as Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927) saw religion as the center of ethnic communities and viewed religious institutions as indispensable aids to immigrant adaptation. Other authors, such as Oscar Handlin in *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (1951) as well as Milton Gordon in *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (1964) extended Thomas and Znaniecki's thesis about mediating institutions to religious and ethnic associations of immigrant groups more generally. For example, according to Gordon:

The immigrant subsociety mediates between the native culture of the immigrant and the American culture. The recognition of this fact is the indispensable prerequisite for the effective use of the communication channels and influence networks of the immigrants' communal life to aid and encourage the achievement of worthwhile acculturation goals. (1964, 244)

In contrast, retaining close ties to other immigrants, according to French Republicanism, would hinder immigrant adaptation. But an alternative view, posited by the American assimilation school, argues that immigrant subsocieties form indispensable intermediaries between newcomers and natives. Gordon, for example, argues that the state must recognize these mediating institutions and cooperate with them to carry out worthwhile goals of immigrant adaptation.

The concept of mediation also appears in debate about civil society and the welfare state. Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, critical observers of the American welfare state, define mediating structures as "those institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life" (2000, 144). In critiquing much of the way that the state delivers welfare services to the needy, they argue that megastructures of the state "are not helpful in providing meaning and identity for individual existence. Meaning, fulfillment, and personal identity are to be realized in the private sphere" (*ibid.*). Speaking of mediating institutions does not mean dismantling the welfare state, as some may fear, but rather thinking hard about how the welfare state carries out its goals. Does the welfare state recognize the importance of mediating institutions? What are the limits on the ability of the state to provide citizens or immigrants with a source of meaning? Only once we acknowledge the

limited reach of the welfare state both in terms of resources and meaning can we then refine our theories and practices to include the contributions of nonstate entities to immigrant acculturation and structural incorporation into new societies.

As I argue here, immigration—in particular undocumented immigration or the immigration of asylum seekers like many Haitians in France—challenges the state’s ability to define who belongs to the political community. How can Republicanism work as a model for immigrants like Haitians who have so few legal channels to immigrate to France yet nonetheless manage to settle there? Haitians, perhaps not unlike immigrants to France who come from other former colonies, such as those in North Africa, feel compelled to leave their home country and settle in France even if France’s colonial history and contemporary social tensions may make them quite skeptical of Republican promises of equality.

This chapter combines descriptive statistical tables from national census data with several months of ethnographic work on Haitians in France. During the spring of 2003, I interviewed thirty Haitian immigrants who attend the Archdiocesan-sponsored ministry for Haitian Catholics in Paris, called the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris, and leaders of seven Haitian secular associations. During that time, I attended weekend and weekday activities at the Haitian Catholic Community as well as activities sponsored by Haitian secular associations in France. I conducted this research in French and in Haitian Creole. I also collected detailed data on Haitian immigration to France from four primary sources:

1. an extraction of data I requested from the French Census Bureau, known by its acronym INSEE<sup>3</sup>
2. the Office of Population and Migration of the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity<sup>4</sup>
3. the Office of International Migration of the French Republic, Statistics and Communications Service<sup>5</sup>
4. the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless People (OFPRA)<sup>6</sup>

## HAITIAN MIGRATION TO FRANCE

Given the colonial ties between Haiti and France, some movement between the two countries has occurred for several hundred years. Today’s Haitian population in France first began to arrive after fleeing the regime of François and Jean-Claude Duvalier, the father and son who ruled Haiti with a dictatorial hand from 1957 to 1986. Until the 1970s, however, most Haitians living in France were either students or professionals (Bastide, Morin and Raveau 1974). This first wave of Haitian migrants in France came from the upper-middle and upper classes of Haiti, mostly

from the capital, Port-au-Prince. They did not see France as their new home country; rather, they were awaiting a chance to return to Haiti under a more democratic system. Many Haitians from this first wave founded associations—in particular, political associations—to promote change in Haiti, although few of these associations have survived until today (Alexis 1998).

Although it is difficult to ascertain exact numbers, Alexis (1998) states that most of the Haitians who were educated in France in the 1960s and 1970s either returned to Haiti or moved on to the United States or Canada. In North America, some Haitians found better employment opportunities, they could be closer to Haiti and they could join larger communities of expatriates, in particular in New York, Montréal and Miami. Increased emigration from Haiti coincided with France's decision in 1974 to end all labor migration (Weil 1995). Despite this change in policy, as the economic and political conditions in Haiti deteriorated under Jean-Claude Duvalier (1971–1986), emigration from Haiti accelerated, in particular to North America but also to France. Little is known about this second wave of Haitians in France. The few studies of Haitians in France that have been published to date (Alexis 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Bastide, Morin and Raveau 1974; Delachet-Guillon 1996) relied on surveys with a few hundred respondents and presented only limited data from the census and immigration statistics.

As seen in Table 6.1, the largest growth of Haitians in France occurred in the 1980s. Notably, these figures only include Haitians who do not have French citizenship. From 1982 to 1990, the Haitian population of France increased from 4,724 to 12,311, an increase of 161 percent. Growth was slower in the 1990s, going from 12,311 to 15,666 in to 1999, a growth rate of 27 percent.

In order to obtain more detailed information on Haitians in France, I worked with a statistician at the French Census Bureau, INSEE, to extract data from the 1999 census.<sup>7</sup> By choosing the nationality of origin category on the French Census as the primary unit of analysis, I was able to identify the following persons of Haitian national origin: (a) Haitian citizens residing in France; (b) persons of Haitian origin who have become naturalized French citizens; (c) Haitian citizens born in France. Using this definition of Haitian origin, as we see in Table 6.2, the 1999 French National Census

*Table 6.1* Growth of Haitian Immigrants in France (Excluding Naturalized French Citizens)

	Total	Men	Women	Total Growth	Growth Rate
1982	4,724	2,344	2,380		
1990	12,311	5,768	6,543	7,587	161%
1999	15,666	7,409	8,257	3,355	27%

*Source:* INSEE, Census, CD-R6. Taken from the 1982, 1990 and 1999 French Census.

Table 6.2 Haitians in France by Nationality at Birth and Current Nationality

	Population	Percentage
All Haitians in Metropolitan France	24,911	100.0%
Haitians Nationalized as French Citizens	9,245	37.1%
Haitian-Born Haitian Citizens Living in France	9,874	39.6%
Haitian Citizens Born in France	5,792	23.3%

Source: INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.

counted nearly twenty-five thousand Haitians in France. As French law requires the children of foreigners born in France to choose their nationality when they turn eighteen, some of the Haitians citizens living in France were born in France (23.3 percent of all Haitians).

To understand what paths Haitian immigrants have taken to enter France, I collected data about Haitian migration to metropolitan France from the *Départements d'Outre Mer* (DOM), or overseas departments, of the Caribbean, namely Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyane. I further examined detailed data on the number and types of visas given to Haitians to enter France legally, and I investigated how many Haitians have regulated their status once in France either through the Private and Family Life Card or by requesting political asylum. Tables 6.3–6.8 and Figure 6.1 summarize my findings.

Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show that, although the 1999 French Census counted 27,349 Haitians living in France's Caribbean DOM—just slightly more than in metropolitan France—only 6.1 percent of Haitians residing in metropolitan France reported moving there from the Antilles.

Before moving on to consider more detailed data from the French Census about Haitians' place of residence, occupation and other socioeconomic indicators, it is important to note that French Census data may not accurately reflect the Haitian population of France. Because French immigration policy offers few legal channels for working-class Haitians to migrate to France, many Haitians in France enter with tourist visas and then remain

Table 6.3 Haitians Living in the French Antilles, 1999

	Total	Percentage
Guyane	15,432	56.4%
Guadeloupe	10,444	38.2%
Martinique	1,470	5.4%
Total Haitians Living in French Antilles	27,349	100.0%

Source: INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.

*Table 6.4* Haitians Whose Place of Residence Changed from the French Antilles in 1990 to Metropolitan France in 1999

	Total
Total Haitian Population in Metropolitan France	24,911
Haitian Migrants from Guyane to Metropolitan France	1,211
Haitian Migrants from Guadeloupe to Metropolitan France	215
Haitian Migrants from Martinique to Metropolitan France	89
Total Haitian Migrants from French Antilles to Metropolitan France	1,515
Percentage of Haitians in France who Migrated from French Antilles to Metropolitan France from 1990 to 1999	6.1%

*Source:* INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.

undocumented. Haitian leaders in France estimate that the census largely undercounts Haitians, and they suggested that fifty thousand Haitians live in France, not the approximately twenty-five thousand counted in the 1999 census. Of those immigrants, leaders believe that approximately 20 percent of Haitians are undocumented. One detailed study of Haitians in France corroborates these assertions. Delachet-Guillon (1996) collected official French data from both national and municipal authorities and calculated that there were over thirty thousand Haitians in France in the early 1990s, nearly twice the official census estimate from 1990.

Further support for the assertion that many Haitians enter France clandestinely comes from French migration authorities. In order to investigate the types and number of legal visas Haitians have received, I visited the documentation center of the Office of Population and Migration of the French Ministry of Employment and Solidarity.<sup>8</sup> Every year, this office publishes a report entitled *Immigration et présence étrangère en France* (Immigration and Foreign Presence in France) that tells how many visas were given to people from different nations to immigrate to France. Prior to 1993, Haitians were classified under the rubric of "Other Countries of America," thus I only present data for the period from 1993 to 2001.

Table 6.5 demonstrates that, between 1993 and 2001, few Haitians (5,133) entered France with work visas. Unlike the census data, however, the data in Table 6.5 do not allow me to distinguish between Haitians who migrated to metropolitan France and those who went to the Antilles. However, as I was interested in how many Haitians received visas to immigrate to metropolitan France, I thus further consulted data from the Statistics Department of France's Office of International Migration (OIM) that indicate where new Haitian migrants settle. Table 6.6 shows that, in the two years when the highest numbers of work visas were given to Haitians, more than 90 percent of those workers immigrated to the

Table 6.5 Official Sources of Haitian Migration to Metropolitan France and *Les Antilles*, 1993–2001

Year	Total	Salaried Workers	Non-salaried Workers	Statutory Refugees	Family Reunification	Members of French Families	Family Members of Refugees	“Private and Family Life Card” (Including Territorial Asylum)**	Visitors	Beneficiaries of Reexamination
1993	3,208	1,643	476	386	361	187	57	n.a.	98	n.a.
1994	1,927	910	193	283	309	148	20	n.a.	64	n.a.
1995	1,375	476	186	57	235	132	17	n.a.	272	n.a.
1996	788	134	93	72	119	175	22	n.a.	173	n.a.
1997	1,865	139	200	72	158	159	45	n.a.	283	809
1998	1,929	129	330	52	236	152	20	n.a.	237	773
1999	1,360	56	69	61	342	104	17	556 (1)	111	34
2000	1,764	43	14	82	480	70	22	1,004	45	2
2001	2,087	37	5	210	517	97	37	1,131	44	5
Total, 1993–2001	16,303	3,567	1,566	1,275	2,757	1,224	257	2,135	1,327	1,623

Source: Immigration et Présence Étrangère en France, 1993–2001, André LeBon.



Antilles. As we can see in Table 6.6, from 1993 to 1994, an extremely small number—only around one hundred Haitians—received work visas to immigrate to Paris and its suburbs. In 2000, only nine Haitians migrated to Paris or its suburbs with a permanent visa as a salaried worker, a very clear indication that immigrating to France as a worker does not represent a viable option for Haitians.

If few Haitians come to France with work visas, what other legal channels exist? Few Haitians migrate to France as refugees. Table 6.5 shows that, despite the numerous political upheavals in Haiti, in particular the coup d'état from 1991 to 1994, only 1,532 Haitians and their family members came to France as refugees between 1993 and 2001.

Not surprisingly, after work visas, family reunification visas constitute the largest category of visas (2,757) given to Haitians to enter France (see Table 6.5). The next largest category of entry is the Private and Family Life Card (2,135). The Private and Family Life Card, which was created in 1999, grants temporary residence to migrants already on French territory and who have a compelling reason not to return to their home country (other than fear of political persecution, which would qualify them for asylum). Even though the law creating this category was only passed in 1999, from 1999 to 2001 this was by far the largest category of legal migration from Haiti to France for those years.

Next, I examined which categories of the Family and Private Life Card were most frequently given to Haitians. In Table 6.7, four important categories have entitled Haitians to obtain a Private and Family Life Card: spouses and parents of French citizens (649), personal and family ties (615), residence in France for the last ten to fifteen years (593), and minors who have lived in France since the age of ten (275). Although the Private and Family Life Card has allowed several thousand Haitians in France to adjust their status temporarily, it is not a permanent residency card.

Data from the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless People, known by its French acronym OFPRA, show how many Haitians have applied for asylum in France. As we can see in Figure 6.1, the number of Haitian asylum seekers has risen rapidly since 1999.

*Table 6.6* Entry of Permanent Workers by Department and Haitian Nationality, 1993, 1994 and 2000

Year	Total	Paris	Guadeloupe	Martinique	Guyane	Suburbs of Paris	Other Depart.
1993	1,643	33	1,286	1	226	88	9
1994	910	31	38	3	784	49	5
2000	56	4	32	0	14	5	1

*Source:* OMISTATS, *Annuaire des Migrations* 1993, 1994 and 2000.

Table 6.7 Haitians Holding a Private and Family Life Card, 2000–2001

Year	Total	Spouses and Parents of French Citizens	Spouses of Scientific Researchers	Minors in France Since the Age of Ten	Personal and Family Ties	Residence in France for the Last Ten to Fifteen Years
2000	1,004	274	1	149	282	298
2001	1,131	375	2	126	333	295
Total, 2000–2001	2,135	649	3	275	615	593

Source: OMISTATS, *Annuaire des Migrations* 1993, 1994 and 2000.

However, Table 6.8 shows that as the number of Haitians seeking asylum increased, the number of acceptances decreased. From 1981 to 2006, the total number of first decisions (including first demands and reexaminations of earlier cases) on Haitians seeking asylum in France reached 37,355. Although 16.5 percent of those requests were accepted, the acceptance rate dropped sharply in the last ten years. From 1996 to 2000, only 14 percent of Haitian asylum applications were accepted, and from 2001 to 2006, only 8 percent were accepted. Because the political and economic situation of Haiti has not improved, one can assume that most asylum seekers whose claims were rejected—along with their accompanying family members—remained in France. The census figure of twenty-five thousand Haitians in France appears very low when we consider that, in light of data from OFPRA, 31,183 Haitians (excluding their accompanying family members) have had their asylum requests rejected in the last twenty-five years.

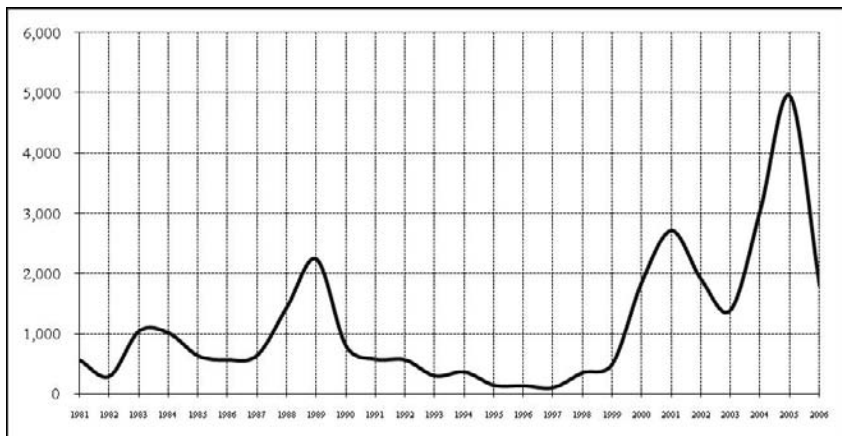


Figure 6.1 Evolution of new Haitian asylum requests in France: 1981–2006. Source: OFPRA.

*Table 6.8* Haitian Asylum Seekers in France, 1981–2006

Year	New Asylum Requests	Cases Reexamined	Total	Decisions	Cases Approved	% Cases Approved	Cases Rejected	Cases Approved after Review by Refugee Commission	% Overall Admitted
1981	562		562	834	490	58.8%	344		
1982	296		296	433	388	89.6%	45		
1983	1,047		1,047	569	348	61.2%	221		
1984	1,015		1,015	1,104	424	38.4%	680		
1985	635		635	1,127	376	33.4%	751		
1986	569		569	1,053	310	29.4%	743		
1987	648		648	601	82	13.6%	519		
1988	1,450		1,450	1,120	285	25.4%	835		
1989	2,240		2,240	1,890	186	9.8%	1,704		
1990	794		794	1,827	269	14.7%	1,558		
1991	577		577	962	260	27.0%	702		
1992	567		567	2,297	520	22.6%	1,777		
1993	301	1,220	1,521	1,460	386	26.4%	1,074		
1994	366	761	1,127	961	283	29.4%	678		

Year	New Asylum Requests	Cases Reexamined	Total	Decisions	Cases Approved	% Cases Approved	Cases Rejected	Cases Approved after Review by Refugee Commission	% Overall Admitted
1995	146	229	375	681	57	8.4%	624		
1996	138	118	256	438	72	16.4%	366		
1997	108	26	134	396	72	18.2%	324		
1998	357	8	365	266	52	19.5%	214		
1999	503	12	515	518	61	11.8%	457		
2000	1,873	13	1,886	1,457	82	5.6%	1,375		
2001	2,713	110	2,823	2,946	97	3.3%	2,849	113	7.1%
2002	1,904	160	2,064	2,269	180	7.9%	2,089	130	13.7%
2003	1,403	152	1,555	1,471	174	11.8%	1,297	122	20.1%
2004	3,067	184	3,251	3,030	215	7.1%	2,815	59	9.0%
2005	4,953	270	5,223	3,655	208	5.7%	3,447	204	11.3%
2006	1,808	391	2,199	3,990	295	7.4%	3,695	197	12.3%
2007	413	265	678						
Total	30,453	3,919	34,372	37,355	6,172	16.5%	31,183	825	18.7%

Source: OFPRA.

*Table 6.9* Haitians in France with Temporary Student Status

Year	
1993	71
1994	88
1995	96
1996	182
1997	159
1998	200
1999	105
2000	93
2001	95
Total, 1993–2001	1,089

*Source:* Immigration et Présence Étrangère en France, 1993–2001, André LeBon.

Another possible legal channel of migration from Haiti to France—to study—also appears quite restricted. From 1993 to 2001, only 1,089 Haitians obtained student visas to come to France (see Table 6.9).

Taken together, data on the entry and regularization of Haitians in France demonstrate that little of the growth of the Haitian population has come from legal, permanent channels. As many Haitians in France have their asylum claims rejected or try to regularize their status under the Private and Family Life Card, they remain in a precarious legal status.

### **Data on Haitians' Socioeconomic Profile and Social Location from the 1999 Census**

Tables 6.10–6.14 return to data from the 1999 census. The demographic picture of the Haitian population that emerges from these tables is one of a young population, recently arrived with a low to moderate economic position, and a majority of two-parent families. Although overall Haitians in France have moderate levels of education, and a significant minority has higher education, few Haitians work in professional occupations in France.

Table 6.10 shows that within Île-de-France (metropolitan Paris), only 10 percent of Haitians live in the city of Paris itself; the remaining 90 percent live in the suburbs of Paris. The largest concentration of Haitians in Île-de-France is in Seine-Saint Denis, which has 6,787 Haitians or 30 percent of all Haitians in Île-de-France. Three other departments have large concentrations of Haitians: Val d'Oise (4,160 or 18.9 percent), Hauts-Saint-Denis (3,138 or 14.3 percent) and Val de Marne (2,617 or 11.9 percent).

Other data from INSEE (available from the author upon request) demonstrate that Haitians are strongly concentrated in the Paris area, but they

*Table 6.10* Department of Residence for Haitians Living in Île-de-France

	Total	Percentage
Total, Haitians in Île-de-France	22,000	100.0%
Seine-Saint-Denis	6,787	30.9%
Val-d'Oise	4,160	18.9%
Hauts-de-Seine	3,138	14.3%
Paris	2,698	12.3%
Val-de-Marne	2,617	11.9%
Essonne	1,069	4.9%
Seine-et-Marne	840	3.8%
Yvelines	691	3.1%

*Source:* INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.

live dispersed throughout the suburbs of Paris. Of the Haitians in France, 88.3 percent live in Île-de-France, the region comprised of Paris and its suburbs. Surprisingly, no other region in France has more than five hundred Haitians. The heavy regional concentration of Haitians in the Paris region may be explained by the fact that because so few Haitians obtain work visas, Haitians choose to settle close to their families and social networks.

In Table 6.11, we see that there are also slightly more Haitian women than men in France and that the Haitian population of France is young. This gender ratio is another sign that the Haitian migrant flow to France is not a traditional recruited labor migrant flow—such as that of Algerians in France—where men arrive first and then later bring their families over (Weil 1995). Rather, Haitian women often journey to Paris to join a distant family member or friend and then try to sponsor their husbands or close family members.

Table 6.12 shows that more than 70 percent of Haitians in France are under the age of forty; in fact, nearly 33 percent are school age (under nineteen years). These data suggest that the majority of Haitians in France are at the age of economic productivity or will enter the labor market in a few years. Haitians—along with other immigrant groups in France—form

*Table 6.11* Sex Distribution of Haitians in France

	Population	Percentage
Total	24,911	100.0%
Male	11,588	46.5%
Female	13,323	53.5%

*Source:* INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.

*Table 6.12* Haitians in France by Age Bracket

Age	Population	Percentage
Total	24,911	100.0%
0–19	8,262	33.2%
20–39	9,297	37.3%
40–59	6,556	26.3%
60–74	623	2.5%
75+	173	0.7%

*Source:* INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.

a greater percentage of the young population than the overall population (OECD 2002).

Given the low levels of education in Haiti, the educational attainment of Haitians (see Table 6.13) in France appears relatively high. This may be indicative of self-selection: Haitians who already have moderate levels of education may be more likely to migrate to France than those who have no schooling or little schooling. According to the 1999 census, more than 77.6 percent of Haitians in France had more than a primary school education. The majority of Haitians in France fall within a middle range of education: 44.8 percent had attended at least some middle/high school, and 20 percent had finished high school. A relatively small group, 12.7 percent, had some university education. Given the few opportunities to study at a university in Haiti, those with university education likely obtained these degrees in France.

*Table 6.13* Educational Levels of Haitians in France

	Population	Percentage
Total Population Aged Fifteen and Above	19,256	100.0%
Primary School	4,318	22.4%
Secondary School and Vocational School <sup>1</sup>	8,629	44.8%
High School <sup>2</sup>	3,859	20.0%
University <sup>3</sup>	2,450	12.7%

<sup>1</sup>Corresponds to the French Census category of *Collège, classes de 6e à 3e, CAP, BEP*.

<sup>2</sup>Corresponds to the French Census category of *Classes de seconde, première ou terminale*.

<sup>3</sup>Corresponds to the French Census category of *Études Supérieures (facultés, IUT, etc.)*

*Source:* INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.

As we see in Table 6.14, Haitians in the workforce in France are mostly classified by the census as laborers and employees. These sectors of the economy tend to have higher unemployment rates, which may explain the high rate of unemployment among Haitians in France. Table 6.15 shows that the unemployment rate of Haitians in France—28.4 percent—is more than twice that of native French, who have an unemployment rate of 12.5 percent (OECD 2002). Lower levels of human capital (education, work experience, French-language skills) likely contribute to the high unemployment rates among Haitians. But other contextual factors—such as inability to attain French residency or citizenship, lack of networks in labor markets and ethnic discrimination also help explain high levels of unemployment among foreigners in France (Simon 2003). Whereas in the United States self-employment could be seen as a way to avoid unemployment, few Haitians in France (133 people, or 1 percent of the total, economically active population) reported being self-employed as artisans, merchants or business owners.

As the French Census does not ask about income, other indicators frequently are used to assess socioeconomic status in France: family structure

*Table 6.14* Economic Activity of Haitians in France

	Total	Employed EAP	Unemployed EAP
Total	13,323	5,124	2,021
Agricultural Workers	-	-	-
Artisans, Merchants and Business Owners	133	93	40
Professionals and Higher Education	164	147	17
Intermediary Professions	464	378	86
Employees	4,685	3,389	1,296
Laborers	1,340	1,117	223
Retired	227	-	-
Others with No Professional Activity	6,310	-	359

*Source:* INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction

*Table 6.15* Unemployment Rates of Haitians in France

	Total	Percentage
Total Economically Active Population	13,319	100.0%
Employed Economically Active Population	9,542	71.6%
Unemployed Economically Active Population	3,777	28.4%

*Source:* INSEE (1999) Census. Author's Extraction.



within households, home ownership and household size. The majority of Haitians in France, 53.7 percent, lived in two-parent, married households. Only about 20 percent of Haitians lived in a home that their family owns; the rest lived in rented housing. The data I collected (tables available upon request) show that 32.1 percent of Haitians lived in homes between 70 and 100 square meters; another 34.4 percent lived in moderately small apartments of 40–70 square meters; and 17.6 percent lived in apartments of less than 40 square meters.

## IMMIGRANT ADAPTATION FROM THE GROUND LEVEL

The data I have presented in the preceding section indicate one problem it is difficult to imagine that Republicanism and *laïcité* can solve: the socioeconomic inequalities between Haitian immigrants and native French. Without some amelioration of socioeconomic inequality, it is difficult to imagine a seamless cultural integration of immigrants into French society. In fact, *la crise des banlieues* largely demonstrated how socioeconomic inequality, what the French might call social exclusion, can produce great social unrest.

My fieldwork among Haitian immigrants illustrates an alternative way of viewing immigrant adaptation. I show how Haitian immigrants arrive in France with cultural schemas formed in their countries of origin that they use to build institutions—both religious and secular—to support their adaptation. Quite in contrast to French Republicanism, which emphasizes individual ties to the state, I argue that religious beliefs and narratives provide a type of cultural mediation—or a source of meaning—and that religious and secular associations act as institutional mediators between Haitian immigrants and the French state.

### The Haitian Catholic Community of Paris

In Haiti, like many other developing countries, state structures and religious institutions play an important social role. Throughout Haiti's history, religion—whether that be Catholicism, Protestantism or Vodoun—has had a strong cultural and institutional influence on Haitian society (Nérestant 1994). In the 1970s, just as Haitian immigration to France accelerated, liberation theology inspired many Catholic social movements in Haiti that sought to engage politics and social issues. Given that many leaders of liberation theology movements challenged the authority of the Duvaliers and targeted for repression, it is not surprising to find some of these lay leaders and clergy now living in France.

As the number of Haitians living in France began to grow in the 1970s, Haitian immigrants began meeting informally for prayer. The original group was comprised of only twenty-five Haitian immigrants led by a French missionary priest who had served in Haiti. Several years later, in

1982, the Archdiocese of Paris created a mission to serve Haitians, called the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris. Although two smaller groups of Haitian Catholics also meet for prayer and mass in different *banlieue*, the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris represents the largest gathering of Haitian Catholics in France and is the only such group with a clergy assigned to lead the community.<sup>9</sup>

The founding of the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris illustrates one way that ordinary immigrants seek to transpose their cultural schemas into a new institutional environment. Republican ideology is largely top-down, emphasizing what the state does for immigrants, but such bottom-up efforts should also be incorporated into our theories of immigrant adaptation. The concept of mediating institutions helps bridge this gap between top-down and bottom-up approaches to immigrant adaptation. In order to go from cultural schemas to creating institutions, immigrants must interact in some way with the host environment. In this case, they did so with the support of perhaps the largest institution of civil society in France: the Catholic Church.

Relative to Protestant or non-Christian religions, Catholic immigrants in France benefit from the large network of Catholic institutions, but the institutional environment in France also limits the extent to which these Catholic institutions mediate for immigrants. Clergy and lay leaders of the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris were indeed concerned with social issues of the Haitian community in France, yet several factors limited their ability to effectively engage these issues. As we have seen, Haitians in France are dispersed throughout the Parisian *banlieue*. Thus, there is no central geographical location that unites Haitians. In addition, unlike other Haitian Catholic communities in Canada and the United States, the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris relies entirely on volunteer work from laypeople. The community even lacks funds to pay for a full-time chaplain and must rely on a Haitian priest studying in France to serve them.

Even if the institutional structures of Catholicism in the Haitian community of France appear to be weak, for the active members of the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris, their religious beliefs provided them with tools they used to create a narrative of hope in difficult circumstances. Members of the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris live in the *banlieue*, work in low-status positions and feel like French do not treat them as equals. They turn to their religious community as a source of dignity, identity and community. When attending mass or social programs at the Haitian Catholic Community, Haitians talk about their fear of being stopped and asked for legal papers. They also discuss the difficulties in finding work and housing and raising children.

Among the different types of organizations that provide a space for Haitians to gather, Haitians who come together at religious institutions come into contact with powerful cultural schemas they employ to generate narratives of hope. During my interviews, the Haitians frequently described their close relationship with God and talked in terms like “being bathed in

the faith.” When facing great difficulties, many people told me they turn to prayer. For example, one woman said, “Jesus is my role model. He’s my best friend. I am nothing without Jesus. I talk to him all day long, just like I am talking to you now.” Adherence to religious beliefs and attending an ethnic Catholic mission becomes a strategy for generating narratives of self-worth. During services at the Haitian Catholic Mission, readings from the Bible and sermons both emphasize that Christians in this world are on a “pilgrimage full of tears.” Church songs bemoan grief and loss while professing belief in a good God. In other words, Republicanism promises fraternity, equality and solidarity, but Haitians’ religious beliefs and practices provide them with a cultural schema that recognizes that such end goals are most often reached while enduring temporary suffering.

### **Haiti Development**

Although Haitians have founded approximately three hundred associations in Paris, most exist only on paper, as fewer than forty of them actually organize activities. Of the forty active Haitian associations, approximately twenty-five Haitian associations in France carry out projects in Haiti, not France (Glaude 2001). Of the approximately ten Haitian associations that sponsor activities in France, their primary concerns are to assist Haitian immigrants in three areas:

1. obtaining legal papers
2. finding employment
3. finding affordable and appropriate housing

Despite the best efforts of their leaders, these associations generally have little or no funding and must rely entirely on volunteer work. Although the leaders of associations all expressed doubts about their own ability to effectively support Haitians’ adaptation, the existence of these types of associations once again points to the importance of mediating institutions in immigrant adaptation.

Not coincidentally, the only Haitian association that has been able to work directly with Haitian immigrants and with the French state has close ties to the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris. One of the founding lay leaders of the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris, René Benjamin, founded Haiti Development in 1961 to train Haitians students in France to contribute to social, economic and political progress in Haiti upon their return. But, as more working-class Haitians began to arrive in Paris in the 1970s through the present, Benjamin changed the mission of his organization to support the adaptation of Haitians in France. Although the majority of the members of the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris are not professionals like Benjamin, the religious community was the only place I observed Haitian professionals like Benjamin and several others interacting with nonprofessional

Haitian immigrants on a regular basis. Thus, this religious community helps bridge the class divide between Haitians in France.

Haiti Development's top priority is a direct type of mediation: Benjamin and his small staff help about 150 Haitians monthly to apply to regularize their status in France, either as asylum seekers or, more recently, through the Private and Family Life Card. As the data presented earlier show, many Haitians in France do not have legal papers. To resolve this situation, they often rely on a trusted member of their own community to assist them in interacting with the French state. By providing Haiti Development with funding to assist asylum seekers in completing the paperwork necessary to file an asylum claim, the French state recognizes the need for this type of mediation. In addition to receiving state funding, Catholic Charities of France provides technical and financial assistance to Haiti Development to create programs in French-language training, AIDS prevention, family communication and cooking courses. In part because Haiti Development has obtained funding for its programs, Haiti Development is the only Haitian association in France with a permanent location, daytime office hours and a paid staff.

Part of the success of Haiti Development also comes from Benjamin's position as a leader of the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris. Participating in a church community allows Benjamin to develop relationships with newer arrivals that generate trust and solidarity. The example of Haiti Development shows how mediating institutions have both a cultural and an institutional element. The narratives generated in Haitian Catholics' religious practice provide a first step towards resolving their lack of social inclusion and Haiti Development connects members of the Haitian community to the French state. Even if French *laïcité* prevents most types of direct support for religious organizations, leaders of secular immigrant organizations may very well derive their legitimacy and trust in the immigrant community from their religious activities. As Benjamin shares in Haitians' religious practice while also directly dealing with the French state, he is a more effective mediator than other Haitian leaders who work exclusively in the secular realm.

## CONCLUSIONS

Given that most Haitians in Paris have arrived in the last thirty years, it is too soon to assess the success or failure of assimilation. For that reason, I focused only on the first steps in this process, such as attaining legal papers as well as finding housing and employment. The data I presented demonstrate that, not unlike other immigrant residents of the French *banlieue*, Haitians face social exclusion. First, as many as 20 percent of Haitians in France are undocumented and only 33 percent have French citizenship. Second, despite the fact that many Haitians in France have moderate or even high levels of education, Haitians in France have high rates of unemployment—nearly 30 percent. Third, Haitians live in suburbs of Paris that are

stratified by race and national origin; as a result, they have limited direct contact with French institutions.

Haitian associations—both churches and secular associations—attempt to mediate between Haitian immigrants and the French state but they have met with limited success. During my research, the Haitian Catholic Community of Paris was the only organization joining cultural schemas and institutional resources to effectively mediate between Haitian immigrants and the French state. As debates continue about the French model of immigrant integration, greater attention to immigrants' cultural schemas could provide new pathways for interaction between immigrants and the state that would promote goals of social inclusion and socioeconomic mobility. Adherence to Republicanism may continue to serve as a goal for immigrant adaptation, but greater attention is needed to the socioeconomic location of immigrants as they begin their journey towards adaptation and to how they form associations to support their social inclusion.

Moving beyond the ideology of French Republicanism requires recognition that the state is limited in its ability to provide meaning. Mediating institutions assist in immigrant adaptation both because they generate a space where individuals create meaning and they provide an institutional basis through which ordinary immigrants can have contact with the state. Acknowledging that immigrants create mediating institutions does not imply forgoing the goals of Republicanism or *laïcité* but, rather, paying close attention to immigrants themselves as agents of their own adaptation.

## NOTES

1. This chapter was previously published in 2008 in French as “Structures de médiation et intégration des immigrants haïtiens à Paris.” *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 24 (1): 80–114.
2. Readers interested in this cross-national comparison of mediating structures and immigrant integration should see my book *Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora* (2009).
3. *Institut National des Statistique et des Études Économiques*.
4. *Direction de la Population et des Migrations, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité*.
5. *Office de Migrations Internationales République Française, Service des Statistiques, des Études et de la Communication*.
6. *Office Française de la Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides*.
7. Dimitri Bechaq, a doctoral student in anthropology at l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales at the time, also collaborated in this data extraction.
8. In French, *le Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité*. I wish to thank André LeBon for his help in guiding me toward the data I needed.
9. Glaude (2001) estimates that there are at least forty Haitian Protestant churches in France that have between twenty-five and three hundred members. Because of time constraints, and because I was interested in comparing how religious institutions support immigrant adaptation in three contexts, I only conducted observation and interviews at the main Haitian Catholic Community of Paris and not Protestant churches or Vodou ceremonies.

## 7 The Uses of Diaspora among Haitians in Boston

*Regine O. Jackson*

In addition to the now well-known circumstances that constitute the Haitian diaspora, this chapter focuses on a number of local events that were pivotal in the formation of a diasporic Haitian community in Boston, MA (see Figure 7.1). Specifically, I describe four incidents: the 1974 assault on Yvon Jean-Louis in South Boston, Antoine Thurel's public suicide in 1987, the Merisier murders in Port-au-Prince (1997) and the nomination of Marie St. Fleur for lieutenant governor (2006). Emblems of the decades in which they occur, these events are convenient points of reference for charting the evolution of this community. Each incident also represents a key episode in what Ulf Hannerz calls "the drama of cities" (Hannerz 1980), marking a turning point in post-civil rights era race relations or a shift in how the Haitians living in Boston at the time negotiated belonging. The cases of Jean-Louis and St. Fleur will help set the stage.

### INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

A full twenty years after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the city of Boston erupted in racial violence over school desegregation. On the afternoon of October 7, 1974, a crowd of nearly five hundred students and protesters gathered at the intersection of Old Colony Avenue and Dorchester Streets, a few blocks away from the Patrick Gavin School. From the center of the mob Joseph Griffin, dressed in a checkered lumberjack coat despite the unseasonably warm 78-degree weather, incited a verbal attack against the police that slowed traffic to a near standstill. As thirty-three-year-old Yvon Jean-Louis drove toward the corner on his way to the laundry where his wife, Caridad, worked, a truck stopped in front of him. Griffin spotted him and called out, "Let's get the fuckin' nigger!"

Nearly forty people from the crowd ran to Jean-Louis' green Dodge, broke the windows and dragged him out by the collar. They pummeled him with their fists and the various makeshift weapons they carried: rocks, hockey sticks and bricks. Others vandalized the car. Griffin pulled out a hammer handle that was in his pocket and viciously clubbed Jean-Louis. When Jean-Louis tried to escape to the porch of a nearby house, the

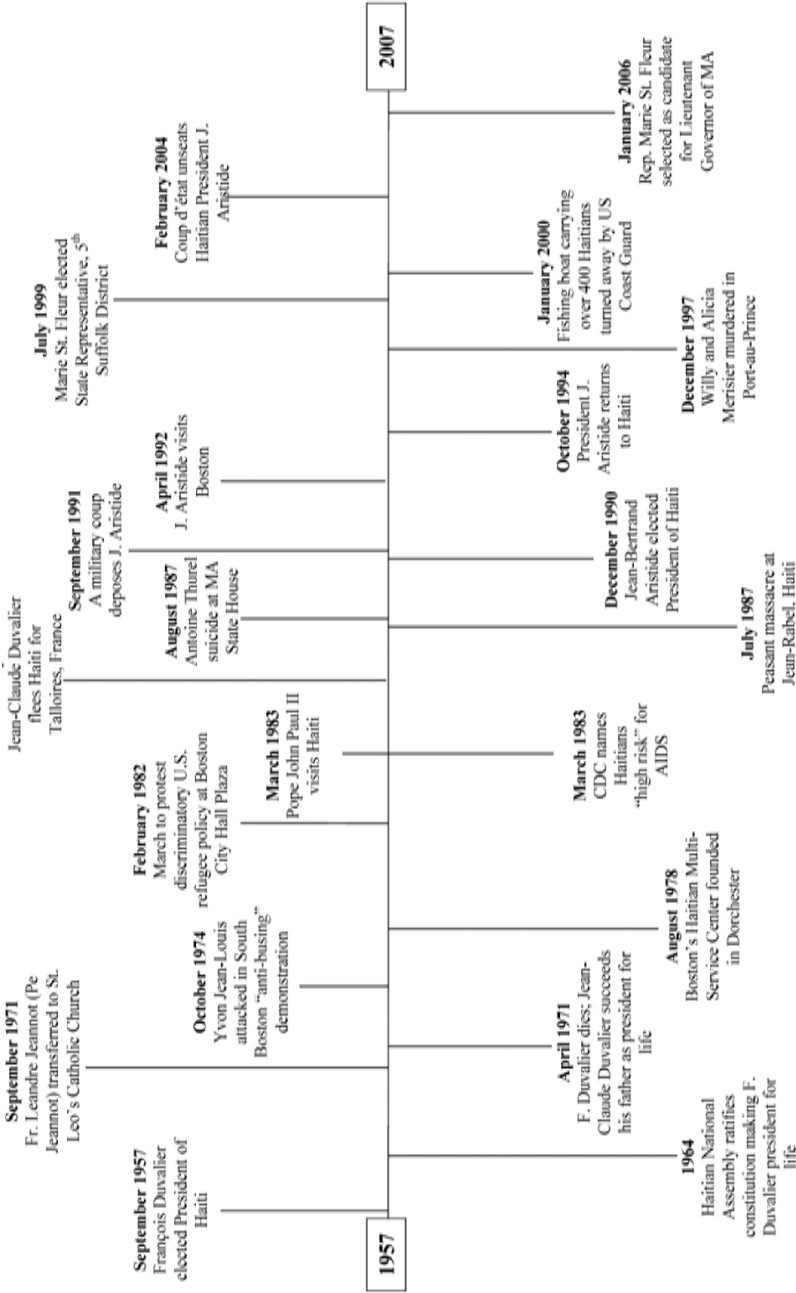


Figure 7.1 Key events for Boston's Haitian community.



*Image 7.1* Andre Yvon Jean-Louis in Boston, MA, on October 7, 1974. Courtesy of the *Boston Globe*/John Blanding/LANDOV.

attackers pursued him until a helmeted police officer fired warning shots to disperse the crowd.

The next day, the front page of the *Boston Globe* featured a photograph of a terrified, bloodied Jean-Louis clinging to a porch rail. Unlike the 1999 Amadou Diallo shooting in New York City where the victim's foreign birth preoccupied the media, initial accounts of the racial violence in Boston that day made no mention of the fact that Jean-Louis was Haitian. The *New York Times* described him as “a black who happened by”;<sup>1</sup> even the *Boston Globe* described the incident in broad racial terms: “Whites chase, beat black man.”<sup>2</sup> But throughout his attack, Jean-Louis shouted desperately trying to stave off the angry mob: “I’m not black! I’m not black!”

Whereas Jean-Louis would not repeat this statement again publicly, his claim of racial innocence was a major theme in the media coverage that followed the attack. He was quoted in several news stories: “I don’t know why they do this. If someone steals something—yes, but I was bothering no one. . . . I just don’t understand why this happens.”<sup>3</sup> In the seven years since he and his wife had moved to Boston, nothing remarkable separated the contiguous neighborhoods of North Dorchester, where he seemed welcome, and South Boston—or Southie, as it called by the locals. Insulated culturally and linguistically, and politically oriented toward Haiti, many of the Haitians I interviewed twenty-five years later claimed that they knew little about the struggles of African Americans.<sup>4</sup> But Jean-Louis’s (mis)



recognition by whites who felt that they were losing their turf made clear the unmarked racial boundaries in Boston and the racialization of Haitians as black. As one emerging community representative told a *Globe* reporter years later: “The first black almost killed in South Boston was a Haitian. From that incident, there was a turning point.”<sup>5</sup>

Over thirty years later, the media spotlight is on another Duvalier-era Haitian migrant who, as an illustration of how much Boston has changed and her position as one of the city’s “new blacks,” frequently reminds her audiences: “I’m black, I’m woman, I’m immigrant.” The scene is a press conference in a crowded Dorchester Boys and Girls Club on January 31, 2006. Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly, flanked on his right by a beaming State Representative Marie St. Fleur, just announced that he selected her to join him as a running mate in his race for governor of the state of Massachusetts. Although Reilly was a middle-aged white male and St. Fleur a forty-three-year-old naturalized Boston Haitian, both made speeches that emphasized modest roots and a bootstraps biography. Their remarks are worth quoting at length as they speak to a central theme of this chapter:



*Image 7.2* Dorchester, MA—Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly, democratic candidate for governor (right) and State Representative Marie St. Fleur (left) on January 31, 2006. Courtesy of the *Boston Globe*/Jim Davis/LANDOV.

Reilly: Marie and I come from different places, but our journeys have been very similar. Marie immigrated to this country from Haiti with her parents when she was seven years old. My parents left Ireland in search of a better life and settled in Springfield. Both of us share the same values. Both of us were fortunate to have families and communities that wouldn't let us fall behind.

St. Fleur's voice cracked a bit with emotion when she finally spoke:

I'm a kid whose parents slaved, worked hard, cleaned toilets, worked in nursing homes, cleaned classrooms. That's who I am, and they sacrificed so I could stand before you today. They spoke their broken English. They weren't understood. But they believed . . . in one thing: They believed in the possibility that their children would have much more than they had.

Some commentators suggested that St. Fleur's nomination was a divide-and-conquer strategy to destabilize the campaign of Deval Patrick, an African American. They were quick to point out that Reilly didn't have to choose a running mate because in Massachusetts the governor and lieutenant governor are elected separately. But many others saw her as a rising star in local politics. St. Fleur was the first Haitian to hold an elected seat in the state of Massachusetts and the nation's highest-ranking Haitian elected official.<sup>6</sup> Even those staunch Democrats who were supporting Patrick in the primary wavered: "With St. Fleur," one insider communicated in an e-mail, "Reilly just won."<sup>7</sup>

These two incidents work well as chronological bookends for an account of how local conditions shaped the Haitian experience in Boston in part because the Jean-Louis beating and St. Fleur's nomination for lieutenant governor help highlight the centrality of race and racism (in its overt and more subtle expressions) in the formation of Haitian diasporic communities (see Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002; Portes 1999; Waters 1999). Although Jean-Louis's attempt to assert the particularity of Haitianess did not spare him, St. Fleur seems to have advanced into that special interstitial status that exotic Others enjoy over the locals. But to read these incidents as examples of "distancing" or opportunism (somehow typical of Haitians) is to ignore the way racial consciousness and racial hierarchies are emplaced, how they are constituted in part through location (Appadurai 1996).

This chapter is concerned with the context (time and place) in which groups take up collective identities. I highlight the local experiences that led Haitians in Boston to imagine themselves as belonging to a diasporic community, as *Boston Haitians*. Whereas Brent Edwards (2001, 46) argues that diaspora is "taken up at a particular conjuncture in black scholarly discourse to do a particular kind of epistemological work," my analysis seeks to contribute to a body of scholarship that suggests the rhetoric of diaspora also accomplishes a range of functions when invoked by blacks in

the west (see Brown 2005; Glick Schiller and Caglar 2010; Keaton 2009). In this case, how and when Boston Haitians deployed diasporic consciousness had important consequences—some of which were unanticipated—for their relationships with African Americans and other blacks in the city.

## BOSTON, THEN AND NOW

“There is no little Haiti here, no Little San Juan or Kingston, either. Boston is not a minority city!”<sup>8</sup>

The city of Boston is located in one of the whitest metropolitan areas and racially homogenous regions in the United States. To fully appreciate the context Haitian immigrants encountered there, it is important to understand the city’s stubborn simultaneity regarding immigrants and racial minorities. The success story that characterized the Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrant experiences contrasts sharply with the history of antiblack social and economic exclusion that African Americans endured.

First, despite a history of immigration (see Handlin [1926] 1991), an “ethos of whiteness and racial homogeneity” (Abelmann and Lie 1995) has always characterized the city, in part because, relative to other metropolitan areas its size, the black population of Boston remained small. The number of blacks counted by the U.S. Census was never more than 2 percent of the total population in the nineteenth century, and it didn’t swell as a result of the Great Migration from the South after WWI (Horton and Horton 1999; Thernstrom 1973). African Americans did not begin moving to the city in large numbers until after World War II. And although they were met by a sizable Cape Verdean community (see Halter 1993) and a largely Anglophone West Indian community (see Johnson 2006), in 1950, blacks made up only 5 percent of Boston’s population.

Second, overt discrimination in many industries, including the semi-skilled jobs in manufacturing and transportation responsible for the upward mobility of the Irish and Italians, helps to explain the subordinated status of African Americans. Racial bias in hiring created enduring concentrations of blacks in what became known as “Negro jobs”: laborers, servants, janitors and porters (see Daniels 1914). Blacks were also excluded from the social networks that governed access to apprenticeship programs and job openings. In the construction trades, metalworking unions, railroad brotherhoods and other organizations, blacks were effectively barred from membership (Schneider 1997). Even the black upper class, described by Adelaide Cromwell (1994) as Boston’s “other Brahmins,” comprised a large number of postmen, Pullman porters and dining car waiters (see Thernstrom 1973).

The persistent residential clustering of blacks in certain neighborhoods, and their exclusion from others, was another salient aspect of the African-American experience in Boston. As Boston immigrants ascended the social ladder they were able to move away from the city and spurn African Americans as

neighbors, classmates and coworkers. But African Americans were blocked from middle-class neighborhoods by the city's obdurate racial boundaries. Over time, Boston became one of the most segregated metropolitan areas its size (Massey and Denton 1993).

Finally, African Americans were marginalized in city politics. This is not to suggest that blacks in Boston were politically inactive; in fact, they were key players in the country's struggle for independence, the abolition of slavery and local school desegregation efforts. However, they were largely excluded from the political machine that eventually unseated the Yankee establishment and the scholarly literature includes very few nuanced accounts that conceptualize political participation and mobilization in ways that shed light on the various modes of African-American involvement (one notable exception is Theoharris 2001).

### **Boston Today**

Boston has changed tremendously in the past fifty years. The minority population tripled between 1950 and 1970 (from 5 percent to 18 percent) and then doubled again (to 40.9 percent by 1990) (O'Brien 1982, 7; Bluestone and Stevenson 2000, 25, fig. 2.1). Reports based on the 2000 census announced that Boston reached "majority minority" status: with blacks, Hispanics and Asians constituting 50.5 percent of inner-city residents (Perkins, Goetze and Lui 2001). Demographers estimate that figure is now up to 55 percent.

At the same time, the black population became more diverse, largely as a result of the changes in immigration legislation inspired by the civil rights movement. Of blacks living in Boston in 1970, only 6 percent were foreign born (Thernstrom 1973, 181, table 8.3). In the past twenty-five years, however, much of the growth in the Greater Boston metropolitan area's black population was the result of immigration from Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and Montserrat. By 1990, nearly 40 percent of Boston's black population was foreign-born (Bluestone and Stevenson 2000, 40).

It is worth noting, however, that the newly acquired "majority minority" designation refers only to the city of Boston, with much less diversity in the 126 surrounding communities (McArdle 2002). Boston suburbs are over 90 percent white; and at a finer level of geography within the city limits, e.g., by neighborhood, the minority proportion of the population looks very different.<sup>9</sup> The vast majority of blacks live in segregated communities where the majority of their neighbors are black. Moreover, the significance of when a city or state becomes "majority minority" is not what it implies demographically (which is somewhat vague); it is important because of the assumption that this statistic will represent a political turning point.

However, despite significant white flight and a growing black middle class, Boston has largely resisted the post-civil rights movement urban trend of ceding political leadership to minorities. Whites still exercise a great deal of influence over local politics. The city has never elected an

African-American mayor and continues to be perceived as a place where blacks cannot rise to positions of power. As one of my respondents put it:

Boston is not like Atlanta or DC where blacks are really in the mainstream. It's a different place.

These place factors (the city's history of immigration, political economies and the dominant culture or "ethos") have influenced how Haitians construct a sense of community, including how they make a living, where they settle, how and with whom they forge social relations, the kinds of organizations they develop and—as I describe in the next section—the language they use to narrate their experiences.

## BOSTON HAITIANS

There are more Haitians living in Boston than in Cap Haitien, the second largest city in Haiti (Laguerre 1998). And unlike New York or Miami, Haitians constitute over 50 percent of Boston's West Indians. Census 2000 suggests that there were less than fifty thousand persons of Haitian ancestry in the state of Massachusetts. By the time I completed my fieldwork, the Current Population Survey reported that the community had grown to 60,630 in 2004. However, the official numbers, as well as those provided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, are widely regarded as gross underestimates.<sup>10</sup> Part of the reason is that the growth of the Haitian community in Boston is a function of both internal and international migration and the former is more difficult to gauge given the nature of census migration data. In addition, Hayes (2001) estimates that almost half the Haitian immigrants in Boston are undocumented; as a result, they take great pains to remain invisible believing: "if they can be counted, they can be deported" (7). Whereas the exact size of the population is unknown, local community leaders and consulate officials estimate that the number of Haitians (including the undocumented, immigrant and post-immigrant generations) in Massachusetts is closer to seventy-five or one hundred thousand residents.

The Boston metropolitan area first appeared among the three largest communities of Haitians in the United States in the 1980s. But Haitians have a longer history in the region than is often acknowledged.<sup>11</sup> In fact, as some respondents confirmed, the process of network migration to Boston originated with connections formed during the U.S. occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934 (see Reid 1939; Verna 2005) and Haiti's golden age of tourism (see Plummer 1990, 58–59). Among the immigrants in my case study, the first Haitians came in the 1950s. According to one early settler:

My uncle met a man from Boston in Haiti who had traveled to Haiti several times in the 1950s. He told him about the Boston Conservatory

of Music. I was planning to go to New York to teach but, almost by chance, I came to Boston instead.

The point to emphasize here is that the migrants did not come en masse; and because the community developed slowly, Boston Haitians include a mix of old and new Haitian nationals, a large and varied second generation (many of whom were born and raised in Boston), as well as a budding third generation of Haitian (African) American and Haitian Cape Verden youth (see Jackson 2007b). A cross section of Haitian society migrated to the Boston metropolitan area in four waves: pre-1965; 1965–1979; 1980–1991; and 1992–present. Not only did they leave different situations in Haiti, but they also encountered distinct local contexts in Boston.

### **“Some of us are Boeing people”**

At first, just a few Haitian families—mostly middle-class intellectuals, artisans and skilled professionals—settled in Boston. Having fled Haiti after a period of mounting instability (culminating in the 1961 uncontested “reelection” of François Duvalier as president for life), they planned to lay in wait in the States. As one Haitian activist explained:

Duvalier had “macoutized” the education system because he had “macoutized” higher education. In order to attend the State University, one had to pledge allegiance to the government. In the 1960s, faculty and university student associations organized the first wave of resistance against the dictatorship. Professors had to flee, or risk jail or death. The university, where people are trained to become the think tank for the country, began to experience a shortage of professors, and families who could afford it made arrangements to send their children to study abroad.

Given the concentration of colleges and universities in the metropolitan area, many of the earliest arrivals ventured to Boston to take advantage of advanced training and job opportunities in higher education, engineering and medicine. One respondent, who came to Boston on an Institute of International Education Fellowship (Fulbright) in 1961, recalled:

There were about five Haitian families and a scattering of individuals, most of us connected to the universities, when I arrived. A few of us studied literature others were in the sciences or music but we came together whenever we could.

In addition to Haitian students and professionals, others came as domestic servants for wealthy American families or to work in the textile industry. This wave included a number of “illegals” in the sense that some migrants

entered the United States using a tourist, student or other temporary visa that they subsequently violated:

I came in 1963 under an official passport. Tourist visa. Legal. My visa expired, and I stayed on illegally. It was the sixties. In '68, the U.S. was looking for people to serve in Vietnam. If you were a young man willing to serve, you could join. So I joined the military and while in the military, I worked out my papers. But I still considered myself in exile.

Although they planted the seeds for the community that exists today, my respondents who migrated in this early period projected a distinct sojourner mentality and did not have assimilation into American society and culture as a goal. They were living with *yon pye anndan*, *yon pye deyò* (one foot inside, one foot outside). One respondent recalled moving from one apartment to the next because he never expected to be there long. Others were more likely to invest in real estate in Haiti than in Boston, in a house intended as a retirement home or a place for family to stay when visiting the island. A growing number of migrants in Haiti from this wave have since relocated to their hometowns of Jacmel, Gonaives or Petionville. Not only was the United States “not home,” but Boston offered little community, in the sense of common interests and frequent interactions. The concept of diaspora would (later) offer a way for migrants to imagine a coherence in the experience of dispersal and to minimize the differences among them. Recalling this period before a discernible Haitian colony took shape, one respondent noted:

Back then meeting another Haitian [in Boston] was a miracle. You had to go to the Tropical Market near Dudley Station if you wanted to see another Haitian. . . . New York used to have a monopoly on communication to Haiti. The main newspapers, *Haiti Observateur* and *Haiti Progres*, were published in New York. There were no direct flights from Boston to Haiti—you had to stop in New York or Miami first!

By the 1970s, the second era of the Duvalier dictatorship, the registered population of Haitians in Massachusetts doubled. The United States under Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon had resumed aid to Haiti, which projected an image of political stability and economic recovery. Foreign companies, mainly from the United States, were installing plants in Haiti, bauxite and copper production increased and tourism nearly doubled (Dupuy 2007). As a result, the majority from the second wave were secondary migrants from other North American cities—primarily New York, Miami and Montréal.

Middle-class Haitians flocked to the city in search of affordable housing and to take advantage of race-based programs in higher education and white-collar job growth. According to one respondent:

These Haitians were the beneficiaries of attempts to hire more blacks in the sciences. There weren't many blacks in some of the fields. For

example, when General Electric and other engineering firms were here, Haitians were hired at a very high rate. Haitian intellectuals found jobs in Black Studies programs.

Although affirmative action programs established at Boston College (1973), the Boston Police Department (1974) and Bank of Boston (1978), among others, proved to be rather short-lived, they were significant to the economic incorporation of Haitians in this formative period. Many second-wave migrants were working-class strivers whose passport to the (lower) middle class were the jobs, neighborhoods and local institutions that middle-class Americans fled. The two- and three-decker homes widely available in Dorchester for \$24,000 to \$26,000 in the 1970s, created a new class of Haitian landlords and gave Haitian renters a low-cost alternative to public housing.<sup>12</sup> Three-deckers represented the good life to Haitian immigrants coming from New York and Montréal, approximating independent, home-owning, middle-class Americans.

As the community grew, becoming more visible to white Bostonians, questions of assimilation arose. The expectation that Haitian immigrants would “become black American” and take up the concerns of the African-American community accompanied the attention they received in the local media in the 1970s (see Hapgood and Woods 1971). Some younger Haitians who were of college age at the time were already actively involved in the Black Power movement. Marie St. Fleur recalls:

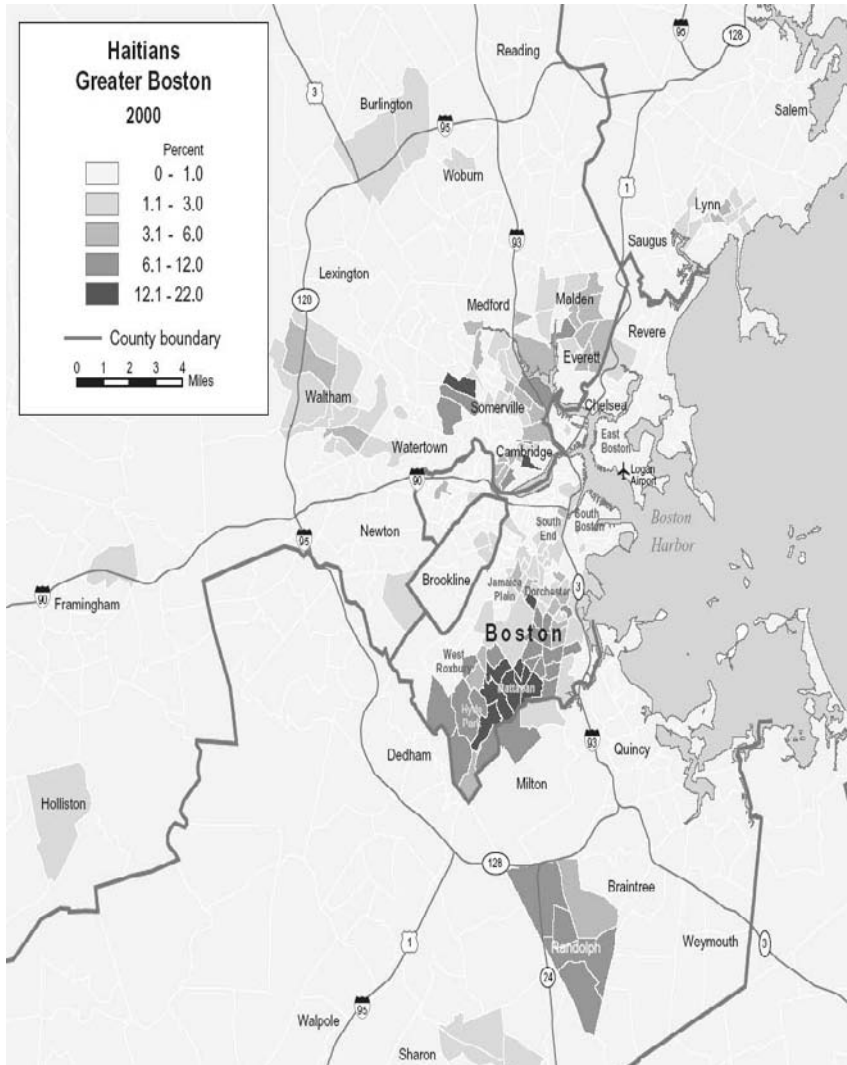
I remember my cousins who were studying at Boston University in the early 1970s wearing their dashikis and afros, joining in the struggle to help black Americans solidify their economic, social and political identity here in the U.S. There wasn't much talk about being Haitian then.

However, as tensions between the city's native white and black populations peaked during the battles over busing and desegregation, white Bostonians seemed more likely to embrace what they considered good blacks—formally educated, socially conservative, black professionals—favoring them as employees or tenants. In this context, members of the emerging leadership class were insistent on distinguishing themselves from African Americans, on the grounds of socioeconomic status as well as culture. This positioning was publicly marked by one of the first local celebrations of Haitian Flag Day in May 1974—a boisterous procession of cars along Blue Hill Avenue in Dorchester. Revelers honked their horns and boldly displayed the blue and red anti-Duvalier flag.

Religion and language also provided especially effective outlets for performing their difference from other blacks. The early migrants were mostly Catholic, and high levels of religious participation served to distinguish Haitian immigrants from the largely Protestant African-American population in Boston, as well as the Episcopalian West Indians. At first, they worshipped in predominantly Irish Catholic or Italian-American parishes; the



weekly one o'clock French service at St. Leo's was the closest thing to a Haitian church in the city. But over time, three Catholic churches in Dorchester and Mattapan—St. Leo, St. Matthew and St. Angela—became the nodes for the nascent Haitian community (Jackson 2007a). The founding of the Haitian Multi-Service Center in 1978 at St. Leo's by community leaders seeking to address the problem of linguistic isolation signaled not only their claim to these religious institutions but also to a distinctive identity, apart



Map 7.1 Haitians in Greater Boston, 2000.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000; Allen and Turner (2004).

from African Americans. For instance, a Haitian businessman interviewed by the *Globe* said:

Haitians do not have an identity problem. We know who we are. The American Negro does have a problem but we are distinct. We have our own culture.<sup>13</sup>

The public speech of early Haitian leaders included frequent recitations of the low numbers of Haitians on the welfare rolls and exhortations of their strong belief in education. Middle-class Haitians aggravated this situation with seemingly innocuous decisions: single men traveled back to the island or to other diasporic sites in search of a suitable spouse; employees recommended other Haitians for available job openings; parents uncritically accepted and passed on to their children denigrating characterizations of African Americans. One of my respondents explained his reluctance to participate in the student demonstrations at Northeastern University following Jean-Louis's nearly fatal experience: "We were not here to make trouble . . . only to make money and have a better life."

One community leader I interviewed recalled that some Haitians also deliberately chose to settle in neighborhoods with few African Americans in order to distance themselves from American blacks:

In the late sixties, Washington Street was almost completely white. Some Haitians had this notion that they didn't want to live close to black people. African Americans were not necessarily established in some of the communities where pockets of Haitian settlements developed.

Mattapan, the center of the Haitian community, is a notable example; although 96 percent of Mattapan residents are racial minorities today, it was less than 10 percent black when Haitians began migrating to the area in 1960. A full discussion of the variety of the specific neighborhood contexts in which different Haitians live in Massachusetts is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2 for a summary).

Still, it is worth noting that when Boston Haitians—across the socio-economic spectrum—began to expand the racial boundaries of the city in the 1970s, they enjoyed a number of material and symbolic advantages over African Americans. Their residential choices simultaneously increased their exposure to other groups, especially middle-class whites, and encouraged the concentration of Haitians in certain parts of the city—Dorchester and Mattapan are important examples. In this way, the very location of Haitian settlement in Boston, outside the historically black neighborhood of Roxbury, occasioned a narrative of diasporic uprooting and living outside the realm of American blackness.

Although the discursive resources were not yet in place for the articulation of a diasporic community, especially after the Jean-Louis incident in 1974, the

*Table 7.1* Characteristics of Top Massachusetts Places Where Haitians Reside, 2000

Social Context of Massachusetts Cities and Towns with Highest Number of Haitian Residents, 2000									
	Total Population	% Black/ African American*	% Minority	% Foreign-born	% Home Owners	% College Educated	Median-Household Income (\$\$)	% Poor	
Boston city	589,141	24.0	50.5	25.8	32.2	35.6	39,629	15.3	
Brockton	94,304	16.5	42.5	18.4	54.5	14.0	39,507	12.1	
Cambridge	101,355	11.5	35.4	25.9	32.2	65.1	47,979	8.7	
Somerville	77,478	6.1	27.4	29.3	30.6	40.6	46,315	8.4	
Randolph	30,997	20.6	38.6	21.6	72.3	26.6	55,255	2.5	
Malden	56,340	7.9	33.4	25.7	43.3	26.2	45,654	6.6	
Everett	38,037	6.0	24.9	21.9	41.5	14.7	40,661	9.2	
Medford	55,765	5.8	15.0	16.2	58.7	31.7	52,476	4.1	
Waltham	59,226	4.0	22.1	20.2	40.6	38.4	54,010	3.6	
Lynn	89,122	9.1	37.8	22.8	45.6	16.4	37,364	13.2	
Milton	26,062	10.1	15.4	10.0	84.2	52.2	78,985	1.6	

\*Black alone, not Hispanic.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4.

Table 7.2 Characteristics of Haitians in Massachusetts by Place, 2000

Characteristics of People of Haitian Ancestry in Areas of Highest Concentration in MA, 2000										
	Total	% of Total Haitians in MA	% of Black Pop*	% Foreign-Born	% Home Owners	% College Educated	% Unemployed	Median-Household Income(\$)	% Poor	
Massachusetts	43,576	100.0	13.9	66.6	31.0	15.4	5.0	39,300	14.1	
Boston city	18,979	43.6	13.9	69.1	28.8	11.8	5.0	35,159	17.7	
Brockton	4,720	10.8	30.8	73.6	42.1	15.9	4.7	40,156	12.9	
Cambridge	3,265	7.5	28.0	68.4	5.5	12.6	4.4	28,735	16.8	
Somerville	2,168	5.0	45.6	67.5	17.2	14.7	8.2	40,539	13.2	
Randolph	2,060	4.7	32.3	65.3	66.3	28.5	5.8	53,603	1.8	
Malden	1,508	3.5	33.9	70.6	41.0	17.5	3.0	46,612	5.5	
Everett	1,208	2.8	53.2	69.1	31.9	10.5	3.7	40,132	16.8	
Medford	1,112	2.6	34.3	75.9	29.2	14.3	2.2	36,563	11.4	
Waltham	977	2.2	41.7	58.5	23.2	15.5	0.0	46,563	2.0	
Lynn	926	2.1	11.4	65.0	28.8	14.2	6.9	42,656	19.6	
Milton	574	1.3	21.8	65.5	79.2	33.3	2.2	86,230	0.0	
Other**	6,079	13.9	-	56.6	-	-	-	-	-	

\*Black alone, not Hispanic.

\*\*Refers to the remainder of persons of Haitian ancestry (living outside the above places) in the state of Massachusetts.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4.

idea of diaspora took the form of a stance, or a posture, that could be used to challenge the meaning of American racial categories and to differentiate Haitians from African Americans and other blacks in Boston. By emphasizing a brand Haitian exceptionalism, including qualities in “hardworking and law-abiding” Haitians that were not typically associated with blackness, early settlers used the notion of a Haitian diaspora to structure opportunities.

### The Crucial Decade

The next phase of Haitian migration to Boston coincided with what has become known as the “Massachusetts miracle”—a period of economic expansion and growth in the 1980s. Employment expanded so quickly in Boston that joblessness fell to one of the lowest levels in the country. The manufacturing job base continued to erode, but white-collar occupations boomed. The employment trend shifted toward professional and service occupations and away from manufacturing and transportation.<sup>14</sup> As a result, Haitian migration shifted from established destinations in Miami, New York and Montréal. Boston was evolving from a secondary to primary destination in the United States, with more and more migrants coming directly from Haiti. And it became clear that Haitians were not just passing through. According to one respondent:

Boston was a small, cosmopolitan city with jobs available. People would tell each other: Don’t go to Miami, don’t go to New York—Boston have [*sic*] plenty jobs!

Once the twenty-nine years of dictatorship under the Duvaliers ended in 1986, older members of the community once again entertained the idea of returning to Haiti. The vast majority, however, turned their attention inward to the Haitians in the city and the New England region. In some cases, this took the form of mutual aid organizations designed to serve the Boston Haitian community that also took on a diasporic dimension. Among them, the Center for Community Health, Education, and Research (CCHER) was founded in 1987 as a community response to the AIDS crisis. The *Asosiyasyon Fanm Ayisyen nan Boston* (AFAB; Association of Haitian Women in Boston), also in Dorchester, was founded in 1988 with a decidedly feminist mission to advocate for Haitian women. The leaders of the new social service agencies served as de facto political representatives, given the absence of Haitian elected officials. According to one activist:

*Mwen vin wè ke li enpòtan pou nou oganizay. Se nan sèl fason sa a sèlman nou kapab reyisi. Se youn nan bagay ki dwe fèt nan kominote a, pou n kapab leve Ayisyen, pou n kapab pase twofe a. Sa k konnen? N a kanpe pou kont pa n; n a gen yon kominote solid, n a ka fè yon seri bagay pou tèt nou.*

[I came to see that it is important for us to organize. That is the only way we will ever achieve. It is the one thing that should be done in the community, for us to be able to elevate Haitians, for us to pass the trophy. Who knows? We'll stand on our own; we'll have a community that is solid, we'll be able do a series of things for ourselves.]

At the same time, these institutions were responses to the characterization of Haitians as economic, as opposed to political, migrants. As the leadership was also drawn from Haitian communities in New York City and Miami, Boston Haitians signaled not only the community's self-sufficiency, but the existence of the necessary human capital *within* the diaspora to address common problems.

Keep in mind that Haitians were making national headlines with the media coverage of desperate asylum seekers washing up on Florida's shores, the designation of Haitians as AIDS carriers by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)<sup>15</sup> and the ousting of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. In the popular imagination, Haitians came to be regarded as impoverished, AIDS-infested "boat people." The inclusion of Haitians as an AIDS risk group, in particular, was the cause of considerable controversy. Medical professionals and researchers throughout the diaspora accused the CDC of racism and Haiti suffered a serious blow to its tourism industry. Boston Haitians complained of being publicly insulted, denied jobs, medical assistance and apartments. As in other diasporic communities, they were stigmatized as part of a "4-H club" at risk for AIDS: homosexuals, hookers, heroin addicts and Haitians. One respondent traveled all the way to Ottawa, Canada, to join a public protest of the Red Cross advisory prohibiting Haitians from donating blood; he described the period as transformative:

*Li lè pou nou mete tèt ansanm, pou kòmanse travay tou* (It was time for us to put our heads together, for us to get to work). . . . As a Haitian, even if your focus was personal and internal, the attitude had to change. We were the leading story on the nightly news and in the morning newspaper.<sup>16</sup>

More generally, Haiti was portrayed as a primitive place of ignorance, poverty, and violence—a country preoccupied with "voodoo" and zombies. The following comment captured the sentiment shared by many who lived in Boston during the 1980s:

When I first came to Boston, many people didn't know where Haiti was. They thought I was saying 'Tahiti.' Then, almost overnight, things changed. Not only do they know Haiti from Tahiti, Haiti is the only country with a surname: 'The Poorest Country in the Western Hemisphere!'

In an attempt to counter these rampant stereotypes and replace them with positive images of Haiti and Haitian culture, structurally incorporated Haitians (those who had frequent interactions with mainstream Americans and other non-Haitian groups) acted as “cultural ambassadors.” Haitian history, art, cuisine and traditional and popular music were venerated by community members. Haitian spokesmen surfaced who never missed an opportunity to mention that Haiti was “the first independent black republic” or that although the country is poor, “Haiti is rich in culture.” Boston became a site of Kreyòl activism, in part because academics and other educators politicized the move to adopt Kreyòl as the language of instruction in bilingual classrooms in the early 1980s. Grassroots organizers and scholars—and others who identified themselves as “patriots”—affirmed their involvement with Haiti’s ancestral religion and worked to bring about greater respect for Vodou. This was particularly significant given the predominance of Catholicism among the early arrivals. One respondent, who embarked on lecture series to achieve this goal, recalled:

Whenever you said the word . . . people have seen images of barbarian blacks, you know, running out and in search for blood or, uh, looking for bad things to do. And also they’ve seen the images of people sticking needles to voodoo dolls. This—those are the kinds of images that you get whenever the word “voodoo” is spoken of. And my idea of doing a lecture on Vodou was to try to enlighten people as to what the thing is.

During the 1980s, ethnic entrepreneurs started new businesses (see Halter 1995); and the growing presence of Haitians mandated a culturally and linguistically proficient labor force in several mainstream occupations ranging from doctors, lawyers, social workers, ESL teachers and policemen to EMS technicians, translators and service providers. Haitians were making inroads into professions that historically excluded African Americans.

In addition, Boston began to serve as a cultural destination for other New England Haitians, especially individuals and families who subsequently settled in western Massachusetts, New Hampshire or Rhode Island. They would come to Mattapan and Dorchester in search of hard to find ingredients for Haitian foods and specialty items such as cakes and pastries. They came to drop off duct-taped cardboard boxes or carefully wrapped packages destined for family in Haiti via a friend’s suitcase, or to retrieve cassettes or videotapes sent from home. By the end of the decade, *konpa* bands such as Tabou Combo, System Band, Tropicana or the Boston-based Volo Volo played to crowds comprising an assortment of New England Haitians. Boston became a site for Haitian cultural recreation. Material goods, news, gossip and other cultural products transported from Haiti were reexported to the various localities of the diaspora through interaction in the city. According to one activist, the community had reached a high point:

The community is bigger than just Boston. We are at a crossroads as a people. We have the best minds, the energy, the enforcement of parents, etc. We work hard, we challenge our children. We're building institutions to keep some culture alive—churches, institutions looking at health concerns. We're for the first time celebrating Haitian Creole! *Moun a'p pale Kreyòl!* (People are speaking Kreyòl!)

At the same time, African Americans in the city recognized that demographically, blacks were in a position to remedy the critical mass obstacle to fuller political representation. In 1983, Mel King, born in the South End to West Indian parents, became the first black candidate in Boston history to win one of the two spots on the final election ballot for mayor. Although he lost to Ray Flynn by a two-to-one margin, three black Massachusetts state representatives from Boston were elected into office in the aftermath: Byron Rushing in 1983, Gloria Fox in 1985 and Shirley Owens-Hicks in 1987.

Following King's failed mayoral bid, however, the strategy of many African Americans working on the grassroots level shifted to one of withdrawal from the Boston power structure, rather than assimilation into it. Curtis Davis and Andrew Jones led a campaign to create an independent municipality known as Mandela, Massachusetts, out of the 12.5 square miles of predominately black neighborhoods in and around Roxbury. The referenda, included on ballots in both 1986 and 1988, were unequivocally defeated at the polls.

These events failed to marshal Haitian support in Boston, but not because Haitians considered themselves sojourners as in previous years. The institutional infrastructure for a permanent community was in place and Haitian transmigrants were more likely to seek American citizenship in the 1980s than ever before. However, the development of stereotypes locally, U.S. foreign policy in Haiti and distress over friends and family "at home" eclipsed attention to racial discrimination in Boston. The case of Antoine Thurel, a fifty-six-year-old Haitian cabdriver who lived on Norfolk Street, dramatically illustrates the prevailing sensibility during this time.

On Monday, August 31, 1987, shortly before seven in the morning, Thurel doused himself with gasoline and set himself on fire with a cigarette lighter on the steps of the Massachusetts State House. According to newspaper accounts of the event, he died on the scene, in plain view of commuters on their way to work. In a letter and on several handwritten placards in French found near his body, Thurel wrote: "Because of many difficulties and my family responsibilities, I want to offer myself in holocaust for the complete liberation of my country." The sign also condemned "the C.N.G. Macoute" and "the soldiers of death paid by the U.S.," and it concluded: "May Father Aristide live in Haiti. May Haiti live for the New Liberation."<sup>17</sup> The letter did not mention specifically the July 23 massacre of over two hundred peasants demonstrating for land redistribution in the town of Jean-Rabel in northwestern Haiti, but family and friends said Thurel was distraught over the alleged harassment



of his daughter by police and an attack on Reverend Aristide, Reverend Jean-Marie Vincent and five other priests who were celebrating a mass for victims of the massacre.

According to his wife, Clementine, and his adult son, Peguy, Thurel, who moved to Boston in 1970, was not particularly politically active, but the public nature of his suicide—in the high-traffic business district during the morning rush hour—suggests the political nature of the act. That Friday, September 4, 1987, nearly one hundred people gathered on the scene for a press conference in order to correct what some Haitians considered a media distortion: the implication that Thurel committed suicide because he was depressed. They insisted that Thurel was a martyr whose death was aimed at increasing public awareness of conditions in Haiti where the transitional military council was using violence to repress political protests. His son, twenty-seven years old at the time, said in an interview at the scene: “When I realized what my father did, I knew that he had done something that will have a significance for all Haitians. It was not a suicide. . . . It was a sacrifice.”<sup>18</sup> Activists were also quite vocal in criticizing the U.S. government for backing the Duvalier regime and for its more recent support of Lieutenant General Henri Namphy, charging that the United States uses “the excuse of communism” to obstruct real progress in Haiti. According to one of my own respondents:

Mr. Thurel wanted to say that it is incredible that we keep talking about other places and nothing is done for Haiti.

Over two thousand mourners gathered at his funeral at the Church of God in Christ on Fesenden Street in Mattapan.<sup>19</sup> They wore red and blue armbands, and men outside sold buttons reading: “I offer myself in holocaust for the complete liberation of Haiti,” echoing Thurel’s words; over fifty people spoke. The tragedy caught the attention of Boston Mayor Ray Flynn, who did not attend the three-hour funeral in its entirety, but stopped in to offer condolences to the family and to the community in brief remarks. Halfway through the service, an African-American neighbor of Thurel’s who was there to offer support to his widow made her way past the crowd to sit outside the church. She told the *Boston Globe* reporter covering the funeral: “I don’t understand Creole, and I also think this is too political.”<sup>20</sup> Dozens of taxi drivers tailed the pedestrian members of the funeral procession to Forest Hills Cemetery. In a scene reminiscent of civil rights marchers in the southern United States, the mourners stopped to sing in front of Thurel’s house, chanted in Kreyòl and carried banners and signs with political slogans: “U.S. Imperialism out of Haiti” and “Support the Revolution from Haiti to South Africa.”

If it was ever accurate, the notion that Boston Haitians were “a very silent minority”—principally sojourners waiting for the opportunity to return to their homeland—began to yield after Thurel’s self-immolation. Home ownership, family sponsorships and naturalization rates increased—as did diasporic political activity. According to one frequent protester:

Ever since 1983, when Pope John Paul II visited Haiti and declared that ‘Something must change here,’ Haitians began to see themselves differently. Even in Boston, they heard his call for reform, more concern among the Haitian bourgeoisie for the masses and for action!

The demonstrations in the latter half of 1987, however, were only partly motivated by Thurel’s death; Haitians had been holding press conferences and weekly marches in front of the office of the consulate since June. Even those who were then only children recalled the incident as a time when Haitian politics, especially the rumors of violence by the post-Duvalier interim government and the elections scheduled for November 1987, had their parents glued to the nightly news. Some scoured several newspapers a day in search of updates on Haiti (see Théodore-Pharel 2001).

I refer to this period as the crucial decade because amid the numerous antiapartheid protests—most notably at Brandeis University (February 1987) and Harvard University’s Fogg Art Museum (September and November 1987)—and increased political participation on the local level among African Americans, the Thurel immolation served as a homing device (Cohen 1999) demarcating the ambit of political concerns among Boston’s Haitian community. It became clear that Haitian nationalism could operate at a distance (see Glick Schiller and Fournon 2001) and that the local stage of Boston was a useful platform for calling attention to affairs at “home” (Haiti). The introduction of Haitian media—specifically, radio and television programs—and business ventures provided important linkages to the economic, political and social life of other Haitians in the diaspora and on the island for transmigrants during this wave. By the time *Tele Diaspora* began broadcasting in 1991 with thirty minutes of programming, the numbers of voluntary associations, community service organizations, churches, cultural organizations and radio and television programs alone challenged the idea that Haitians perceived the dominant minority discourse as a viable one for their concerns.

### **One-way ticket**

The most recent Haitian arrivals come to Boston as a result of immigration policy provisions that favor family reunification and refugee admissions. These means of entry have produced more economic disparity in the community—adding a large number of janitors, nursing assistants and low-wage, unskilled service workers to the occupational profile—as well as diversity in terms of religion and origins in Haiti. This group includes many with rural backgrounds who, in stark contrast to the previous migrants, have little to no previous migration experience. They also arrive with a history of extensive and prolonged exposure to violence.<sup>21</sup>

Whereas earlier waves describe the pull of jobs and access to education in Boston, several Haitians I interviewed were pushed by successive political conflicts in Haiti during the coup years, 1991–1994. Because of the

persistent human rights abuses during this period—arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, rape and torture—they could not imagine going back to live in Haiti. As one respondent put it: “When you come this way [as a refugee], it’s a one-way ticket.” Boston was more than a place to make money; for refugees and other recent arrivals, Boston was the hub of Haitian cultural and political activity, of both primary and inter-diasporic relations (see Laguerre 1998). According to one respondent, an immigrant from *L’Asile (Lazile)*, Haiti, who became active in fundraising to bring electricity, running water and a library to her hometown:

I love my country, and I love my hometown. Before I came here, I said that if I can ever find the way to help Haiti, and help my hometown, I will never stop doing that . . . But I can only go back in my dreams now.

This shift in perspective was most apparent after two longtime Mattapan residents were murdered in Port-au-Prince. Although the Merisier deaths resembled others reported in the press since the coup years involving Haitians from New York or Miami targeted by thieves when they visited Haiti, the case represented a watershed moment for Boston Haitians who still nurtured dreams of return to their native land.

Willy and Alicia Merisier came to Boston in 1967 and, once he became a permanent resident and she a U.S. citizen, they helped numerous family members to migrate as well. They temporarily housed almost unending waves of newly arrived relatives in their basement apartment. Mr. Merisier was retired at the time of his death, but for several decades he worked for the shipping department at General Electric packing jet engines. Since 1982, Alicia had worked in health care at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. They raised a family in a modest three-bedroom home on a quiet, dead-end street just blocks away from Mattapan Square. They worshipped regularly at St. Angela’s Catholic Church, and sent all three of their children to Catholic schools. Granddaughter Kaylicia would have been the fourth Merisier to attend St. Gregory’s Elementary School in Dorchester. Their oldest went on to graduate from Boston College and to work for Bank of Boston; the youngest, eighteen, was enrolled at Suffolk University when his parents were killed.

Like other Haitians who settled in the United States in the late 1960s, Willy and Alicia Merisier intended to retire in Haiti. The couple made far more progress toward that goal than most: Willy relocated to Haiti in October and had been staying at the home of Rene Laurent, Alicia’s cousin by marriage who was also an engineer. After sending funds in a piecemeal fashion—two thousand or five thousand dollars at a time, over seven years—they purchased land on Santos 11 and were making final selections for their retirement home in the neighborhood of Croix des Bouquets. According to their daughter Kaythleen: “People tried to convince them to go retire in Miami. But they were going home. That was their whole goal.”<sup>22</sup> In fact, Alicia was headed to the building site to select bathroom tiles when the car her husband drove to Port-au-Prince International Airport to pick her up

was ambushed. At about four o'clock in the afternoon, assailants forced the Toyota Corolla off the main road and dragged Willy from the car. The gunmen shot him at point-blank range in the head before shooting Alicia in the chest and stealing the U.S.\$10,000 she was carrying in her luggage. Both died at the scene on December 2, 1997.

News of the murders made it to Boston not long after Haitian authorities discovered the bodies at seven o'clock that evening. At least half a dozen Haitian officers from the Boston Police Department were deployed to Haiti as part of a three-hundred-member, multinational United Nations civilian mission to train the local police force. This made details of the investigation more transparent and accessible than they might otherwise have been. Moreover, the fact that Alicia Merisier was an American citizen helped family members elicit information and assistance from the Haitian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the U.S. embassy, even the FBI.

It is worth noting how mainstream incorporation—including U.S. citizenship, high-ranking Haitians in the Boston Police Department and Haitians with access to local power brokers—transformed the investigation and community response to the Merisier murders. As rumors began to spread about a possible Boston connection to the crime, Joseph Chery, then vice president of the Haitian-American Electoral Council, insisted that American officials get involved: “U.S. authorities must work with Haiti to uncover the perpetrators!” Months afterward when it became necessary for Sandra Merisier to travel to Haiti and offer testimony for the case, U.S. Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II took an active role, arranging security for Merisier during her stay.

In addition to the outpouring of sympathy for the Merisier children, the public response to the killings in Boston approximated the sentiment captured in the hackneyed phrase: “you can’t go home again.” Haitians who once described elaborate plans to return to Haiti began to develop a different outlook.

I would love to return . . . but I think I have work to do in Boston. Once you have children, once you get married, once you own property, it’s hard to go back. That’s the history of migration. But that does not mean that we don’t support Haiti. We support Haiti 100 percent, just like the Jews support Israel. I think the Haitian community in Boston needs young people who are educated and who can understand both cultures, who can be both Haitian and American. That’s the work that needs to be done by Haitians here. That is my responsibility as a Haitian citizen.

By 1999, when over six such murders involving Boston Haitians had occurred in Haiti, the community was in a quite different position politically. Caleb Desrosier, twenty-five years old at the time, mounted an attention-grabbing campaign for a Senate seat representing the Second Suffolk District in Mattapan. Marie St. Fleur won a special election to complete the

term of a state representative who left office to work for the Boston mayor. As one respondent put it:

In the 1970s, no Haitian would have been able to see a [City] Council member. Now, we are elected officials; you can call the mayor and expect to speak to him.

What I want to draw attention to here is that in the aftermath of the Merisier murders—more than at previous moments in their history in the city—Boston Haitians began to see their future in the diaspora. Not wanting to stake everything on an increasingly risky future in Haiti, they began to imagine fuller incorporation in Boston. This project was clearly articulated at a public meeting convened at Harvard University where three long-time Boston residents and educators gathered to discuss the possibility of a private Haitian high school:<sup>23</sup>

*Lè nou vin isit, nou tonbe nan yon ilizyon men li pran anpil tan pou vin dekouvri ilizyon sa a. Mèm mwen menm, mwen fèk sot itilize mo sa a: “melting pot,” se pa vre, se yon kesyon “kominote.” Lè ou parèt, se yon kesyon kominite. Ou wè sa a se kominote x, y, z . . . Se yon gwoup kominote. Chak moun fèmen nan kominote pa yo epi gwoup kominote a, se sa yo rele “melting pot” la. O fon, pa menm gen yon bon relasyon nan kominote yo. Egal, sa ou konnen ki vin pase? Ou menm Ayisyen ki pa gen anyen ki reprezante ou, ou vin tounen yon nèg ki pral mande nan tout kominote yo: ban m yon dyòb isi, ban m yon dyòb lòtbò. Se mande ou pral mande. Se mande w ap mande. Lè ou pa gen okenn estrikti, yo pa respekte ou.*

[When we came here, we fell into an illusion, but it took a long time to uncover this illusion. Even myself, I just used the word ‘melting pot,’ but it’s not true, it’s a question of ‘community.’ When you arrive, it’s a matter of community. You see this is community x, y, z . . . It’s a collection of communities. Each person is closed up in their community and this group of communities; that’s what they call ‘melting pot.’ Sometimes, there aren’t even positive relations within the communities. Still, what do you know happened? We Haitians who don’t have anything to represent us, we turn into a person who has to ask other communities: can I have a job here? Can I have a job there? You will always have to ask. You will have to ask and ask. When you don’t have any structure, they don’t respect you.]

Money and goods continued to flow to individual families in Haiti, but considerable attention was focused on diasporic Haitians as a target for activism and maintaining a connection to Haiti. Even if they could not see themselves living in the United States forever, Boston Haitians were beginning to recognize they would always be connected to Boston through kin and friendship networks and their shared memories of life in the city.

## CONCLUSION

“Boston Haitian” is easily mistaken as a comment on the *kind* of Haitians that settled in Boston compared to those who settled in New York City or Miami. The presumption that people from Haiti are divided in significant ways (between haves and have-nots, the elite and the illiterate or the God-fearing and the “voodoo” practitioners) coexists uncritically with a narrative that assumes all Haitians are fundamentally the same. Even though a sense of difference from other Haitians in diaspora was part of the motivation for studying this community, as a concept, *Boston Haitians* is more an attempt to keep matters of place in mind when one might be tempted to gloss over or fix (in time) the dynamic configurations of the economic, political and cultural context of the local community (Morawska 2003, 162).

In Boston, changes in the local political and economic context during the near fifty-year history of Haitians in the city prompted definitions (and redefinitions over time) of diasporic relations. As in other communities, Haitians used the idiom of diaspora to make claims of similarity to each other and to contest the notion of parallel minoritization at the heart of popular and scholarly expectations that they would become (U.S.) black Americans (Woldemikeal 1989). Diaspora was also central to the articulation of community projects that had both local and translocal significance. In addition, for Boston Haitians, diasporic language allowed them to elide the contested minority discourse that limited African-American political incorporation.

This understanding of diasporic relations includes a concern for both inter- and intragroup dynamics. As other scholars have noted, the construction of a transnational Haitian community interfered with solidarity with African Americans (see Glick Schiller 1977; Laguerre 1998). However in Boston it also took place in a context where a broader African diasporic consciousness was developing. Not only was the composition of the black population changing, but African Americans began to lay claim to “the diasporic condition” as a way to describe their experience and their political agenda. The energy generated by anti-apartheid and South African divestment campaigns, the Greater Roxbury Incorporation Project, and opposition to U.S. foreign policy in Grenada in the 1980s could have been the basis for a different mode of community organizing. But in Boston, the Haitian diaspora developed, in some ways, at the expense of their inclusion in the idea of a multi-national African or black diaspora.

The consequences of ethno-nationalist diasporic discourse for relationships with other blacks in the city and the post-migration generations are not lost on all Boston Haitians. As evidenced by St. Fleur’s public claims to being black and immigrant, some Haitians strategically embrace blackness to appeal to an increasingly diverse black Boston or to form interracial coalitions with powerful white power brokers on the basis of representing all blacks. Second- and later-generation Haitian youth also narrate experiences akin

to what Carbado (2005) calls “black racial naturalization.” Their dramas, acted out on the streets in interactions with the Boston Police Department and authority figures in local schools, call into question the particularity inherent in invocations of Haitian diaspora. One respondent’s suggestion that Haitians may have mistaken increased visibility for community empowerment seems a fitting note on which to conclude:

It would be terrible to see us exhibit the same sentiments, the same feelings toward other blacks that people had toward us. We need to realize that the diaspora started when we were put aboard ships and dropped off in the Caribbean. We could have just as well landed in Jamaica or in the U.S. We can’t live in a vacuum, so we need to face the reality of this country. We need to ask what is it that we can contribute? It’s not enough to say we are Haitian. What does it mean that we are here in America? In black America? When we understand that, we will begin to develop a sense of direction; we can begin to be part of the larger picture.<sup>24</sup>

Haitians in Boston are not unique in their behavior—energetic championing of Haitian art, music and other cultural products—or their pursuit of respectability. This chapter has endeavored to show how local obstacles and opportunities, layered on top of national and international events, led to the articulation of a collective identity as Boston Haitians.

## NOTES

1. See Kifner (1974).
2. See Sales (1974).
3. See Karaglanis (1974).
4. This chapter is based on a larger work, an ethnographic study of Boston’s Haitian community. Methodologically, the project is based on a combination of field, first-person, census and archival research conducted from 1998 to 2003. I draw data from formal interviews—with first- and second-generation Haitian immigrants; return migrants (in Haiti) who lived in Boston; Haitian community leaders; as well as black and white Bostonians who interact with Haitians in the city. In addition, I analyzed over twenty-five years of *Boston Globe* articles and other media coverage of Haitians in the city and conducted hours of unobtrusive and participant observations in Haitian organizations, businesses, cultural events, bilingual classrooms and in the everyday social spaces that Haitians in the city inhabit.
5. Gerdes Fleurant, quoted in Pollard (1980).
6. St. Fleur was joined in the Massachusetts Legislature by Linda Dorcena Forry, a native Boston Haitian, who was elected state legislator in 2005.
7. The next day, the *Globe* reported that St. Fleur had been delinquent in her federal taxes and was not paying off forty thousand dollars in student loans. See Robinson and Rezendes (2006). St. Fleur withdrew from the campaign on February 1, 2006, and was elected to her fourth full term in the House in

November. Reilly lost in the democratic primary election in September 2006, two weeks after the *Globe* reported that two hours before he announced St. Fleur as his running mate, Reilly was given detailed information that St. Fleur had not paid student loans and federal authorities were after her for twelve thousand dollars in unpaid income taxes. See Phillips (2006). Deval Patrick was elected in November 2006; he is the first African-American governor in Massachusetts history and the second African-American governor in the United States since Reconstruction.

8. Alix Cantave, (former) executive director, Haitian Studies Association based in Boston. Author's interview, June 1999.
9. For example, in 1980 Charlestown was 98 percent white and 95 percent white in 1990; according to the 2000 Census, Charlestown was still 79 percent white. Similarly, West Roxbury—where 97 percent of residents were white in 1980—was only 16 percent minority twenty years later. By contrast, minorities constitute 96 percent and 95 percent, respectively, of Mattapan and Roxbury residents.
10. Halter (1995) argues that the lower estimates are the result of high geographic mobility, the large numbers of undocumented immigrants and the growing number of second- and later-generation Haitians in the city (see Halter 1995, 161).
11. Political refugees of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1803) scattered along the U.S. coastal cities as far north as Boston; among them were colonists, free mulattoes and slaves (Laguerre 1984). In the late nineteenth-century period, Dr. Thomas Patrick, a physician born in Haiti, lived in Boston from the time he came to the states in 1892 until his death in 1953. He founded a well-known School of Pharmacy in Boston in 1892 that trained a number of American pharmacists (Laguerre 1983). There is also evidence of influential black Bostonians who were of Haitian descent, including the daughter of a Haitian settler who ran the Agassiz school in Cambridge in the 1900s.
12. The “three-decker” is a unique housing type characteristic of New England cities in the early twentieth century. Generally defined, it is a free-standing, wood frame structure on its own narrow lot, three stories high. Triple-deckers (as they are also called) are designed as multifamily housing with one family on each floor, including the owner who typically pays the mortgage by renting the other two units. They are the dominant housing stock in Dorchester where there are nearly five thousand such structures. Of the 5,250 units in Dorchester, 4,700 were built between 1900 and 1930, usually by and for newly arrived Irish, Jewish and Italian immigrants (see Krim 1977; Husock 1990).
13. See Hapgood and Woods (1971).
14. According to Bluestone and Stevenson (2000, 266):

The area's economic revival can also be tied to corporate actions and labor conditions that provided the image of a good business climate, in Bennett Harrison's words. These included the weakening of unions, as traditional sectors declined; the establishment of less unionized sectors, as high technology manufacturing and business and personal services grew; the depressing of wage demands, as successive recessions and high unemployment dampened militance; and rising proportions of women, youth, and immigrants in the workforce, who tended to be more flexible with regard to wages and work conditions.

Ironically, the very economic conditions that facilitated the growth of the Haitian community would also engender the community's chief economic troubles: weak unions, depressed wages and poor working conditions.



15. In the March 4, 1983, issue of the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, the CDC warned the public that:  
Persons who may be considered at increased risk of AIDS include those with symptoms and signs suggestive of AIDS; sexual partners of AIDS patients; sexually active homosexual or bisexual men with multiple partners; Haitian entrants to the United States; present or past abusers of IV [intra-venous] drugs; patients with hemophilia; and sexual partners of individuals at increased risk for AIDS.
16. For example, the *Ten O'Clock News* on WGBH-Boston on April 17, 1987, ran a story, "AIDS in Minority Communities," that singled out Haitians as an ethnic group. The reporter concluded the presentation of evidence from various scientific studies with the following statement:  
But drugs alone are not the only reason AIDS is infecting more minorities. The integration of immigrants from Haiti and Africa into the black community, for example, may be escalating the problem. (WGBH Media Library and Archives. Accessed on February 4, 2001.)
17. See Associated Press (1987).
18. See Constable (1987).
19. The crowd estimate was provided by William R. Celester, deputy superintendent of Boston Police Area B.
20. See Bickelhaupt (1987).
21. Charlene Desir's (2007) multisite ethnography of Haitian students is also an invaluable resource on this point.
22. Quoted in Latour (1997b, B1). See also Latour (1997a). Four months later, the investigation in Haiti produced two suspects. Both were related to Alicia Merisier. See Latour (1998).
23. See Vedrine (2004).
24. Dr. Eustache Jean-Louis, executive director of CCHER. Author's interview, August 1999.

## 8 Haitian Migration and Community-Building in Southeastern Michigan, 1966–1998

*Chantalle F. Verna*

During the latter decades of the twentieth century, Haitians in southeastern Michigan constituted a small but consciously active element of the Haitian diaspora. At the time of my fieldwork, an estimated 753 Haitian-born and 3,459 second-generation Haitians resided in Michigan.<sup>1</sup> This chapter focuses on the most visible of these Haitians, residents of the state's southeastern cities of Detroit, Grand Rapids and Lansing. Oral interviews conducted in July and August 1998 with forty Haitians and evidence in the records of community organizations from the three study cities reveal that these members of the Haitian diaspora proudly acknowledged the Haitian roots of their life stories and continuously sought to preserve elements of Haitian culture in their daily lives.<sup>2</sup> For many individuals, that lifestyle served to reinforce their sense of attachment to Haiti. The testimonies of Haitians residing in southeastern Michigan contribute to our understanding of how the process of dispersal from Haiti to less-traditional U.S. cities took place after 1965.

As described by historian Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador* (2000, 225–226):

A diaspora is more than the dispersal of a people. It is a complex historical process whose contemporary dynamics of culture and power are related to four dimensions of the diasporan experience: first, the reasons for and conditions of relocation; second, relations with the host country; third, relations with the homeland; [fourth], interrelationships within the diaspora group; . . . [and a fifth, comparative dimension,] complex struggles over identity, belonging, acculturation, and separatism.

Butler's and my own understanding of diaspora have been informed by a theoretical framework presented by Ruth Simms Hamilton (1990). I find that it is important to add the language of "consciousness" to these frameworks in order to account for the varied forms of consciousness that members of the diaspora articulate in their daily lives.

My search for Haitians in Michigan led me to discover three waves of Haitians arriving in the southeastern region of the state since 1966. Haitians in Michigan developed a general sense of community based on networks developed through family and social contacts, participation in formal organizations, faith-based activities and by engaging in social or political activism. They developed a sense of community by linking various Haitian social circles and welcoming ties with non-Haitians who shared interests and a range of identities including race, culture, geography and politics.

## HAITIAN IMMIGRATION TO SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

Three immigration waves led to the growing prominence of southeastern Michigan's Haitian diaspora after 1965: *Haitians who were invited* to participate in professional programs; *Haitians who were seeking* opportunities outside the traditional immigration centers (e.g., New York City and South Florida); and *Haitians who were sent* by U.S. refugee resettlement programs.<sup>3</sup>

### Haitians Who Were Invited

As early as the 1930s, Haitians were able to travel from Haiti to the United States for educational and employment opportunities under the auspices of formal cooperative agreements between public and private institutions in Haiti and the United States. These institutional ties became avenues for southeastern Michigan's eldest Haitians to immigrate to the United States. Interpersonal ties reinforced these pathways to Michigan by facilitating chain migrations, whereby the migration of a single individual served as the first link in a growing chain of individuals (typically family members or friends) who would migrate to the same destination. "Pere Gilbert's"<sup>4</sup> immigration story illustrates the process by which Haitians were invited to Michigan. Gilbert decided to settle in Lansing after completing a two-year graduate studies program at Michigan State University (MSU) in 1968. He said:

My original purpose [in 1966] was to undertake graduate studies . . . at Michigan State University. And in fact I did graduate in 1968 with a Master's degree. . . . Subsequent to my graduation, I found that I could not really return to Haiti [due to political repression and violence that affected many family members and friends]. [Under the circumstances], I [then sought] and found employment with the State of Michigan. . . . After finding employment, I was able to have my family join me [in 1972].

Whereas this history of events traces the trajectory of Gilbert's permanent residence in Michigan, his first travels to the United States were in 1949. This date marks the beginning of his experiences as an international student who pursued undergraduate training at MSU. As valedictorian of his

school in Haiti, Gilbert attracted the attention of the United States' cultural attaché who invited the young scholar to interview for an academic scholarship to study abroad. Upon acceptance, Gilbert made a week-long visit to Washington DC where he was informed that, based on his field of interest, he would attend MSU. Returning to Haiti upon graduation in 1951, Gilbert spent the next fifteen years as a Haitian government employee and five years working with different cooperative programs between the United States and Haiti.

Institutional ties between Haiti and the United States that were established during the U.S. military occupation of Haiti (1915–1934) flourished during the post-occupation period and facilitated the rise in Haitian travels to the United States. In 1939, sociologist Ira Reid wrote about the increasingly visible presence of Haitians in New York City: “Before the American occupation of Haiti, there were only a few graduates of American institutions. Since then, more than fifty students have been sent over by the government” (98). Haitians became familiar with U.S. cities, citizens and institutions by participating in intellectual cooperation programs administered through institutions such as the Haitian Department of Public Instruction, the United States Office of Inter-American Affairs, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Institute for International Education and countless universities, hospitals and businesses. These encounters were an important means by which Haitians could begin to conceive of and arrange travels and immigration to the United States (Verna 2005).

Another elder Haitian who migrated to Lansing after residing in New York City for several years spoke about how his employment with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Haiti facilitated his emigration from Haiti in 1962. Maxim, an *invité* (invited) said:

I was with USAID program, which is the [U.S.] State Department [giving] help to underdeveloped countries and I was as an engineer in [the Haitian government's] public works department. So, when the program ended or they had to leave, since I work with the American [technicians] . . . they say, ‘Why don’t you come . . . come over.’ So, I move to the States, in 1962 . . . I think there was a little political problem between America and Haiti . . . things were not working too good . . . there was kind of a political squabble between [François] Duvalier (that was president) and the state department. So Duvalier asked them to leave. And they say, well, they are going to leave. So, they packed and at the same time, they . . . pick up people they wanted. So I came to New York City, start working.

Maxim explained how his dissatisfaction with the quality of life in New York motivated him and his family to move to Michigan. Living conditions were a factor that each wave of Haitian migrants claimed reinforced their decision to resettle in Michigan. Maxim described how living in New

York meant living in cramped quarters and frequenting crowded streets and subways. After visiting his sister-in-law in 1965 (who had migrated several years earlier with her husband for employment), he decided to leave the East Coast:

I was not asking for too much, for just the way to balance the budget and raise my children, my family and . . . I found out that Lansing, Michigan, was a good place for that. There was no big thing, just a kind of a college town. . . . And I like Detroit because I see things that I would never see in New York, such as trees and grass, you know [in New York], I was living in a hotel for six months so I never seen anything like that so I say, ‘Wow! I better move.’ Then from Detroit, for job-related things I moved to Lansing [in 1967].

By highlighting a few factors that guided his resettlement choices—economic security, stability for the family and an environment conducive to child rearing (i.e., fresher air and grassier surroundings)—Maxim described the dynamic process of deciding to move and resettle.

### Haitians Who Were Seeking

The second wave of Haitians to arrive in southeastern Michigan began during the 1970s. These newcomers were often Haitians whose migration to the United States followed travels from Haiti to Africa, Europe, Canada, Mexico and/or South America to pursue education and employment opportunities. Others were children of immigrants who decided to pursue a life on their own outside of the traditional Haitian diaspora communities in U.S. cities such as New York, Boston or Miami where their parents originally migrated. Oftentimes, these second generation immigrants migrated in order to pursue educational and employment opportunities, to rekindle ties with family members living in Michigan or to begin families of their own.

Like the *invité* Maxim, many Haitians who first immigrated to U.S. cities such as New York opened themselves to a secondary migration in order to reside in the alternative locations. Among these places, Michigan was highly regarded. According to a seeker who originally left Haiti to pursue studies in Europe, prior to his move to Michigan, he and his wife were accustomed to visiting his family who had moved from New York to Detroit. At that time, the seeker was studying in Europe and subsequently worked in South America. Another seeker wanted a place that was not “too crowded,” and where individuals did not have to be hassled by long commutes to work or other activities, such as evening socials. These factors encouraged a young doctor who had studied and worked in Mexico, Canada and New York City to begin looking elsewhere for employment.

Appreciation for a quieter and more manageable manner of living was not an unusual sentiment; several migrants “took a chance” and responded

to the comments of associates and colleagues who suggested that Michigan offered a “quieter, better . . . more friendly” type of living. In fact, most interviewees expressed an appreciation for the satisfactory housing and educational opportunities offered locally. As described by one seeker:

[What] I like about Michigan is [what it offers] if you want to raise a family. I like small towns. I mean, I could have gone to Long Island, but it was expensive. And Lansing was really quiet, they had schools . . . didn’t have the problems that New York City had. Not that they wouldn’t come here . . . we’re starting to inherit the things that are happening in big cities, but it took . . . quite a long time . . . since it’s a small town it’s not as bad . . . [Lansing is] a good family town.

As Haitian migration to southeastern Michigan increased, individuals encouraged their family members and acquaintances one after the other, adding links to a growing chain of Haitians who took advantage of what they perceived the value of life in Michigan.

### **Haitians Who Were Sent**

The third wave of Haitian immigrants to southeastern Michigan arrived when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Offices of Refugee Resettlement designated Michigan as a site for Haitian refugee resettlement in 1993. Working with local voluntary agencies, political refugees were sent to an array of cities in the U.S., particularly places with a small presence of the immigrant group (see Newland 1995, 9–11; Rumbaut 1989, 97–129).

Statistics from a local refugee services office reveal the nature of Haitian refugee resettlement in Michigan between 1993 and 1998. Based on applications for assistance from the State of Michigan’s Family Independence Agency (MFIA), approximately 195 Haitians were documented as resettled refugees in Michigan. Based on county statistics, Lansing located in Ingham County has hosted the largest number of refugees recently (145), followed by Grand Rapids based in Kent County (40), and counties encompassing Detroit (1–Macomb, 3–Wayne).<sup>5</sup>

Unlike previous waves, Haitians who were sent arrived without any certainty about their future place of residence or the type of educational or employment opportunities that would be available to them. One newcomer said:

My objective was not to come to Grand Rapids because I was a person who was accustomed to Florida. Since 1986, ’87, I had already made about five trips to Miami. My parents are there, my uncle’s there, my brother and cousins (male and female) live there. I felt more comfortable to live there. But . . . since *travay Bondye* [God’s plan] doesn’t

always work with *travay lezòm* [man's plan]. It took until God said that it was here in Grand Rapids that we'd resettle.

Another said:

*RESPONDENT*: All the while I was in Haiti, I did not know where I would be going. It is when I arrived in Miami that they [the U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services] told me, that given my file I cannot live in the large cities because they are a bit 'too hot' . . . they are not 'cool.'

*INTERVIEWER*: What cities are those?

*RESPONDENT*: Cities like Miami, New York. You see, they did not really want me to stay in them. So they sent us, me and another guy, here [to Lansing].

According to this newcomer, the selection of locations outside the "hot" spots—U.S. cities where intense political organizing on behalf of Haiti was anticipated given the larger population size—was to discourage political activism in the diaspora community. Thus, he and the other refugees were resettled in "cool" Michigan cities, places where organizing was less likely.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the Haitians who were sent described political persecution and a life of contemporary *marronage* in Haiti. They lived in hiding and in flight, sometimes maintaining their activism by clandestinely contributing to radio broadcasts or newspaper articles. These migrants evoked a mode of resistance that their ancestors successfully used in the antislavery and anticolonial struggles preceding Haiti's independence from France in 1804 (Fouchard 1981; Manigat 1977; see also Price 1973). One Haitian sent to Grand Rapids explained how he became a maroon and what that meant for his family life:

After . . . elections were done in December [1990], in September [1991] there was a coup d'état. They [the military] did not allow the government to stabilize for even a year. So now . . . we who were affiliated with the [overthrown] government party, there were many of us who were given death . . . And we said, thanks to God that people like me are still alive, [but to do so] we had to hide in certain locations. In other words, they overthrew the government, killed lots of people, and we had to go into the woods so that we could survive.

I can tell you, that for many of us, *marronage* was very difficult.

Because, it was difficult for families to reunite, people abandoned their families. And for me, not a single person was to know where I was sleeping because according to the politics, to the way things were at that moment, you couldn't trust anyone to know your location. Because no one knows when they [the military] will come get you. And,

the day they get this or that person, and they know?! . . . that is why everyone had to be secretive. No one revealed to another where they spent the night. That began in 1990, with a few changes in 1991, but intensified in 1993.

All of the many stories like this were told by men who served as political party members and fled with their families for security. The stories of women who served in a similar capacity remain untold, suggesting the need for further investigation. Yet, despite the narrative silence, statistics from the State of Michigan Office of Refugee Resettlement accounts for eighty-six women registered with local voluntary agencies.<sup>7</sup> Again, these numbers suggest just a minimum presence. The experience of being sent to Michigan for women who accompanied politically active men added a layer of uncertainty. As one young woman who came with her father recalled, when she left Haiti, she did not know where she was going or why her father was traveling abroad with her. Behind her, she left her siblings and mother (from whom the father was divorced); ahead of her was a new life in what she would come to learn was Michigan.

Many of those sent were comforted by the opportunity for a family reunion.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in this life of asylum, those who were sent had access to the services of local resettlement agencies and the support of local residents. The refugees remained encouraged about life in this new land by focusing on the opportunity to reunite as a family, purchase a home and educate their children. This sent political refugee said:

Well, it was like this on August 5, 1993, I saw that it was me on the plane coming here. It made us very sad because we were coming to a place where we did not know if we would interact with any persons speaking Haitian [Creole]. On the other hand, we were comforted, because it was the first time we found the possibility to reunite . . . live in a single place, something that we could not do for some time because [*marronage* demanded that] the kids stay in grandmother's house . . . my wife . . . obliged to sleep at her aunt's house. She had several aunts . . . because she could not sleep just at one person's house . . . just the same as I had to do, sleeping each night in a different house . . . so people don't know where we sleep at all.

Thus, sent families came to southeastern Michigan to avoid the life of secrecy, separation and seclusion.

These three waves of Haitian migration span three decades and three metropolitan areas. Diverse social backgrounds and residential locations made it difficult for Haitians to become familiar with one another, establish a sense of community and create sustainable organizations. Nonetheless, the desire to fulfill personal needs and interests and promote positive visibility for Haitians in the diaspora, and attempts to contribute to improving



conditions in Haiti, led to an array of interactions that reflect the clusters of Haitian community in southeastern Michigan since the mid-1960s.

## ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The circumstances of migration and the absence of a highly visible ethnic enclave where communal interaction and organizing took place meant that most Haitians residing in southeastern Michigan were often introduced to one another within familial settings. Kinship ties—real and fictive—reinforced the value that Haitians traditionally placed on familial connections (see Chierici 1991).<sup>9</sup> The benefits of kinship ties in southeastern Michigan included having contacts that helped ease the settlement process, created opportunities for social interactions and perpetuated cherished Christian practices.

Haitian seekers revealed how kinship ties facilitated the process of settling in southeastern Michigan. An industrial laborer who moved to Detroit from New York City in 1975 spoke about how his kinship ties supported his efforts to become independent in his new hometown. His brother and many friends helped him search for a new job as unemployment benefits from New York began to dwindle. Other seekers recalled that they were given a home to reside in while they searched for work and/or completed degrees that would expand their employment opportunities.

Haitians who were sent to southeast Michigan experienced a more formal mode of assistance. Beginning in the 1990s, “veteran” Haitians (i.e., members of the first two migration waves) residing in Lansing, Michigan, supported efforts by Lansing Catholic Refugee Services to resettle those who were sent. An *invité* who extended his support for five years (1992–1997) described his interest in helping “displaced individuals born in Haiti”:

I volunteered to . . . help them cope with adaptation in the new country . . . [and] the language. I was not making money—not making profit—just helping for humanitarian reasons, and [providing] advice, counseling, and enticement to go to school and study . . . I could say I helped them quite a lot . . . twenty-five to fifty families.

This *invité* helped, and continues (though on a less regular basis) to help newcomers learn how to “swim” in their new setting: how to adjust to the “climate . . . how to find housing, how to find transportation, how to fill an application for work, how to get medical care.” This support was in addition to this *invité*’s history of encouraging a number of seekers to move to Michigan and also supporting their resettlement process.

Some seekers also made an effort to assist Haitians who were sent to Lansing by organizing a *système de parrainage*, i.e., a god-parenting system. One seeker described the formal effort to adopt the newcomers as kin:

[W]henever [Lansing Catholic Refugee Services] would establish Haitian houses . . . one of us would be the godfather and godmother of the house and another responsibility would be to take care of it, to guide them and provide for them . . . The first group that came to Lansing received the best possible welcome ever. Everybody came; we brought them food, toiletries, household accessories, and opened up [our] homes.

In Grand Rapids, one seeker spoke about how he and his wife supported the efforts of Bethany Christian Services by volunteering to greet refugee families when they arrived at the local airport. This couple migrated to Grand Rapids, on their own and without any concrete knowledge of whom or what they would find upon arrival. The choice of Michigan as a place of residence was simply based on a tip from some Haitians whom he met during a transitional stay in South Florida. To help Haitians who were sent avoid a sense of alienation, the husband said: “We wanted to help out and let [the refugees] know . . . that they have their own people here. They don’t have to be afraid. We are here to help them.”

Establishing relationships with other Haitians residing in Michigan created opportunities for socializing. One *invité* recalled how during the 1960s, his Haitian social circle evolved as he frequented the homes and social gatherings of individual Haitian families. One seeker described how he entered such a social circle during the 1970s after expressing his cravings for *di ri ak saus pwa* (rice with Haitian bean sauce) to a Haitian colleague at MSU. The colleague invited the seeker for a Sunday dinner that not only served to satisfy the seeker’s palette with a familiar meal but also introduced him to families that would reinstate his ties with a Haitian milieu. In addition to sharing meals, Haitians from each migration wave described the popularity of playing board games, card games (e.g., *bezik*, 3–7, Casino), dominoes, sports (especially soccer), attending birthday and holiday parties, organizing rotating credit associations (*sol* and *sang*) or meeting after church for coffee, *paté* (Haitian pastries filled with meat or fish) and conversation.

In addition to casual social activities, awareness of a Haitian presence in the local Michigan area allowed Haitians to maintain cherished Christian practices with great enthusiasm. Catholic women in Detroit spoke about how connections with other Haitians in the area helped to affirm the importance of special masses. Protestants in Grand Rapids demonstrated their attachment to the church by supporting a Haitian Creole mass. These opportunities helped to counter the cultural barriers that other Haitians, particularly *invités*, faced in religious communities that were not prominently frequented by other Haitians.

Two Haitian women in Detroit spoke about how their contacts with other Haitians helped their families respect the Catholic sacrament of First Communion and masses that honored the memory of deceased loved ones or celebrate blessings. Rose Marie recalled how she lived in Detroit for two

years without becoming aware of a Haitian population. This created some distress for her when preparing for her daughter's First Communion. She wondered if it would be the festive occasion that it usually was among Haitian families. Through referrals from contacts outside of Michigan, the process of being reintroduced to former classmates, neighbors, family friends and colleagues, her social network expanded and helped to give life to Rose Marie's event. Several years later, these contacts supported her through her mother's death. She recalled: "On my mother's funeral, all Haitians came . . . give me their support and . . . they cook[ed] for me, and they [brought] me food almost every day . . . they were good people."

Hosting a mass in honor of the deceased, at the time of their death and in the years that follow, is a tradition that another seeker also sought to preserve. Nicolette described her commitment to sponsoring masses for the deceased and thanksgiving masses:

In Haitian culture, whenever . . . you are happy about what happen[s], you want to give thanks to God . . . so you go to church and have a special mass and you give donation to the church if you want to . . . or whatever you want to do. And then after the church ceremony, you invite people over for food . . . and sometimes they also have that for a [deceased] family member, then they call that *messe des morts* . . . but the other one is thanksgiving mass, for example, if somebody have a surgery and they thought they were dying and they made it, then they have a thanksgiving mass. If you think you weren't going to have a baby then you have a baby then you give a thanksgiving mass. Some people do it in big scale and some people do it very quiet, they just give the money to the priest and tell the priest they want it done and they don't even have to participate. But I like to participate and invite people.

Protestants in Grand Rapids were able to preserve their own attachment to the church by participating in Haitian Creole services. Given the increasing numbers and the presence of a Haitian pastor in the area, the First Church of the Nazarene offered the most visible social center for Haitians who were sent to Grand Rapids. Participants in this church described maintaining their Christian faith as the single most important social activity they could engage in. As described by one man, at the church they "have more of a chance to meet with other Haitians, and . . . we see we gain teachings to advance ourselves spiritually and materially [based on the informational sessions sponsored by and hosted at the church]."

These opportunities to make connections with other Haitians and perpetuate cherished Christian practices helped numerous Haitians avoid the sense of frustration one *invité* felt when attending a Catholic mass in Lansing during the late 1960s: "You know, being from a different place . . . [y]ou cannot integrate yourself in that church . . . because of the different language. I mean you know . . . they not talk[ing] to you, you [are] . . . kind of isolated

... [there is a] language barrier during the sermon.” This *invité* said that while he was “agreeable” with fellow parishioners, “at the same time, [he kept his] distance.” Another *invité* from Lansing expressed disappointment about the prevalence of racial segregation in a predominately white church. Nonetheless, he made an effort to become involved by joining the men’s club (Knights of Columbus). He proudly exclaimed, “I’m a Knight!”

## Cultural and Social Organizing

As Haitian social circles became more established, it became increasingly possible for formal organizing to take place. Haitian adults organized cultural and social activities as a way to enrich themselves while promoting positive awareness about Haitian culture and society to their children and non-Haitians.

A literary club named *Le Baobab* was the earliest organization mentioned by Haitians in southeastern Michigan. Although discussions about forming a club to discuss literature and current events began as early as 1978, the first formal gathering was in 1982 in Lansing. The club was organized by a seeker who had previously resided in New York City and lamented the sense of isolation he felt while in Michigan. He stimulated the interest of fellow Haitians, as well as francophone friends from Senegal and Martinique who would also allow the club to be a venue for maintaining fluency in French. This cross-cultural organizing explains the club’s name: *Le Baobab*, the tree around which many West African griots told tales. The linguistic and cultural vestiges of French colonialism and African history allowed for a connection between these francophone members of the African diaspora.

Members of *Le Baobab*, primarily from the Lansing area but also from Detroit and nearby Ann Arbor, made an effort to bring their children to the Sunday afternoon gatherings. They wanted the youngest members of their families to sit in on the cultural presentations, listen attentively to the professional commentaries on development issues (e.g., medical and engineering) taking place “back home” and be present for discussions that countered the local media’s “misguided” accounts or the lack of coverage on the homeland.

Interest and efforts to promote these types of activities expanded a few years later with the founding of two Detroit-based organizations: Haitian Community Organization of Michigan (HCOM) and *Espoir* (Hope). HCOM was “founded on October 15, 1984, as a non-profit organization in an effort to settle a solid base for present and future generations of Haitians living in Michigan. HCOM [proposed to] by all possible means, promote Haitian Culture and Art in Michigan.”<sup>10</sup> According to an addendum to the organizations’ bylaws, the group could “pursue its objectives through social, cultural, and educational channels” via the plans and organizing efforts of respective committees.<sup>11</sup> Documents on past HCOM events and

commentaries by Haitians who were familiar with the organizations' activities emphasized the social function of the organization. Key events were "picnics, raffles, dinner-dances, beauty pageants, [and] carnivals."<sup>12</sup>

An open letter from the executive committee of HCOM described the importance of participating in Detroit's annual Caribbean Carnival:

This year as in previous years, our participation in the Caribbean Carnival was a great success . . . We, at HCOM believe firmly that the Haitian presence in the Michigan community of Caribbean immigrants must manifest its self-worth and integrity, pride, and self-determination.<sup>13</sup>

Detroit's second and more prominent Haitian organization, *Espoir*, founded in 1986, joined HCOM in organizing social events that celebrated Haitian culture; they also organized art exhibits, conferences, educational activities and the publication of a quarterly newsletter. *Espoir* organized annual fundraising dinners with themes like "African Roots of Haitian Culture" and they participated in presenting "Christmas in the Caribbean" for the City of Detroit's Noel Night. Members of *Espoir* worked to incorporate Haitian art onto the local art scene. They hosted exhibits at local galleries, festivals, the Museum of African American History (MAAH) and the Detroit Institute of the Arts. *Espoir* supported local visits from scholar/activists such as Katherine Dunham who was well known for her anthropological investigations in Haiti. Members of *Espoir* also helped to promote a four-week excursion to the West African country of Benin, organized since 1984 by an *Espoir* board member who served on the faculty at Wayne State University. In 1997, *Espoir* was one of the hosts for the annual Haitian Studies Association conference and the exhibition on "The Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou" at the MAAH. These events, as well as news, announcements from around the nation, educational materials for sale, research projects, poetry, book reviews and interviews with local members of the Caribbean community graced the pages of *Espoir's* newsletter, *Krik, Krak*.

Both HCOM and *Espoir* made some effort to use their organization's activities to promote knowledge and pride in Haitian culture among the local youth. The two groups encouraged participation in the annual Caribbean pageants, and *Espoir* organized an annual essay contest beginning in 1993 for youngsters to express their ideas on the images of the Caribbean and its people. Efforts were made to organize a group called *Quisqueya* (the indigenous name of the island shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic), targeting Haitians who were thirty years of age and under. At the close of the 1990s, Detroit's young professional Haitians organized the Haitian Group Network. The Network met on the last Saturday of each month to discuss Haitian history, culture and current events. Their efforts are reminiscent of the activities of southeastern Michigan's older Haitian club, *Le Baobab*.

## Transnational Activism: International Aid to Haiti

Given the opportunity, members of HCOM and *Espoir* were able to translate their consciousness into transnational activism—that is, the behavior of Haitians in southeastern Michigan served to connect their homeland (Haiti) and their host society (Michigan), by regularly engaging in “overlapping familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political practices that transcend borders” (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994, 684). These practices sustain the argument that many immigrants are long-distance nationalists who make use of their status in the United States to stimulate positive change both locally and globally (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001).

In fact, *Espoir* was founded with the primary purpose of providing aid to Haiti. In the summer of 1986, an African-American woman who had ties with several members of Detroit’s Haitian community proposed the creation of *Espoir*. The nonprofit organization was founded by a “group of metro Detroit citizens, both Haitian and American, [who] grew increasingly concerned about the quality of life in Haiti [following the ousting of Jean-Claude Duvalier].” The group supported medical missions as a means of offering “direct relief to the people of Haiti, while sensitizing the local community to their plight.”<sup>14</sup>

HCOM helped to provide direct aid to Haiti in 1988 by raising funds to support the missionary efforts of Dollie Bennett, a forty-year-old African-American woman from Detroit. Bennett was a nurse who provided free medical aid to a Haitian village that had no physicians, electricity or running water. Bennett’s efforts were featured in the November 1988 issue of *Ebony* magazine. In response to this feature, HCOM’s chairman wrote a letter to the editor:

Thank you for your article on Dollie Bennett. It has served as an inspiration to the members of my organization who for months have been undecided about what to do to honor [Bennet]. A fund-raising campaign has been launched on her behalf, and the proceeds as well as a plaque will be presented to her.<sup>15</sup>

Efforts by Haitian organizations in southeastern Michigan complimented the contributions that individual Haitians made to Michigan-based church missions to Haiti. When I asked a Haitian woman in Detroit why she felt most Haitians attended St. Gerard’s church she replied:

That particular church is involved in doing work for Haiti . . . fund-raising and things of that nature; and, they usually have speakers and we usually have somebody from Haiti and they really appreciate us over there . . . glad we are a part of that family. So, it is just like a little family over there.<sup>16</sup>

In Grand Rapids, a pastor at First Church of the Nazarene had been involved with missions to Haiti for at least thirty years. He found support among the Haitians who were sent to the area. This group also networked with missions in other cities, particularly Detroit. The missions, sometimes formal Twinning Projects (when a U.S.-based church partners with a church in Haiti; see Hefferan 2007), benefited from the capital and human resources Haitians in southeastern Michigan had to offer. In addition to donating funds, Haitians contributed to the preparation process by helping to teach non-Haitian missionaries Haitian Creole or providing insights about Haitian culture and society. Thus, both organized and individual efforts from Haitians in southeastern Michigan lent support to missions targeting Haiti's national development.

### **Transnational Activism: Political Organizing**

Another way Haitians in southeast Michigan sought to make an impact on the state of affairs in Haiti was by becoming involved in politics. Haitians in Detroit and Lansing became more politically conscious by working with campaigns intended to nurture democracy in Haiti. The most prominent organizations were *Mouvement Pour la l'Instauration de la Démocratie en Haïti* (MIDH), the *Dixième Département* and the Michigan Committee for a Democratic Haiti.

The Michigan Committee appears to have had much earlier roots than the other two groups, which began in the 1990s. As described by a seeker and founding member from Lansing, the committee grew out of efforts that began as early as 1979 to help Haitian refugees who were arriving in Miami, Florida. The committee included Haitians and U.S. Americans who worked to collect money and clothing. The money was used to bring an activist priest from Miami to speak in Michigan. The balance of funds and the clothing were then sent to a Haitian center in Florida. The committee followed up with additional presentations about the political situations in Haiti. Thus, when political tensions mounted in the mid-1990s, the members of this organization worked with university organizations and departments to host events such as "an all-day teach in on Haiti" at Wayne State on September 29, 1994. Announcements in *Espoir's* newsletter, *Krik, Krak*, advertised the formation of a speaker's bureau dedicated to offering "educational lectures and presentations about the Haitian crisis." Haitians, U.S. scholars, civic groups, churches and professional organizations concerned about Haiti's fate attended these sessions.<sup>17</sup>

Whereas the committee served as a vehicle for human and political rights activism, Haitians in Michigan interested in party politics joined MIDH, the party of presidential candidate Marc Bazin. MIDH organized branches across the diaspora in an effort to have Bazin elected in the December 1990 Haitian presidential elections. The leader of MIDH's Michigan branch described his commitment to the party campaign as follows: "My main

motive was [to] try to help. I don't aspire to [attain a] political office, but I always like to help whichever way I can."

Dedicated to moving away from Haiti's dictatorial history, *Branche Michigan* (which officially met for the first time on May 12, 1990) served as a subsidiary to the National Counsel. Locals were charged with promoting the party ideas outside of Haiti, encouraging support among compatriots within Haiti, recruiting new members, undertaking diverse measures in an effort to contribute financially to the party's activities and establishing and managing the offices needed in order to ensure proper functioning of the party.<sup>18</sup>

With linkages in New York (the branch model) as well as across the nation, members of MIDH worked towards their vision of a democratic Haiti. Even with a brewing rivalry between HCOM and *Espoir*, members at a June 10, 1990, meeting declared that "conflict between the two other Haitian organizations" would have to be put aside in preparation for Bazin's visit. "[T]he meeting with Bazin is for everyone, all are welcomed. No need to change location due to personal conflicts. President wants members to put 100 percent effort into making the meeting with Bazin a success . . . [A] list of all Haitians in the community . . . [is] needed."<sup>19</sup> Thus individuals were encouraged to inform their local Haitian contacts and promote the gathering that sought to support political progress in Haiti.

All Haitians in southeast Michigan did not agree on Marc Bazin as the choice candidate for the Haitian presidency. Many others supported Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Nonetheless, the saliency of the concept of *le dixième département* (the Tenth Department) facilitated the participation of a wide array of Haitians, including Bazin's supporters, who protested the military coup d'état that deposed Aristide from office. An open invitation for a meeting of the *Dixième Département, Bureau du Mid-West* evoked the sense of attachment and agency that Haitians in Michigan felt in regards to Haitian politics:

Dear Fellow Citizens from the Haitian Community . . . Today, the diaspora constitutes a serious force to be reckoned with; through number[s] . . . economic . . . technical influences. . . . The idea of a 'dixième département' is an attempt to define a scenario to bridge the gap between the tremendous support being provided to the country by the Haitian community abroad, and their actual lack of involvement in the country's decision making process. This issue is becoming more meaningful and more urgent with the recent establishment of a democratic system in Haiti, and the massive Reconstruction currently underway. . . . Proposed meeting is scheduled for . . . St. Gerard's church.<sup>20</sup>

In response to the coup d'état, the *Dixième Département, Bureau du Mid-West* (represented by Haitians in Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri) made an effort to keep Haitian political and refugee issues in the public eye. They met with active political lobbyists, such as U.S. Representative John



Conyers and Senator Carl Levin. They made public speeches on television and radio broadcasts, organized with churches and other organizations in lobbying efforts to reinstate the Aristide administration. Finally, they supported a U.S. embargo on Haiti.

This last strategy created a stir among Haitians who otherwise identified as members of a Tenth Department. One seeker wrote:

I am appalled by the recent petition issued and circulated by the Tenth Department Bureau of Michigan urging people to sign-up in support for the imposition of sanctions and embargo against Haiti's current administration [(established by an 'unwarranted [military] coup')]. . . . It connotes the notion that 'power must be regained at all costs,' even if it means starvation and denial of basic humanitarian help to the people of Haiti.<sup>21</sup>

Despite these political differences, the interest and activism of Haitians in Michigan, particularly those in Detroit, for political events in Haiti increased the visibility of this diaspora population.

#### CHALLENGES TO FULL PARTICIPATION AND VIABILITY OF HAITIAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

Several factors posed challenges to individual and collective efforts to formalize the sense of community among Haitians in southeastern Michigan. These included social stratification between Haitians, the constraints of time due to personal obligations, differences in political opinions and the physical distance between the various residential clusters of Haitians in Michigan. These challenges left several Haitians with the feeling that community did not exist in Michigan. An *invité* from Lansing said:

There's not much interaction that I've seen between the two groups [i.e., veterans and those who were sent], and I think I know the reason why. First of all, there were differentials culturally . . . since the Haitian community back in Haiti itself is divided [often along class lines]. And, the American way of life is such [that it] requires that you go on your own . . . [the way of life is] individualistic . . . working rules, [you always have] schedules to meet, deadlines to meet, and everybody is trying to make a living. So that takes most of the time of both [the] professional [migrant] and the one [that] comes without much education. And there is no time to meet and interact, not that they don't visit each other once in a while but . . . they don't integrate; they don't have social get-togethers, except superficial [interactions]—somebody might ask them for translation [services] but it is not a unified, solid thing.

The sense of cultural difference, or social stratification, among Haitians created a harsh fissure between veterans in Lansing and the latter wave of Haitians who were sent. One seeker described how a cultural clash among the different waves led to the deterioration of the effort to sustain the *système de parrainage* and the aid given to Haitian houses. Individuals from across the migration waves called it a *manque de respect* (lack of respect). Veterans perceived those who were sent (in Lansing) as abusive of the charity offered for actions like hoarding supplies, running up “one-thousand-dollar” telephone bills and speaking in ill terms towards others. Whereas the sent interviewees concurred with the opinions of invited and seeking interviewees, alternative perspectives also emerged. For example, as one seeker (involved in the *système de parrainage*) suggested, the charitable actions could have been perceived as patronizing and stimulated backlash. Also, this seeker noted that coming from different regions meant that Haitian immigrant groups may have had limited interactions with one another prior to immigrating.

Time constraints also posed a real challenge to nurturing Haitian community in Michigan. Both professionals and laborers faced heavy demands on their time. The fact that most of the formal organizations and activities were created by and supported by white-collar immigrants reflects their advantage in the society. The majority of the laborers, Haitians who were sent, particularly those residing in Grand Rapids, described their schedules as being filled by working two different jobs and fulfilling their family obligations. This did not allow much time for organizing and participating in community events, besides those at their church on Sunday (a commitment associated with family obligation). A final comment about time constraints as an obstacle to community organizing relates to the physical distance separating southeastern Michigan’s Haitian population. There are approximately 150 miles between Detroit and Grand Rapids, 80 miles between Detroit and Lansing and 60 miles between Grand Rapids and Lansing. It was common for Haitians in Lansing and Grand Rapids to site the Haitian community in Detroit, based on the greater visibility of organizations such as HCOM and *Espoir*. Among these individuals, those interested in nurturing a formal, centralized Haitian community in southeastern Michigan had to be prepared to expend time and money. A round-trip drive to the activities taking place in Detroit could take nearly four hours, would require access to a vehicle and would incur the related expenses of wear and tear on a vehicle and gasoline.

There was also lack of support at times due to disagreements over the nature of organizations. For example, one former member of *Le Bababab* expressed his disappointment with the inclusion of non-Haitians in the club, as well as the use of a West African image for the Haitian club. The emergence of *Espoir* two years after HCOM’s founding led to debates about how important social functions were for the local diaspora population. During *Espoir*’s first four years (1986–1990), extensive efforts were

made to collaborate and cooperate with HCOM. The two organizations supported each other's events and created an ad hoc committee. This coordinating committee, represented by the two groups and general members of the community, held several meetings "in order to strengthen [the] effort in the existence of the two organizations" and facilitate "better dialogue and cooperation."<sup>22</sup> The organizations were to retain their autonomous status and "strive at establishing a better working relationship that would include mutual support in implementing their individual activities." Correspondence through the end of 1990 attests to sustained efforts; however, shortly thereafter HCOM ceased its activities.

In 1998, the Haitian Association of Michigan (HAM) was established. The organization began as a committee of twelve friends who collaborated to fund and coordinate social events for the community. Local Haitians described HAM as the rebirth of HCOM, in that HAM aimed to meet the social demands formerly met by HCOM. In this way, Haitians reasserted their interest for preserving a lively social scene. A seeker who served on the executive committee of HCOM and is now a primary organizer of HAM discussed the importance of the new organization:

Well, I think it is essential that it continues to exist in spite of controversy . . . because it does bring the people together and provide an opportunity for social gathering . . . a chance for people to release their feelings and their views of what's going on around them and within their own families.

Finally, differences in political opinions created a difficult challenge for sustaining a sense of community and efforts to organize Haitians in southeastern Michigan. Passionate political sentiments regarding developments in Haiti influenced the level of participation in all types of local organizing—social, cultural and political. One *invité* said: "I believe that the . . . political situation [in Haiti] affected the unification of the diaspora." This informant lamented the difficulty of choosing the right side to take. "We know that we have refugees . . . but I did not guarantee to go help them because you have family in Haiti . . . so you don't know which side to take. . . . You have to be careful [with whose cause you are supporting] . . . sort of conflict and confusion with politics."

Others attributed the sense of "conflict and confusion" to generational issues. One seeker said: "You know, the elders . . . the older generation, they really hold it [difference of political opinions] personally. . . . But us guys [the seeking or younger generations] here we deal with Republicans, Democrats." The most evident concern for Haitians in Detroit was the impact of political divisions on efforts to nurture Haitian culture in the local youth. A young organizer mentioned that political divisions made it difficult for her group, *Quisqueya*, to gather donations and support for their efforts. A seeker critiqued the adults' behavior by saying:

I think the sad thing about the Haitian community is the fact that the youth and children growing up in the community, they grow up detached . . . because the adults [have issues due to politics]. I think that's a sad thing . . . because they grow up . . . not knowing . . . really some of their roots. Right now, they have been denied this opportunity because we failed to . . . do our duties, I think, as a group, and as a people. I think that's the saddest thing about it [the political and, consequently, the community divisions].

## CONCLUSION: CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

The life experiences and general knowledge of Haitians in southeastern Michigan shaped their vision for developing Haitian community. For example, in organizing *Le Baobab*, the experience of two Haitian members who had worked in Africa contributed to their awareness of the cultural and linguistic similarities between Haitians and West Africans. This experience facilitated their interest and appreciation for the participation of the group's Senegalese members, and the African name of this Haitian literary club. In another example, one of Detroit's seekers, a Haitian engineer, applied his technical knowledge and his familiarity with the city's revitalization efforts to develop *Espoir's* Center for Caribbean Arts and Culture. By renovating a home located in Detroit's Arts District, he helped to establish *Espoir's* Center. The architectural beauty and practical space offered by the Center created a central meeting place for Detroit's Haitian community. The renovated property offered members of *Espoir* and other community groups (Haitian and non-Haitian) a site for meetings, art exhibits, lectures or other communal activities.

In Michigan, being a part of networks that included non-Haitians magnified the possibilities for what the Haitian diaspora community could represent and accomplish, particularly during times when support from the small base of Haitians waned. By building community with other African-descended people, Haitians in southeastern Michigan affirmed Haiti's significance for the African diaspora. Seekers and the community's youngest members were the most likely to embrace a historical and cultural connection with Africa and its descendents. Nonetheless, the activities in Michigan helped to nurture the importance of celebrating and taking advantage of those connections to the largest audiences possible.

An executive member of *Espoir* proudly spoke about the role of an African-American woman in encouraging the organization's creation. He welcomed the assistance of African Americans in helping to promote constructive knowledge about Haiti and its diaspora:

In a city like Detroit, where Haitians are not really well known and television only portray [us as] poor . . . noneducated . . . we are able to

change the image . . . [to show that] we are educated, very rich culturally, and we have made a historical contribution to the Afro-American community. We also contribute to [the larger] community, with culture, arts, dance. . . . We are able to participate and contribute in a different way.

*Espoir* received numerous letters over the years in testimony to how their presence was appreciated in Detroit. A letter from Charles H. Wright, MD, founder and chairman of the MAAH, demonstrated how the Haitian presence in Michigan could help blacks in Michigan present a more sophisticated understanding of the dynamics of their community. Wright wrote:

Since next year is the State's [*sic*] Sesquicentennial celebration, I would like to prepare exhibits and offer a symposium that will reflect the contributions of various groupings of blacks in Michigan for the period of its statehood. By looking at immigrants from specific points of origin, Caribbean, [L]atin America, Canada, Africa . . . as well as non-immigrant blacks, we may be able to tell a different story from what is usually reported.<sup>23</sup>

The collaboration of Haitians with African Americans on projects as diverse as fundraising dinners that celebrated the theme of African diaspora, medical missions to Haiti and political lobbying on behalf of Haiti and Haitian refugees demonstrates that Haitians in southeastern Michigan had an opportunity to build their community in a way that nurtured African diasporic identity on a regular basis. These activities were complimented by African members or through the biennial trip to Benin organized through Wayne State University. Connections with Caribbean people were also acknowledged and affirmed through participation in public events such as the Caribbean Carnival, establishing a Caribbean Center and supporting activities such as public speakers, musical events and newsletter features that drew attention to the importance of learning about the people, history and culture of places like Cuba, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago.

Haitians in southeastern Michigan did not limit their connections to the larger community to people of African descent. They welcomed the support of other populations, particularly white Americans, who were interested in many of the aforementioned activities that helped to promote Haitian history and culture. However, the broadest area of collaboration came in terms of the human and political rights advocacy efforts as well as the religious missions working towards spiritual and economic development in Haiti. Moreover, projects such as *Espoir's* Caribbean Center, which provided a physical space for organizing, offered the valued contribution of helping to reestablish the vitality of a cultural arts district in metropolitan Detroit. The interest and activism of individuals who were not of Haitian descent was a vital source of support that sometimes led

to the actual efforts to build a formal Haitian community, and at all times, helped to sustain the existence of community organizing through the peaks and nadirs.

These findings highlight the factors influencing the expansion of Haiti's diaspora, its character at a personal and communal level, its visibility in the United States and Haiti and how its location at the intersection of other populations (e.g., Caribbean, African, African American, urban, university, politically active) has affected the viability and mode of addressing the needs and concerns of Haitians and others living in the urban United States.

## NOTES

1. Cross-tabulations of first- and second-generation immigrants, prepared by sociologist Rubén G. Rumbaut. The data are from the inter-decennial Current Population Survey, United States Bureau of Census, 1996 and 1997. The survey's numbers are weighted estimates based on a sample of fifty thousand persons, of which less than five hundred were Haitian.
2. Among the forty interviewees, there were thirteen Lansing residents, fifteen Detroit residents and twelve Grand Rapids residents; twenty-four male and sixteen female interviewees. All evidence from interviews and community organizations are held in author's files.
3. Representing the categories applied in my analysis, the cases include: three *Haitians who were invited* (individuals who came prior to the 1970s under the invitation of an educational or employment institution) from Lansing; twenty-seven *Haitians who were seeking* (individuals who came after 1970, on their own or without the support of formal institutions) from Detroit, Grand Rapids and Lansing; and ten *Haitians who were sent* (individuals who came after 1980 under formal resettlement programs sponsored by the United States government and local voluntary agencies) from Lansing and Grand Rapids. These individuals originate from across the island of Haiti, but are primarily from Port-au-Prince, Port de Paix, Aux Cayes and the Central Plateau.
4. All interviews are anonymous and interviewee names given are pseudonyms. Unless otherwise noted, quoted material is extracted from interviews with the author.
5. Berrien County was officially listed for hosting six refugees. This county is located at the edge of southwestern Michigan. It is approximately 83 miles from Grand Rapids, 125 miles from Lansing and 180 miles from Detroit. None of my interviewees spoke of Haitians in this area.
6. Despite this effort to deter the political activism of foreigners in the United States, several interviewees indicated that some individuals maintained contacts in Haiti and the United States that allowed them to stay abreast of and involved with political events in Haiti. According to the director of a local voluntary agency, those sent are queried by INS officials on where they would like to resettle upon arrival at Miami International Airport. This is done to offer individuals and families the opportunity to be reunited with other family members, given that the destination city is approved. Telephone conversation with the author, August 26, 1999.
7. Statewide statistics compiled for the author from Michigan Family Independence Agency, Refugee Assistance Program, in author's files.

8. Some persons who were invited and who were seeking, particularly those entering the United States as children, had similar experiences of uncertainty as the elders initiated the migration processes. Perhaps one unique aspect of the experience of those sent was that their move was done much more spontaneously, or appeared as such to those not involved in the decision-making processes of migrating.
9. There were a number of Haitians who were not connected to or interested in connecting to other Haitians in the area. One reason for this was the high level of attachment individuals had to their families more so than their ethnic background. This led some individuals to refrain from engaging in social activities (i.e., Haitian or non-Haitian) or doing so in a limited way. In other instances, such behavior was due to the desire some have to assimilate and mask their distinctiveness as Haitian.
10. Untitled document on HCOM letterhead stating the "History, Aims, and Purpose" of HCOM, as well as providing an outline of "Membership Information" and "Member Privileges," n.d.
11. "Addendum to HCOM By-Laws," n.d.
12. Reflecting the main functions proposed for the Committee on Social Affairs, "Addendum to HCOM By-Laws," n.d.
13. Letter to "friends and fellow supporters of H.C.O.M." from "the Executive Committee," August 22, 1989.
14. Press release in announcement of the Second Annual Fundraising Dinner, November 1987.
15. "An Evening with Ms. Dollie Bennett," program booklet; Brown (1998, 64, 66-67, 71); "Letters," *Ebony*, February 1989. All copies in author's files.
16. As of 2006, St. Gerard Parish became Corpus Christi, Detroit. See information on closed/merged parishes on <http://www.aodonline.org/AODOnline/AODOnline.htm>.
17. Announcements in *Krik, Krak* (newsletter for *Espoir*, a Haitian-American organization, Detroit, MI), fall and spring 1994.
18. "Loi Organique du Mouvement Pour l'Instauration de la Démocratie en Haïti: Section Internationale, Branche du Michigan," 3-4; Meeting Minutes, May 12, 1990.
19. Meeting Minutes, June 10, 1990.
20. Letter to "fellow citizens from the Haitian community," announcing a meeting of the *Dixième Department*, n.d.
21. Letter to "friends and neighbors" from a local seeker, November 6, 1991.
22. Correspondence between HCOM, *Espoir* and the coordinating committee, those quoted dated February 5, 1989, and February 1990.
23. Letter from Charles H. Wright to *Espoir*, dated November 12, 1986.

## 9 Departing Diaspora's Future?

### Forced Return Migration as an Ethnographic Lens on Generational Differences among Haitian Migrants in Montréal

*Heike Drotbohm*

Several years ago while carrying out research in rural Haiti about the life perspectives of local youth,<sup>1</sup> I discovered for the first time that the forced return of Haitian migrants (some of whom lacked a documented status, some of whom had been convicted of a criminal offence) constituted a significant topic of public debate. In the Haitian villages these so-called *depoté*, marked by the stigma of expulsion, were both admired and scorned. They were not only associated with an aura of cosmopolitan worldliness, but also with issues of familial neglect, urban violence and organized crime. The latter phenomena were thought to come to Haiti from the outside and would eventually precipitate its ruin. For many Haitians the deportees were the prototype of the unsuccessful migrant, people who had passed up the chance of successful emigration—the dream of so many on the island—and who, after their return to Haiti, lived the lives of restless bandits.

Some years later, during anthropological fieldwork among Haitian migrants in the Canadian city of Montréal, I came across the same issue.<sup>2</sup> Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) “people who are not Canadian citizens may be subject to removal from Canada if they are convicted of an offence in Canada” (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 2004). In regular intervals the Haitian migrant community<sup>3</sup> engaged in fervid debates about the practice of the Canadian government of deporting migrants back to Haiti. This chapter focuses on the association of threatened or real deportation with the younger generations.<sup>4</sup> Although U.S. and Canadian law maintain that no immigrant under the age of twenty-one may be transported back to his or her country of origin, deportation is linked, in this community, to the problem of youth delinquency. The perception is that the migrants who tend to get into trouble with the law are young, the youthful offspring of the migrant community. A particular theme in the local debate on this issue was that the government did not differentiate between those Haitians who had only come to Canada a few months or years ago and those who had arrived in Canada as small children and had spent their formative years in the country but never managed to obtain Canadian citizenship.

The expulsion of noncitizens back to their respective countries of origin by the target countries of international migration constitutes a growing and



complex phenomenon worldwide. In many cases, those who are expelled emigrated together with their parents and spent their childhoods and adolescence in the multicultural environment of Western cities. Whether in the U.S., Canada, France, Germany or elsewhere, it is no secret that structural discrimination can result in limited chances for upward mobility (Waters 1999); youth-specific crimes, such as drug abuse, thefts or robberies, but also gang rivalries and violence, occur frequently in this social context. Moreover, many of these adolescents do not realize that their status of “permanent residency” is a conditional one; such that conflicts with the law can result in the loss of residency status and eventually deportation—to a country that they hardly know, if at all.<sup>5</sup>

The criminalization of immigrants and refugees has been an important trend in the last several decades. Research has shown that the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath have resulted in a considerable increase in reliance on deportation by many Western states; anti-terror measures resulted in a more restrictive reformulation of laws as well as the extension of laws for national security (Mitchell 2004; Nyers 2003; Pratt 2005). Pratt (2005, 19) argues that these policies are being governed by fears of criminality, and by governing “through crime” states exclude or oppress the poor, the unemployed, minorities and migrants. The consequences of these policy changes, which Western governments expected to function as a deterrent, are dramatic for migrants and their families, as well as for the countries of origin that have to accommodate the deportees. Recent research on the phenomenon of forced return migration has dealt with the political and societal background of deportation, the mode of transfer as well as the possibilities of an eventual reintegration into the former home community (De Genova 2002, 2007; Peutz 2006; Walters 2002; Zilberg 2004). Whereas the legal basis for the deportation, the status of returnees and the form of transportation may vary, the deportees nevertheless experience comparable problems when they finally arrive in their alleged home communities. Integration in the country of origin and especially into unfamiliar social contexts can be particularly conflict laden. The deportees, already traumatized by the transit, are confronted with what may be for them an unfamiliar culture.

With the aim of complementing these studies, this chapter will discuss the multiple understandings of deportation and the impact of this state practice on the self-perceptions of the Haitian community of Montréal. Using the issue of deportation as an ethnographic lens I describe the perspectives among different age-groups of Haitian migrants in the Canadian city, where deportations of youth back to Haiti have caused much agitation. I find that ideas about deportation vary according to migrant generation and their apparently contradictory reactions are analyzed against the social and cultural context so as to elaborate on the different levels of meaning involved. My examination of these ‘deportation narratives’ illustrates mutual constructions of Otherness within this migrant community and how inner boundaries are constructed and maintained—boundaries that not only divide social classes, but the generations as well.

Arjun Appadurai has identified the relationship between the generations as a key issue for understanding deterritorialized communities and interprets them in terms of a diasporic ideology in which this relationship is elaborated as a part of identity and localization processes vis-à-vis inner and outer references (Appadurai 1996, 44). Accordingly, I approach the “generation gap” in a double sense (Whyte, Alber and Geest 2008). First, I talk about different age-groups and, hence, different age-specific life experiences, particularly with regard to the process of migration. In my case study, elder migrants often belonged to the first generation, who left their country of origin as adults, whereas their children either left Haiti when they were very young or were born in diaspora and, therefore, belonged to the second generation (Stepick and Stepick 2003). The experiences of different age-groups, or migrant cohorts, are also linked to the second common use of the term *generation gap*, which refers to the relationships within one family unit, where parents and children dialogue, but may have different understandings of the same issues.

This chapter is a product of anthropological fieldwork carried out in Haiti and in Canada in 2002 and 2003. Whereas my original research interest focused on the changes and transformations of religious practices in the diasporic context, forced return migration emerged as such a pressing issue in both the country of origin and the migrant destination that I could not ignore it. The following interpretation is based on participant observation within the Haitian community of Montréal, informal encounters with Haitian migrants of different age-groups, as well as semi-structured interviews carried out with adults as well as young Haitians who discussed the threat of deportation in different ways.

Following a brief historical overview of Haitian migration to Canada and some thoughts on class-specific ethnic identity and relations to the country of origin, I turn to the problem of Haitian youth “delinquency” in Montréal in order to illuminate the frame of reference for the narratives presented here. In the next section, I discuss the public reactions to the Canadian state announcement regarding the deportation of more migrants to Haiti. The choice of some striking and what might seem like extreme statements highlights some key tensions and the range of responses I encountered. These examples enable me to classify the reactions according to different patterns and link my observations to structural differences between the first and the second generation of Haitian migrants in Montréal. In particular, I differentiate between the elders’ and the youths’ perspectives in order to elaborate on generational differences before concluding with some general thoughts on possible interpretations of forced return migration in different social contexts.

## HAITIANS ON THE MOVE

At the time of my fieldwork, of the 1 to 1.5 million people of Haitian background who lived outside of Haiti itself (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001, 12), it was estimated that between forty thousand and seventy thousand

were in the Franco-Canadian city of Montréal (Davenport 2003; Dejean [1978] 1990).<sup>6</sup> Haitian migration to the Caribbean and the North American contexts is not a new phenomenon (see Boswell 1982), but it emerged as a mass movement in the course of the 1950s. In the second half of the twentieth century, Canada prided itself on a liberal approach to refugees; changes in immigration policy combined with a more humanitarian approach than the United States led to increasing numbers of nonwhite migrants and refugees. Simplifying considerably, one can subdivide the Haitian movement to Canada into two larger migration waves.

The first wave began in 1957 with the rise of François Duvalier to power and the subsequent dictatorial regime. Given the political situation in the country, primarily members of the Haitian upper classes, such as intellectuals, artists, medical professionals, lawyers and also the whole political Left fled the country until the end of the 1960s. The francophone Canadian province of Quebec continued to be a favorite destination when with the second wave of Haitian migration in the 1970s and 1980s more and more members of the working classes migrated. Haitians, as a franco-creolephone group, enjoyed considerable privileges regarding employability and communication with the Canadian administration (Labelle, Larose and Piché 1983; Piché 1987). At the same time, they maintained good contacts to other centers of Haitian migration, such as Boston, New York City, Miami or Paris.

The experience of living as commuters between places of residence and the place of origin has been captured by two different albeit complementary paradigms within migration studies. First, the situation and perspective of Haitian migrants has been examined in the context of diaspora studies, which focuses on the collective feeling of loss as well as the dispersal throughout many countries and that interprets the particular kind of collective consciousness linking Haitian migrants to their former homeland (Cohen 1997). In addition, Haitian migrants have gained particular prominence within the more recent understanding of migration processes as “transnational social fields.” This analytic optic sheds light on the multiple linkages extending between country of origin and destination country and reveals the “simultaneous incorporation” of migrants in more than one nation-state (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994; Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc 1992; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

With regard to both theoretical backgrounds, I would like to underline the particular importance of the country of origin—be it a real or imaginary reference. Research on notions of the diaspora have shown that the images that evolve around the country of origin are particularly significant for the construction of diasporic identities and have consequences for the ways in which migrants position themselves vis-à-vis members of their own group, vis-à-vis other minorities and vis-à-vis the host society (Cohen 1997, 26, 144–153; Safran 1991). Transnational Studies also highlights the meaning of connectedness between migrants and their former country of

origin and elaborates on the multiple social, political and economic linkages that interweave both places.

Currently, the relationship of Haitian transmigrants towards their country of origin is considerably affected by the fact that Haiti is so often referred to as “the poorest country of the Western hemisphere.” The popular depiction is of a country that has undergone a continuous decline in the last century and is at present completely devastated in political, ecological and economical terms. Labelle (2002, 13) reminds us:

The emigration of Haitians took place under the influence of structural factors, at once economic and social (misery, unemployment, collapse of economic structures, absence of social protection) and political (American occupation in 1915, despoilment of land and goods, dictatorship under the Duvaliers, difficulties related to the transition to democracy).

It is not surprising, then, that in the course of the last three decades many Haitians have taken leave of any illusion of eventually returning, arguing that corruption, nepotism and the unadulterated exploitation of resources continues unabated with each new government. Even the euphoria accompanying the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide as president in December 1990 was frustrated and an ambivalence between affection and bitterness towards the country began to emerge in the Haitian diaspora—with significant consequences for the relationship between Haiti and its migrants. A transnational social field began to develop while at the same time many Haitians started to explicitly plan their future in Canada, or elsewhere in the Haitian diaspora, deciding to support their home country from the outside.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the self-perception of Haitian transmigrants is much affected by how the migrant community is perceived by others. Many Haitians see themselves as being confronted with more racism and stigmatization than other ethnic minorities, especially in disputes with institutions and the authorities (Potvin 2000). Particularly in the 1980s, when Haitian immigration to the United States and Canada was increasing, it was sometimes perceived as a massive invasion, not only by the Quebecois, but also by other ethnic minority groups. Hence, throughout North America several negative stereotypes associated with Haitians emerged. Comparable to the historical perception of Haiti by the surrounding Caribbean and North American countries, the Haitian minority in Canada and the United States was classified as a hotbed of criminality and violence and was associated with the trafficking in drugs and weapons and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Richman 1992, 192; Stepick 1998, 35).

Due to this entanglement of constructions, the self-perception of Haitian migrants with regard to their ethnic belonging in Montréal remains ambiguous. Those belonging to the intellectual or political elite of the community

seem to perceive themselves as being closer to the French bourgeoisie and feel themselves to be better off in relation to other ethnic minorities in Quebec. Thus, some of them even distance themselves from those Haitian migrants who can be described as more working class. Among the latter, the negative stereotypes can result in strong distrust towards members of other ethnic minorities, as well as towards the elite of their own group. The working-class position is expressed either in very conservative and conformist behavior with regard to the norms and values of Canadian society or in social distance toward other ethnic minorities (Drotbohm 2005a; Potvin 1999, 2000). Whereas these characteristics were particularly prevalent in the 1990s, more and more examples of successful integration into the Canadian society can be cited, as Haitians today are represented in all professional groups and contribute actively to the shaping of multicultural politics in Quebec.

In sum, it should be kept in mind that the self-perception of the first generation of Haitian migrants is characterized by an inner antagonism that is nourished from different directions. As their image of the country of origin has shifted from mystification to frustrated ambivalence, the negative reputation of the Haitian community has led to internal divisions and to class-specific discourses of difference. Therefore, even today, more than fifty years after the arrival of the pioneer migrants, Haitian migrants struggle with internal class differences as well as disparate interests and expectations—perhaps even more than other migrant communities.

## YOUTH DELINQUENCY IN MONTRÉAL

Given the dynamic between several fields of identity construction and the image of the Haitian migrant community in Montréal, the issues of youth delinquency and deportation have acquired a symbolic meaning. Generally, from the perspective of migrants, the integration and social mobility of the next generation is of particular importance. This expectation was clear during my research in Montréal. In private dialogues, informal meetings as well as official events, the public perception of Haitian children and youth emerged repeatedly among Haitian migrants of the first generation. In some cases, Haitian parents described their fears about the loss of “culture” among their offspring, their consumption of North American mainstream mass culture and their abandoning of Haitian norms and values. These are taken as results of an “immoral” Western way of life. Everyday questions of style—dress codes and hairstyles, music and their leisure-time behavior—prompted Haitian parents to regularly describe their own distance from and failure to comprehend the lifeworlds of their children.

The lifeworlds of Haitian children who live in the United States or in Canada have been explored by several North American sociologists and anthropologists. To date three issues have been the subject of focus: the

positioning of the so-called second generation of migrants<sup>8</sup> between Haitian and Western cultures (Laguerre 1984; Potvin 1999, 2000); the lives of Haitian children and youth in transnational spaces and in relation to other centers of the Haitian diaspora (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001; Meintel 2000); and, finally, some studies (such as those carried out by Perreault and Bibeau 2003; Stepick 1998; Stepick et al. 2001; Zéphir 2001) focused on the issue of youth delinquency and asked why Haitian children and youth more than any other migrant group are confronted with socioeconomic discrimination, as identified by their lack of educational success.

A particularly hot issue in this context is the problem of Haitian street gangs in Montréal. The threat posed by criminal street gangs in Canada appears minor compared to that of other places.<sup>9</sup> National crime rates fell during the decade of the 1990s and remained flat in 2000–2002. The murder rate is relatively low, with crimes against property as the main violation (Statistics Canada 2004). But “the gang problem” is by all accounts real and associated with violent theft and drug dealing in the urban areas (Chalom and Kousik 1993). The overrepresentation of Haitian youth in these gangs has also been documented (Douyon 1996).<sup>10</sup> Gang-related crime is regularly discussed not only among Haitian parents but also in the press, which, importantly, focuses on the dynamic among the individual, family, migrant community and receiving society in a particular way. For instance, a series of events during 1992, when a Haitian street gang broke into and robbed several shops in one neighborhood of Montréal, mark until today a significant coordinate in the production of stereotypes about the Haitian community (Perreault and Bibeau 2003, 69).<sup>11</sup>

At first, the “delinquent” behavior of Haitian children and youth is not obvious. Most of them seem to undergo a socialization process that is rather common in the Haitian diaspora and remain fully integrated into families organized around the idea of parental authority and the transmission of long-held values and norms. However, a closer look at family life in Montréal reveals that a generational conflict divides the domestic sphere in two.<sup>12</sup> As described earlier, we are dealing with a group that is characterized by a class-specific discourse of difference and for whom the relationship to the country of origin has a significant meaning. These two features—constructions of internal difference and the relation to the country of origin—will appear frequently in the following interpretation.

After this brief note on the local context, I want to return to the summer of 2002 when a small group of Haitian youth was arrested by the Montréal police on charges of gang-related activities and drug dealing and waiting for their court case in custody. This situation was nothing new and similar cases had received only little attention before. However, in the past the Canadian government apparently had only rarely made use of its option to deport Haitians, who had simply failed to apply for Canadian citizenship and therefore were either undocumented migrants or Haitian citizens with a permanent residency status.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, my interviewees—without exception—did not differentiate between undocumented migrants who

were facing removal because they were noncitizens and migrants who were permanent residents *and* had been convicted of an offense in Canada. At least in the context of my interviews, deportation was directly associated with delinquency and its impact on Haiti.

### THE ELDERS' PERSPECTIVE: NEGOTIATING TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES

For several weeks in the summer of 2002, the deportation of a number of Haitian youth to Haiti stood in the center of everyday gossip on the street, as well as in local television, print and audio media and the online forum of the Haitian diaspora. Here, I will try to recapture some of the reactions, beginning with those of the elder, first-generation Haitian migrants. Their reactions to the announcement of the deportations include outrage, aggression, confusion and compassion. Apart from the intensity of these emotions, their reactions were in no way homogeneous, but expressed different, at times contradicting, appraisals of the events and can be summarized into four categories to be illustrated by means of exemplary statements.<sup>14</sup>

First, there was the reaction of a very vocal minority who greeted the deportation of the troubled youth. From their perspective, the “scum” of the community would finally get what it deserved, as would the parents who had failed to teach their children Haitian values, adequate modes of behavior and respect. When I talked to Josèphe, owner of a chain of supermarkets, forty-nine years old, it became clear that he perceived the criminal acts of co-ethnic Haitians as an attack on his own professional prospects:

For years we have fought our bad reputation. Can it be, that a couple of brats mess up the reputation of the whole black community in Montréal and destroy our lives? These gangs are a shame for the Haitian community. I'm glad to see that the Canadian government is finally taking rigorous steps.

Josèphe's harsh reaction may sound extreme, but it corresponds to many statements I heard in my discussions on the practice of deportation, especially if this concerned “delinquent” migrants. Josèphe is among those who came to Canada in the early 1980s, he has invested a lot of money and sweat in order to extend his financial basis, he is proud of his upward mobility and the status he has acquired. He has “made it.” But at the same time, he often struggles with the bad perception of Haitian migrants in Montréal and is confronted with racist encounters, a situation that apparently lessens or calls his personal achievements into question. Reactions like his are prominent among those migrants primarily concerned with the perception of their migrant group in a culturally diverse environment and who perceive themselves as representing the upper class of the Haitian community.

In this sense, the actions of the Canadian government are appreciated because these migrants hope that their group will be freed of these “blemishes” for the benefit of a peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society. Those who worked hard for their upward mobility are particularly worried about maintaining their position and keeping their vested rights. In this case, the deportations are perceived as some kind of purification that may free the community of a negative stereotype. Comparable to the scapegoat principle, the respondents expect the processual liberation from the stigma of criminality.

The study carried out by Marc Perreault and Gilles Bibeau about Caribbean youth gangs in Montréal confirms this trend. They describe how the alleged delinquent behavior of the youth of an ethnic group can be perceived as an attack on the group's reputation and therefore as a threat:

One of the common reflexes is to blame the splinter groups of these young ‘boors’ who lack social values and of which these delinquents have to be isolated. Commonly, the fact that these events harm the reputation of the entire black community is deplored. (Perreault and Bibeau 2003, 71; my translation)

Furthermore, as Wendy Chan (2006) persuasively argues, even the threat of deportation plays an effective role in the moral regulation of migrants. She writes:

A central argument in this paper is that deportation is as much about the expulsion of particular ‘undesirable’ immigrants as it is about making ‘good’ citizens given that many more immigrants are investigated for deportation than are actually deported. (2006, 154)

The second type of reaction did not center on the consequences for the local Haitian community, but on the consequences for Haiti, the country of origin. With the deportations, some Haitian elders saw a wave of criminality and violence arriving in Haiti, with which the country would not be able to cope. I talked with Myrielle, who worked as a bank employee; she was fifty-three years old and came to Canada in the 1990s:

But Haiti already has so many criminals! Today they are small-time thieves, but tomorrow the whole country will be in big business. The island will degenerate into a territory for drug trade, since these guys bring with them the tricks, perfidies and sophistication of organized crime in North America. They know very well the needs here, the kinds of drugs and the strategies of the Canadian police. But this form of criminality was produced in Canada! These little criminals are Canadian products, not Haitian. Canada's decision to export this criminality to Haiti will end in the complete ruin of Haiti.



Here, Myrielle connects Canadian criminality with the disastrous situation in Haiti and uses the announcements of the deportations for an evaluation of the homeland's destiny. Unlike Josèphe, who is mainly concerned with the diasporic context, Myrielle reflects on the inner logics of migration, segmented integration, racial attributions of belonging and, linked to this, the particular situation for the society of origin. Haiti will bear the burden and have to deal with the integration of individuals who have undergone a traumatizing process of social disintegration during the process of removal.

In the interviews I often felt the uneasiness of migrants as they reflected on the perspectives and situations the deportees would face back in Haiti. Often they speculated that the deportees would have no options but to continue their criminal careers and that this would have considerable consequences for the security of their own family members still living in Haiti. Although the connection between criminality developed in Western states and the degradation of developing countries may not be as straightforward as is assumed by the preceding informant, these fears are nevertheless real. The examples of youth gangs in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, whose members were deported from North America, demonstrate the difficult conditions under which returned youth live and the dangers of eventually returning to criminal gang activities (Zilberg 2004).

However, I would also like to suggest that the prospects Myrielle fears can also be understood as subjective feelings of helplessness. Like many Haitian migrants she would like to contribute to the economic and political improvement of her country of origin, but is not able to do so. Haitian transmigrants who came to Canada during the last couple of years and still have plans and hopes for an eventual return feel responsibilities and duties for a future life in the country of origin. They worry not only about their own eventual interests, but also about family members and friends still living in Haiti who are particularly hard hit by increasing destabilization.

In the third category of responses, the preoccupation with personal failings in contributing to the reconstruction of Haiti plays a significant role as well. This set of reactions associated deportation with a vision of loss and ruin. Marie-Rose, forty-seven years old, housewife and mother of two teenagers, commented:

These children are no real Haitians, they have never been there, they do not know anything over there and do not know how to get along in such a country. They have no family there or friends, they are *djaspo*. They [Haitians in Haiti] will slam the door in their faces, or maybe stone them to death. They do not even know how to find something to eat! And the climate! There is no snow in Port-au-Prince! The heat will kill them. All this is completely irresponsible. The Canadian government should assume the responsibility for these kids, whom they have offered no other perspective

than crime; they have to offer alternative solutions. If not, they will be back faster than they think anyway. All this will all end badly.

Marie-Rose migrated to Montréal more than thirty years ago, in the 1970s. After she separated from her husband, she worked as a cleaner until a couple of years ago when she stopped working in order to care for her two sons. She told me that sometimes she was extremely scared by the stories she heard about her country of origin, about the level of crime and atrocities. A couple of years ago she decided that she would never return to Haiti and she also would forbid her two sons, both of whom were born in Canada, to go there. Marie-Rose, who interprets the issue of deportation on the level of individual life prospects, tries to bring together the negative image of her country of origin with the perspectives of young Haitians living in the diaspora. Keeping in mind her own experience as a refugee, who had to flee the country many years ago, her attitude is understandable.

In the course of my fieldwork, I often heard generalized and extremely negative descriptions of living conditions in Haiti. Particularly among those early migrants who fled as political refugees and never went back after the dictatorship collapsed, the image of their country of origin hardly agrees with contemporary reality. Marie-Rose represents a segment of the Haitian population in Montréal who, even today, suffers the loss of their former home country, but would never dare to return, neither for a short visit nor for a longer stay. Among these migrants, often Canadian citizens of Haitian origin, Haiti truly represents a lost and unreachable home, an image that is nourished by the country's trauma of continuous political and ecological destabilization.

Whereas these depictions of Haiti may be seen in relation to the abandoned ideal of returning someday, the problematic issue of the exclusion of young deportees by the receiving local structures is all too often true. Whereas the *diaspora*, as members of the Haitian diaspora sometimes are called pejoratively in Haiti, ensure economical survival in the country of origin by means of remittances (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994, 161), they are sometimes accused of neglecting their duties of solidarity vis-à-vis their nation and their family members in Haiti. Others think that the *diaspora* are cowardly for having fled the country (Stepick 1998, 30). Clearly, such animosities are even stronger towards the *depoté*, as illustrated in my introductory remarks.

The fourth and final type of reaction among the elders that I would like to discuss in this context is entirely sympathetic with the deportees' destinies. These comments expressed a strong empathy towards deportees, who, it is argued, had no future in Canada and now regrettably no longer hold the right to freedom of travel. Some see the Haitian migrant community as partly to blame; they are accused in the local Haitian media of having failed to support the youth threatened with deportation. In this response, so-called youth delinquency is associated with weakened family ties, forsaken

adolescence and increasing generational conflicts. Furthermore, my interviewees singled out the elite of their migrant community, who they perceive to be interested solely in the smooth integration or complete assimilation of the youth into mainstream society and in the maintenance of their own bourgeois existence. With regard to other Haitian migrants, they argued that Haitians did not appear as a unified group to condemn the actions of the Canadian state. I talked to Jean-Claude, who was fifty-six years old, already living in Canada for thirty-eight years and working as a taxi driver. He commented on the issue in the following way:

Our own children do not mean anything to us, we cast pearls before swine. It serves us right that our children turn away and have lost any connection to Haiti. We ourselves have nothing that ties us to Haiti anymore, we turned away long ago!

At this point I would like to call attention to the extreme emotionality of the reactions, particularly obvious in the comments by Marie-Rose and Jean-Claude. Their positions represent a common attitude among Haitian migrants with regard to their country of origin. In this context, the interaction of parents with their children should also be interpreted in relation to their own biographies and how they feel about themselves and their life choices. If we consider the lives of Haitians who arrived in Canada as members of the first migrant generation, it becomes clear that the events of 1986 (and perhaps even 1991) suggest an emotional stake and also a closer attachment to an eventual future in Canada. However, many Haitian migrants were relegated to the margins of Quebec society, against their own expectations and visions. As a result, they concentrated more on their children, who now not only represented the motivation, but also content and aim of their parents' migration project. The second generation embodies the hopes of social and economic upward mobility and the return of the positive reputation and prestige, which their parents enjoyed or envied before leaving their country. Against this background, the eventual expulsion of members of the second generation back to Haiti, be it their own children or the children of other families, implied the shattering of their life plans and a sort of failure. In other words, the prospect of the eventual deportation of their own children forced Haitian parents to face their deep-rooted fear that their migration could have been for naught and that at the same time that the way back home was closed.

### **THE YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVE: FRAGMENTED CULTURAL BELONGINGS**

Haitian youth contend with their cultural heritage against the background of structural violence, historically rooted racism, the fight against economic marginalization and diffuse life perspectives. Their parents' perspectives, as described in the preceding section, also persist in their children's

ambivalence towards notions of cultural belonging and social identity. A male youth, perhaps sixteen years old, told me:

I speak French, English and Creole fluently and I can also speak Spanish. But here I am always Haitian. And they are somehow always the bottom of the barrel.<sup>15</sup>

As this statement shows, even those who have lived the greatest part of their lives in Quebec, must, due to their skin color, contend with an ascribed Haitian identity and the negative reputation of their migrant community. Despite (or because of) this stigma, many Haitian youth in the course of their adolescent years feel the need to identify profoundly with their parents' country of origin. Jennifer, also sixteen years old, of Haitian origin and born in Montréal, puts it to a point:

I was born here. Here I go to school. Here, I have my family and my friends and I never asked myself this question, because it is here, where I am. But one day someone asked the question: 'Where are you from?' and I answered, 'From here.' The person laughed. 'No: Where are you from? Where were you born?' I said, 'In Montréal.' They thought I was kidding and did not accept my answer. Since this day this question is always repeated. And this made me think: Where am I from?

As a result of this form of exclusion, among these youth Haiti emerges as a significant coordinate in the creation of their identity. Some develop a strong interest in the history of their parents' country and its political and economic development. But they are also confronted with their parents' ambivalence.

The perspective of Haitian parents, commuting between an uncertain homeland and the Haitian diaspora, is reflected in their descriptions of Haiti. The Haiti of their imaginations shifts between horrifying portrayals and mystification. On the one hand, the parents describe Haiti in an exaggerated way as a place of poverty, misery and natural catastrophes and as a place where theft and murder render a normal life impossible. On the other hand, they speak in dazzling colors of the 'pearl of the Antilles,' its heroic history as the first free nation of former slaves, the first one to successfully break the chains of oppression in a famous rebellion. This ambivalence leads on the part of their children to an uncertainty with regard to their cultural heritage. In Montréal, mainly as a result of their skin color, second-generation Haitians are classified as "outsiders," as part of a "visible minority." At the same time, Haiti, as a central element of their identity, remains intangible and diffuse. This is particularly true for those who only spent a few years in Haiti, if at all, and whose image of the island country is first of all a product of their parents' narratives.

At the same time, they perceive the Haitian migrant community in Montréal as a kind of space constructed by, and for, the first generation, a space that offers the second generation neither refuge nor support.

Maryse Potvin has explored this phenomenon and summarizes her results in the following manner:

They also don't find any kind of refuge in the Haitian community in Montréal, perceived like a space created for the 'first generation'; which offers services for new arrivals and a political springboard for an established elite, but only small means of integration to young Québécois. (Potvin 2000, 186)

Thus many Haitian youth travel among several community-based identifications: the multicultural society of Quebec; the Haitian community that surrounds them, including their parents and other family members but also the rest of the first generation of Haitian migrants in Montréal; and, finally, the community of black youth in Canada, which connects them to a trans-ethnic global youth culture.<sup>16</sup>

In the context of the uproar that followed the announced deportations, the youth themselves hardly contributed to the public debate. Their hesitation and silence was surprising; I could not identify a reaction to the governments' announcement comparable to those of their parents—neither in the media, in the context of informal meetings with individual youth, nor in the context of organized youth meetings. It almost seemed as if this affair was hardly of any concern. Only when I actively introduced the issue into my conversations with the young people and asked them their opinions directly did they react, and some controversial discussions did take place. There were two types of reactions, which are again best illustrated by the following examples.

One recurring reaction was the justification of the criminal actions or a critique of the media's representation:

It is nonsense to deport them. What have they done? There are many kids active in gangs, so what? This doesn't mean that they are criminals. They should talk to them. They could tell them a bit about what it means to be black in Montréal. We are the niggers<sup>17</sup> here. They want us to be good kids, go to school and marry a white girl. But that's not what *we* want. And we're fed up with this capitalistic shit. We are rebels, yes. We live differently, alright, but this does not necessarily mean that we are criminals. And if yes—so what? (Jimmy, sixteen years old)

The boy explained that the Montréal public pay special attention to gang activities and muggings when Haitians were involved. Another young man blamed the media for reproducing the stereotype that all black criminals were Haitians; he claimed that nobody paid attention to crimes when the perpetrators were not black. Another one told me, as others around him applauded, that these kinds of crimes were exaggerated in order to find a reason to get rid of Haitians.

Another, also typical, reaction was the condemnation of their parents' attitudes towards the governments' announcement. In this case, the kids agreed that their parents put more faith in the government than in their own children and had thus lost touch with them.

My god, why all this excitement? Because we are not the way they want us to be. They dis us only because we are not managers and lawyers. And their children, they leave them alone: they have nobody, no government, no community, no parents, no God, who cares about them. At the same time they [the parents] also come out of the shit. Only because they have left their country, they think they are something better. It's awful, to see them chum up to the Quebecois: 'give us work, give us houses, give us cars. Let us be like you.' I hate that. They are house Negroes, nothing more. We do not want to be like them. (Jennifer, seventeen years old)

During our interviews, these young Haitians accused their parents of not speaking up for them because it would be more convenient to keep a low profile. When they call their parents *blancophil*, as one of them did, they devalue their efforts at integration as some sort of deference to the host society and criticize them, claiming that the parents put their material needs before their sympathy for their own children.

In both types of reactions, two entangled themes are in the foreground: first, the affinity of the youth to trans-Caribbean ideologies of rebellion and resistance; and second, the distance between them and their parents and the larger migrant community. In both cases they are working with images of themselves, constructed by Canadian society or the Haitian community, which they apply in expressing their disappointment in their parents' indifferent attitude towards the subtle racism of the host society. In response to my question about what problems they thought the youths being deported might have to deal with in Haiti, one young man said:

So what? Then they are there. Haiti is not hell. It's the country of our ancestors, who liberated us of the white oppressor. Maybe they'll have a better life over there than they did here.

These selected quotes illustrate the identity construction of the youths who have to negotiate their position between the spheres of reference raised earlier. The experience of rejection and of racism is the guiding theme in their opinion on the issue of deportation. Against the background of their bleak future and career expectations, racism appears to be the most significant criterion of difference and emerges as the sole explanation for their social situation. In her study on the interface between racism and self-perception of young Haitians in Quebec, Maryse Potvin made clear that the prevailing African-Canadian reaction to racism in the host society for several decades

oscillated between two extremes: a so-called democratic logic on the one hand, which concentrates on the expansion of rights and options among black segments of the population in the United States and Canada, and an “essentializing logic” on the other, which is based on a self-referring identity and is followed by a radical avoidance of white universalisms (Potvin 1999, 59–65). Both types of reactions among the youth can be allocated to the second logic, because both responses underline the critique of North American lifestyles and the stereotyping of nonwhite youth. In these ideologies of resistance typical for youth cultures anywhere in the world, the discussion of the gang activities shifts to a symbolical level, in order to express solidarity and to construct the youth as rebels, who speak up against their own marginalization (see also Brown 2002).

However, the young peoples’ accusations are not only directed towards the racism of the host society but also towards their parents who are perceived as submissive and indifferent. In this environment, the term “house Negro” is employed as a trans-Caribbean symbol referring to the historically founded antagonism between field slaves and house slaves. This dichotomy, developed in the context of Caribbean plantation economies, puts the field slave, who had to perform heavy work on his owner’s land and whose life-world was oriented towards trans-ethnic African traditions, in opposition to the house slave, who lived in spatial proximity to his white master, who was partly integrated into the masters’ everyday lives and enjoyed privileges such as education and better provisions. Against this background of trans-Caribbean ideologies the term “house Negro” might need to be understood as a specific term for a traitor and informer.

The comments quoted earlier revealed other levels of communication between the youth and their parents. Besides having to deal with the negative reputation of their migrant community and their preoccupation with their parents’ efforts of integration, Haitian youth are under pressure to fulfill their parents’ expectations and migration dreams. Not only do they have to deal directly with the structural limits put on their professional and social integration in Canadian society, they must at the same time deal with their anxiety about their parents’ projected desire for their upward social mobility.

Finally, the youth feel rejected by both these reference cultures—by the multicultural host society as well as their own ethnic group—and turn to the ideologies of a trans-ethnic black youth culture, which is able to offer them familiar identity images. This becomes particularly obvious when they are asked to assess the criminal activities of Haitian youth gangs. Analogous to the dichotomy between the traitorous house slave and the field slave as prototype of the African-American liberator, the members of the street gangs are celebrated as postmodern heroes, who lend themselves well for collective as well as individual identification. The youth honor the gang members and stylize themselves as urban rebels caught up in the fight for the rights of the marginalized.

Before I conclude, I want to come back to the Haitian youth's (restrained) reaction to the announced deportations. Whereas their reactions are colored by their conflict with both the host society as well as with their own migrant community, the young people remained indifferent towards the prospect that their contemporaries will have to spend the rest of their lives in Haiti and nowhere else. Rather than a lack of identification or sympathy with other Haitian youth, I want to suggest that this be interpreted in relation to the imaginative elevation of the country of origin and its heroic history. In the youth's descriptions, Haiti becomes a mystic, distant place detached from local realities. The youth are not able to perceive deportation as a threat to their generation because they do not know, or hardly know, the real Haiti. As a result, they use the country as a foil against the wishes and desires of their parents, which they see as located in Montréal.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

This chapter was based on the observation that the decision by the Canadian state to expel Haitian migrants back to Haiti—irrespective of how long they have lived in Canada—resulted in different and partly contradicting reactions among Haitian migrants in Montréal. In their debates about deportation, Haitian migrants not only dealt with the futures and destinies of its own offspring, but also discussed questions of nationhood, citizenship and migrants' belonging in a transnational environment. When classifying these reactions on the basis of generation it became obvious that the elder migrant generation perceives deportation as a threat to Haiti or as an assault upon their personal migration project. The younger generation, on the other hand, remained less emotive in regard to the issue. Instead, they used it as a point of reference in dealing with their own generational conflicts and with their parents' attitude towards their lives. Furthermore, it became apparent that the concern of the parents' generation commutes—goes back and forth—between here and there, between Canada, the Haitian diaspora and Haiti, an attitude typical for transmigrants who construct their identities in relation to and between different places of cultural and national belonging. Their children, however, are primarily concerned with their own situation in Canada and deal only to a limited extent with the impact deportation might have on Haiti. For them, Haiti, their parents' country of origin, apparently has a rather symbolic meaning and the practice of forced removal is judged as coercion on the part of the Canadian state. In their struggle with these diasporic realities, younger Haitians reject the potential consequences of forced return.

Admittedly, whereas the interviews may not be representative, as they reflect the attitudes and interpretations of a limited section of Haitian migrants in the city of Montréal, they nonetheless reveal considerable differences with regard to the symbolic meanings of home, cultural belonging



and generational identities among Haitian migrants. Interestingly, both transnational and diasporic Haitian identities, two distinct theoretical paradigms in migration studies that are often assigned to different forms and experiences of migration, were useful in bringing to the surface and pinpointing fissures as well as separate interests among elder and younger Haitians in Montréal. In my approach, deportation served as a key site for mediating national and cultural identities and for understanding contradictory perspectives among the first and the subsequent generations of migrants. This work suggests that as new constraints emerge in the context of globalization, they may be interpreted differently and shed new light on generational differences within migrant families, whose members express their belonging in and towards different social fields.

## NOTES

1. I spent five months in Haiti in the year 2000 working for the German Development Cooperation.
2. The following descriptions are based on anthropological fieldwork carried in 2002 and 2003 in the Canadian city of Montréal, financed through a doctoral scholarship of Marburg University (Germany); furthermore, I received considerable support from the Centre d'Études Ethniques (CEETUM) of the University of Montréal (Canada).
3. In the context of Montréal the term 'migrant community' is less a territorial indicator than a political, social and cultural idea, which transcends territorial limits. Here, it refers to an imagined collectivity, constructed by social practices as well as the political fostering of an imagination of ethnic similarity and common political goals.
4. An earlier version of this chapter was published as "Deporting Diaspora's Future? Forced Transnationalism and Generational Conflicts in the Haitian Community of Montreal," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 6 (4): 69–84. Whereas the work has been revised for this reprint, the more recent public debates as well as the most up-to-date literature on the situation in Haiti or within the Haitian diaspora are not included.
5. In addition, parents themselves frequently send their children back. When a family recognizes that a child regularly gets in conflict with the law, often they decide—in agreement with the youth concerned or not—on a 'voluntary' return, in order to forestall eventual official measures and maintain freedom of travel rights. They also hope to realize a change in behavior as a result of a longer stay in the country of origin and the inculcation with traditional norms and values.
6. These numbers vary due to the fact that an unknown number of Haitian migrants are not officially registered.
7. Nina Glick Schiller and her colleagues elaborate in detail the influence of the Haitian diaspora on the internal politics of the country and the evolution of transnational social spaces (e.g., Fouron and Glick Schiller 1997; Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994, 157–177). The coup against Aristide and the success of René Préval in February 2006 has not changed this standpoint in the diaspora.

8. The second generation of immigrants is defined as people whose parents (one parent or both) came to Canada directly or via third countries, and who therefore belong to the first generation of immigrants. People who came to Canada at a young age (under ten) and were socialized primarily in the destination context, are also called second generation; some scholars call them the 1.5 generation, for example, Stepick and Stepick (2003, 129; see also Zéphir 2001, 6). Citizenship or the lack thereof, the most important legal factor in deportation cases, can vary within this group. Due to the long history of Haitian migration to Canada, which has lasted already more than fifty years, people belonging to the second or even to the third generation do not necessarily need to be young at age; for instance, a 'son' can be older than thirty-five years. However, as explained in the introductory remarks, the issue of deportation affects many young people and becomes identified by the migrant community with youth and its symbolic meaning. Therefore, I chose primarily young people as representatives of the 'children's perspectives.'
9. In U.S. cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles or New York, youth gangs emerged as ethnically homogeneous groups at the beginning of the 1920s, particularly in immigrant neighborhoods (Duffy and Gillig 2004, 1; Trasher [1927] 1968). Today, gangs constitute trans-family, informally structured social units, mostly organized on the level of neighborhoods, which do not necessarily need to be homogenous in terms of ethnicity or gender. Their activities include organized crime, with appropriate division of territory and spheres of influence (McCorkle and Miethe 2002).
10. A study carried out by Gladys Symons (1999), which includes the perspective of the police as well as the young gang members, came to the conclusion that the coherence between gang membership and belonging to a certain group is partly constructed by the local police.
11. A detailed description of different types of youth gangs in Montréal can be found in Perreault and Bibeau (2003, 44–51) as well as in Symons (1999, 126–128).
12. This has also been described by Stepick et al. (2001, 233ff.) in discussing Haitian families in Miami.
13. The report of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR) summarizes the development of the phenomenon and the legal situation in Montréal (Adams 2003). But it is important to note that "no one is subject to automatic deportation as a result of a criminal conviction in Canada. A delegate of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness reviews the circumstances of each case and in many cases may allow the person to remain in Canada. However, the delegate may refer some cases to the Immigration Division of the IRB (Immigration and Refugee Board) to have a removal issued under section 44(2) of IRPA (Immigration and Refugee Protection Act)" (see Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 2004).
14. The following description is based in part on spontaneous informal discussions about a radio broadcast titled "Il neige pas à Port-au-Prince," first broadcast on June 6, 2002 (for downloading, see <http://www.souverains.qc.ca/neigepas.html>). This broadcast collected several reactions from the public to the deportations of Haitian youth. I used this broadcast as a hook and asked people about their thoughts on the issue. Furthermore, I carried out semi-structured interviews with members of different social segments within the Haitian community. All names mentioned in the text are pseudonyms in order to protect the personal identity of my interviewees. All interviews were translated from French or Haitian Creole into English by the author. Capital letters indicate a particular accentuation by the interviewee.

15. Author's interview, May 15, 2002.
16. I have elaborated in another context on the perspectives of Haitian children and youth by means of an analysis of the lyrics of rap songs referring to different cultures of reference (Drotbohm 2005b). Mary C. Waters also describes differing identities within the group of Haitian youth (in the city of New York) and divides them into the following groups: (a) hyphenated black Americans, (b) ethnic Americans and (c) immigrants who do not identify with America (Waters 2001, 195–196). However, according to my own observations these identities are not lived in parallel, but are lived all at the same time, partially and situationally by each individual.
17. The young man, who talked in a mixture of French, Haitian Creole and English, used the English term 'nigger' in this context. He used it as a pejorative term. The accordant term *nèg* in Haitian Creole has a neutral connotation and means person.

Part III

# Diaspora as Metageography



## 10 Listening for Geographies

### Music as Sonic Compass Pointing Towards African and Christian Diasporic Horizons in the Caribbean

*Elizabeth McAlister*

I met my partner in Haiti when he was a sound tech for his sister's band, Boukman Eksperyans, while I was doing field research on Vodou and music. We were introduced at the Rex Theater in downtown Port-au-Prince, right on the stage, a few hours before the show. The band usually set up to a soundtrack of their own music or to Bob Marley and the Wailers pumped up to a volume I found uncomfortable but that the musicians loved. Loud music made the air thicker, and it shaped the space into a pulsating, vibrating, energized place.

Hand-carved drums thundered during the sound check. The band members of Boukman Eksperyans were self-conscious researchers of the musical legacy of the African diaspora that had brought their forebears to Haiti during colonial slavery. Taking ethnographic forays into the countryside to historic religious compounds, the band learned the rhythms, songs and dances associated with those eighteenth-century diasporic strands: the Dahome, the Nago, the Kongo and the Ibo. They blended these styles, along with elements of Protestant and Rastafari thought, into their own rock fusion, and toured the Antilles, the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan on Chris Blackwell's Island Records label. Traveling through the networks of the contemporary Haitian diaspora, the band sang of the Afro-Creole history of Haiti. They crafted a religious message and a politics of a Creole past even as they leaned into a globalizing future, heaving their Dahomean-derived drums through airport metal detectors together with digital music players slung from their back pockets.

Music makes a place where my husband can live in his body. Now that we have moved to a university town in Connecticut, my husband has become adept at streaming live Haitian radio broadcasts over the Internet and through the many speakers in our house. He pumps up the volume just like in the old sound check days, playing his favorite style, *konpa*. Our daily activities in New England are punctuated by the lively advertising jingles and the radio news in Port-au-Prince. In these moments the soundtrack of our lives echoes the soundscape of a household in Haiti. Living away from his extended family and friends, outside his country and culture, my partner tells our children that he came to the United States too late, when



Image 10.1 Lolo and Mimerose Beaubrun of Boukman Eksperyans by Marc Steed.

he was too old to be remade here. Yet when we return to Haiti, he is clearly marked as a partial outsider, *yon djaspòra*, by his clothing, his physical fitness and an Americanness readable in other subtle ways. He has become like many transmigrants who are no longer quite fully at home anywhere. For him, I think, Haitian music and radio ads move him to a psychic space closer to home. In fact, for my husband, music itself is a kind of home, and hearing it makes him feel he is “in his skin” (see Ramnarine 2007). When the devastating earthquake struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, he lived in an in-between netherworld, playing the only radio station still on the air, Signal FM. We listened to the litany of the dead, the on-air discussions and the slow dirges on Haitian radio, with the television tuned soundlessly to CNN.

But music changes its tune when my husband’s brother visits. Frè (Guy) is *konvèti* (converted), an evangelical, who frowns on mainstream *konpa* because it encourages hip rolling, couples dancing and impure thoughts. Guy brings audiocassettes, CDs, videos and DVDs of evangelical *konpa*, Haitian gospel, Haitian church services and Haitian evangelical TV shows. The weekend after the quake, Guy and his family came from Boston to wait for news at our house. The scripture of the day on their favorite website was about earthquakes, all part of God’s mysterious plan. Visiting with Guy, we are invited to feel at home in a different diaspora, or, more properly phrased, a global movement. Through witnessing and through music, Guy works to convince us that we belong to the one and only Kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

Very like Proust's character dipping a petit Madeleine into his tea and being at once flooded by the uncanny sensations of involuntary memory, music has the extraordinary capacity to transport us emotionally to an earlier moment, and reexperience fragmented sensations from the past. A sound, a chord change, a melody or a particular phrase sends us back to another place and time, to feel a certain way about the past and, of course, therefore, the present. This chapter offers the idea that the sounds of music, with their capacity to index memories and associations, become sonic points on a cognitive compass that orients diasporic people in time and space. Tuning in to sonic compass points is one way they come to know a sense of belonging. Music making is a way individuals and groups position themselves towards privileged geographies and locate themselves in the spaces they construct.

This chapter listens to grassroots religious musical productions in order to show that Afro-Caribbean groups can stake out multiply diasporic identities in overlapping diasporic spaces through the various political registers of tribe, kingdom and nation. Whereas researchers often focus on the national diasporas produced through the recent shifts and flows of globalization, I want to illustrate some of the *limits* of the concept of national and ethnic diaspora to understand how Caribbean groups form networks and imagine themselves to be situated. I argue that even groups with self-consciously diasporic identities premised on a national past and culture can form extranational identities through a Christian religious imaginary that mimics salient features of ethnic diasporas. In the case of communities of Haitians and Dominicans with whom I've done fieldwork since the early 1980s, imagined geographies of diaspora feature multiple horizons (Johnson 2007), and can be focused on Haiti, the Dominican Republic or all of Hispaniola, and simultaneously on a past Kongo Kingdom or on the future Christian Kingdom of God. These cognitive maps, in turn, open up possibilities for multiethnic networks and forms of group belonging.

I also show how even though evangelical Protestantism is not a diaspora in the established sociological sense, many Caribbean Christians conceive of their 'spiritual lineage,' their past and their future, in ways that mirror a 'classic' diasporic consciousness. This Christian diasporic sensibility comes precisely out of the genealogy of diaspora in Judaism and its appropriation by Christian thinkers. Christians are not a diaspora in the current social science because they do not share an ethnic identity or a common homeland. But do they not fashion themselves as one people through the transcending of ethnicity in the universal possibility of Christian salvation? And do they not have a homeland for which they are nostalgic in the Jerusalem of the ancient Israelites, whose identities they have appropriated as God's new chosen? Further, they actively envision an immanent "return," in the future ingathering in the New Jerusalem of the Heavenly Kingdom.

I also suggest that the growth of spirit-filled Christianity in the Southern sphere is directly linked to the fact that this Christianity incorporates



indigenous forms of music as a biblical injunction to “Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; Make music to our God on the harp” (Psalm 147:7). Even where the rituals of liturgy, preaching, prayer, witnessing and testifying take a similar form throughout the world, Christian music will be various and multiple, allowing groups to produce sonic indexes that create deep associations and a sense of belonging. Music making in its multiple indigenous forms is a central part of what allows evangelicalism to grow and accompany Haitians and other diasporas in the Americas.

## DIASPORA, RELIGION, MUSIC

Haiti has been one of the most studied areas in diaspora studies (see Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994). The first island Columbus staked out in 1492, Aiyiti-Kiskeya (now Hispaniola) is of central historical importance in the hemisphere, as Haiti was second to the United States in achieving independence and first to abolish slavery. In early African Diaspora Studies (and before that term came into usage), Haiti was famous for being at the “most African” end of Herskovits’s (problematic) continuum of “Africanisms in the New World” (Herskovits and Herskovits 1966). Haitians are more recently known in the Caribbean literature for being self-consciously diasporic; the term *yon djaspora* (a diaspora) in Haitian Kreyòl designates a person, like my husband, who returns to Haiti from outside.

As important as Haiti has been for diaspora studies, it may also offer a way out of several conceptual conundrums inherent in diaspora theory. For example, looking at a diasporic group defined nationally points to the critique of the nonboundedness of the nation-state that diaspora theory offers, only to short-circuit that critique by maintaining focus on a national group. Furthermore, how does one parse diaspora through time, because most Caribbean groups, at this point, have been subject to more than one diasporic moment? The vignette with which I opened here makes reference to several upheavals. For Haitians this includes: (a) the ‘African diaspora’ of various West and Central African ethnic groups who were trafficked *into* Saint-Domingue to fuel the machine of colonial slavery, (b) the San Domingan dispersal of planter refugees and their slaves fleeing *from* Haiti—to Louisiana and elsewhere—during the Haitian Revolution, (c) the Haitian transnational diasporas of twentieth-century labor migration outflows, to the Dominican, Cuba, Bahamas and to the North and Europe in the brain drain spurred by the Duvalier dictatorship and (d) the continuing diasporic flows that result from Haiti’s downward political and economic spiral. How can we understand how the ‘African diaspora’ becomes articulated with the Haitian diaspora, or other national diasporas?

In this chapter, I bring together two techniques in defining diaspora: the genealogical (later in the discussion), which involves tracing historical uses of the concept, and the social scientific, which involves comparing

and analyzing features of diasporic groups. Generally the social scientific term refers to (a) the dispersion of an ethnic group linked from one place to multiple other places, (b) the continuing collective identity of the group through thought and practice, which necessarily correlates with the group's maintaining differences with the 'host' group, often through the building of institutions, (c) the cultivation of memory about the 'homeland,' often characterized by nostalgia, (d) the maintenance of practical ties with groups in the 'homeland' and (e) the cultivation of the idea of an eventual return (Johnson 2007, 44).

With the developments of postmodernist, postcolonialist and race theory, critical attention is turning to the complex and contradictory ways people and groups produce space, experience time and locate themselves in collective identities in relation to modernity. Whereas religion is often seen as resisting modernity, it is also true that religious thought, practice and collective identity is itself articulated with forms of modernity, and these forms may exceed the limits of diaspora. To wit: evangelical Protestantism is sweeping the Americas. A full one-third of Haitians are estimated to engage with evangelical Christianity (much of which is Pentecostal). How exactly is Christianity articulated with the Caribbean, or Haitian, diaspora? Is Christianity itself a diaspora? If not, in what ways can the new charismatic evangelical Christianity that is on the rise in the Southern sphere be *likened* to a diaspora? By reminding ourselves of the genealogy of the notion of diaspora in religious thought, we might better understand certain post-diasporic, extra-ethnic global identity formations, even among ethnic and national diasporic groups.

I suggest that if we think about religion and spatiality when we listen to music of the Haitian diaspora, we will better understand the various modes through which people locate themselves and each other within multiple realms. Music is one of the most transportable, most easily appropriated features of culture, because music is possible to practice without material objects, and is associated with religion, healing, pleasure, entertainment, work and play and with deep bodily sensations linked to memory. Music makers collectively formulate ideas, sentiments, ideologies and politics. To make and experience music is to touch emotion, nostalgia, associations with homeland, nationalism, life away, community and belonging. Turino (2008) draws from Pierce's linguistic theory to write about how music also can be said to function indexically, to point to somatically experienced associations with particular identity groups and historical conditions (Turino 2008, 8). Music indexes the time and place and people with whom we heard the music, and can produce powerful emotional experiences. Like an aural version of Proust's Madeleine cookie, hearing music once heard during a particular moment in life can transport us back to that moment and we feel the emotional reverberation. Through music, the past place and the present place and condition are played in tension, and they are also in tension with the ways others, in other parts of the

diaspora, are portraying them. Music can *house* all of these overflows of meaning. Listeners' imaginings of diasporic membership becomes mediated and shaped by music making.

To consider music and diaspora we need a processual and contextual approach that assumes music making and hearing to be active processes such that, although people and groups may play the same exact music, the meaning and connotations change according to the conditions under which the music is played. A carnival song played one year, under one government, will not mean the same thing after regime change; music from the homeland immediately signifies and indexes something else in exile or in diaspora. For that matter, music first created in diasporic spaces means something "extra" when it is played in the home territory. When groups are moving in diasporic networks, music can have a spatial valence, and can point to other spaces of memory and association.

I offer the image that music creates sonic points on a compass orienting the hearer to one or another "diasporic horizon." Paul C. Johnson gives us the helpful theory of diasporic horizons to organize the tropes of time, space and position in diasporic religious groups' cognitive maps (and the image works equally well for ethnic diasporas). The idea of a "diasporic horizon" pictures how diasporic identity has to do with both a spatial imagining and a temporal dimension of both past and future, of nostalgia and future return. In its spatial dimensions, groups remember certain places as original, even sacred sources of deep and abiding identity. In its temporal sense, a future horizon suggests "futurity and desire," and shows how diasporic identities always relate to conditions in the present (Johnson 2007, 39). Horizons are of different orders, so one could be concerned with the horizon (real or constructed) of "Africa" or even a "Kongo" or "Yoruba" tribal past, while being simultaneously oriented to diasporic horizons in the Americas articulated with labor migration from island to island. This conceptualization is most relevant to groups that are more or less self-consciously diasporic. That is, certain places are remembered by groups, or conditions are striven for in the future, so that to be 'diasporic' is part of "an idiom, a stance, a claim" (Brubaker 2005, 12). When music is religious, and when music making is part of ritual contact with the unseen world, music is a sonic compass pointing out cosmic directionalities. For religions that work with unseen spiritual force, music is also a transportation device, a sonic bridge linking the past, present and future through the bodies of singers and musicians and hearers alike.

I'll now turn to two musical genres from Haitian culture—Rara music from the Afro-Creole traditional religious complex called Vodou and evangelical music that belongs to the charismatic Christian movement. These two forms rest on opposite ends of a religious continuum that runs between Afro-Creole religion, on the one hand, and evangelicalism on the other, yet they share similar characteristics in that they are each component parts of each group's cognitive mapping and world building. Interestingly, neither

repertoire contains many songs that reference Haiti itself as a nation. Most Vodou songs refer to local, general spaces and their “owner” spirits, such as “Legba of the gate,” “Baron of the cemetery” or “Simbi of the water.” Likewise, Christian songs in Kreyòl and French tend not to refer to Haiti itself, but rather the spatiality they reference is that of the Holy Land.

Yet I suggest that if we pay attention to the geographies that *are* present in the texts, then both of these forms can illustrate how making and experiencing music effectively maps somatic and discursive location points that reproduce old spatialities and create new ones. These sonic points link individuals and groups and in turn locate them in terms of past and future diasporic horizons. Such sonic forms of navigation are one means by which people and groups locate themselves in space and time, and through which they come to know a sense of belonging wherever they might live.

### RARA MUSIC AND THE KONGOLESE DIASPORIC HORIZON

Haitian Rara is a community music form that can orient its producers to several diasporic horizons (each in its own context, which I will elaborate in the following). It is a particular genre of music with probable roots in a stream of the Kongolese diaspora into colonial Saint-Domingue. Created and adapted through the generations in Haiti, by the twentieth century Rara had developed into a full-blown annual tradition, with hundreds of local bands parading all across Haiti throughout the Lenten season—the six weeks between the end of Carnival and the weekend of Easter. Rara embarked with recent transmigrants on a second diaspora to contemporary Miami, New York, Boston and beyond, recently to be incorporated here and there into hip-hop by Haitian music star Wyclef Jean. Rara is a festival, a genre and a name for the parading bands that form multigenerational musical communities, usually comprised of extended family members. Rara bands are most often religious societies, and usually—although not always—they are going about the business of performing ‘spiritual work’ for deities (called *lwa*). The public face of Rara is that of a carnivalesque parade, but an inner core of ritual priests conceives themselves as performing religious obligations to the unseen spirits (the *lwa*) and the family dead (McAlister 2002, 88).

Rara music is a particularly evocative “sonic Madeleine” because the instrument that carries the melody as the bands walk down the roads is a distinctive horn all but unheard of anywhere else. The horn produces an eerie sound almost like an owl, and carries remarkably far across the mountainous terrain in Haiti. Called a *banbou* or *vaksin*, it consists of a piece of bamboo cut and hollowed, with a mouthpiece set into one end. The length of the bamboo will determine the pitch of the sound, and each *banbou* is cut deliberately to achieve a certain single pitch.<sup>2</sup> Musicians play the

small horns one by one according to a common rhythm to form a melody using the technique of hocketing. (To stay on the same rhythm, the players beat a rhythmic pulse against the bamboo with a stick.) This short, catchy ostinato becomes the sonic logo of the band, and a good band will find a signature melody by which it becomes known throughout the village or neighborhood. Rara musicians play *banbou* along with other, metal trumpets called *konè* (also known as *klewon*), handmade metal trumpets with a yard-long tube and a flared horn at the end. They also blow *lanbi* (conch shells) cut with a hole for blowing. All of these horns are accompanied by a battery of drums, cowbells, scrapers and percussive rattles, in addition to a chorus of singers. Drummers, horn players, singers and percussion players form waves of musicians, who walk down the roads together, followed by dancers and attracting large crowds of singing followers.

I can attest that to join a band on an outing for a night and dance for miles through public space creates a sense of exhilaration as well a physical and musical “flow experience” (Turino 2008, 4). The musical memories that can be lodged somatically are profound because one’s entire being is engaged in walking, dancing, singing and playing, for hours on end. In fact, during the last week of the festival, bands take to the streets for days, stopping for sleep and food at the compounds of patrons who can afford to host them. Entire families and communities halt their everyday lives to make music in public space, enhance the reputation of their band and enter into new dramas and social relations under these liminal, festival conditions.



*Image 10.2* Rara Djakout in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park in the early 1990s. Photo by the author.

Keeping in mind the way musical meaning relies on context, I'll recount four ways in which groups in Haiti or its diaspora have used Rara to locate themselves in the present with respect to a diasporic past or future. The first horizon is the past time and place of colonial Central Africa. One understanding Haitians have is that Rara stems from a Kongolesé tradition, adapted and reproduced in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Rara members in Haiti said as much when they consistently told me that Rara sits in the Kongo-Petwo-Bizango branch of the Afro-Haitian religious system (McAlister 2002, 88). Indeed, there does seem to be linguistic, ritual and musicological evidence that Rara stems from a Kongolesé source. The intriguing, fairly rare bamboo hocketed instrument is played in various parts of Africa, including Central Africa (although they are also played by indigenous peoples in the Americas).<sup>3</sup> Numerous words in the ritual vocabulary of the Kongo-Petwo-Bizango line are recognizably derived from Kikongo words (such as *nganga*, *Lemba*, *simbi*, *doki*, *bilongo*, *pemba*, *zonbi*, etc). I recorded this song, for example, in a Rara in the early 1990s in the mountains above Port-au-Prince:<sup>4</sup>

*Gwo lwa, gwo pwen mwen, Simbi nan dlo (x3)*

*Simbi rete nan barye-a l'pa sa rantré*

*Mande'l sa wè l'pa sa pase*

*Mande'l sa wè l'pa sa rantré*

[Great spirit, great 'point,' Simbi-in-water (x3)

Simbi stays in the gate, he won't come in

Ask him what he sees, he won't pass through

Ask him what he sees, he won't come in]

This text is cryptic in ways typical of prayer songs in Afro-Haitian religion, and does not impart a narrative or clear message. But we can observe that the song is about—and is also an invocation of—the spirit called “Simbi-of-the-water,” and would be used in a religious ritual to call Simbi to possess a spirit medium. Here Simbi is also named as a *pwen* (lit: “point”). This rich term in Vodou refers here to an aggressive spiritual force. A *pwen* can also refer to the *vèvè* (cornmeal ground drawings that “attract” the spirits) or anything “concerned with both the distillation of knowledge and the deployment of power” (McAlister 2002, 167). In this sense, prayer-songs are also forms of *pwen* that not only point to spirits indexically, but also invoke them to mount the mediums in the religion.

In this text we learn only that Simbi lives in the water, that Simbi stays at a threshold and will not cross a boundary. However the fact that *basimbi* spirits were and are also a class of spiritual beings in Central African culture makes for strong evidence for a Kongo source. Closely related to the recently deceased ancestors, the *basimbi* are a type of reconfigured ancestor spirit. They are thought to have passed through the under-the-water world of the deceased, living instead in lakes, streams and territories of the

clan of people they are related to (Jacobson-Widding 1979, 79). The reference to Kongo cosmology and spirit is what marks this song, and its use in the Rara, as a potential reference to a past Kongo diasporic horizon.

Tracing African sources for American culture must be carried out with caution, and still seems to be weighted with a political charge.<sup>5</sup> One thing that seems clear is that people were brought from a diverse set of regions and ethnic groups from West and West Central Africa. In colonial-era Saint-Domingue, there was an estimated half a million enslaved people on the eve of the Revolution in 1791, and two thirds of them were African-born (Fick 1990, 25). French slavers bought slaves from Central Africa, north of the Congo River, and estate inventories show that these Kongolese slaves comprised the largest groups on the colonial plantations—as many as 40 percent in the north in the decades leading up to the Revolution (Vanhee 2002, 246). European writers of the period spoke of slaves known as ‘Kongos’ who were famous maroon leaders, rebel army leaders and ritual ‘cult’ priests (Dubois 2004, 159). Don Petre, a notorious possession priest, was most surely from Kongo, where “people were already Catholicized and commonly took Catholic names preceded by the honorific Dom or Dona” (Vanhee 2002, 249). Historians surmise that “Don Petre” became Don Pedro in Spanish and this name evolved into “Petwo,” still the signifier for this ‘hot,’ ‘aggressive’ branch of Haitian religion.

Rural Haitians I worked with on Rara festivals had a sense of Rara as an old tradition, identified with a Kongo source, as I’ve mentioned. In their embodied practice, dealings with spiritual entities and Kikongo ritual vocabulary can be identified with a Kongo source culture. But they were not invested in a diasporic consciousness, with nostalgia for a Kongolese past, and there was certainly no talk of a future, material return. In only the vaguest way can they be said to have had a sense of themselves as members of Kongo diaspora. In Haitian Afro-Creole religion there is reference to the “21 nations” (sometimes figured as “101 nations”) that are said to comprise the coming together of many African peoples into one system. The various “branches” or “nations” in Vodou and their accompanying rhythms and rites seem to be indicators of a kind of group awareness, perhaps a kind of dissipated diasporic consciousness. So we can say that Rara music provides a reference to a Kongo past, and so to a distant Atlantic diasporic horizon, but that this is arguably a fact of more interest to students of history than to Rara members themselves. Still this is one past horizon to which Rara music can be made to point, and we will see shortly that groups in diaspora chose to privilege this sonic point on the diasporic compass. Through musical performance they set their sights on this diasporic horizon.

My second example illustrates how performing homeland music can point back to a still-present diasporic horizon even while opening up new spaces and producing new geographies in diasporic territory. In the early 1990s in New York City, first- and second-generation Haitians began playing Rara in the parks on Sunday nights, and a new transnational Rara

“scene” developed. Hundreds of young and middle-aged people would come out each week and play music, sing and dance or follow the bands as they paraded around the southern tip of Prospect Park or near the Summerstage at Central Park. Vendors sold Haitian food, men played dominoes and people formed community around the drum and the bamboo horn.

Rara’s distinctive sound was (and is) an emotional “sonic Madeleine” for many who participated. Band members told me: “Rara allows me to be in my skin.” Like my husband listening to Internet radio, the Rara became a place to be “at home,” a place to fully be alive. The diasporic horizon for the Haitian Rara members in New York was most definitely Haiti, the place where it was ironically impossible to live, yet where one could truly be alive. The community was self-consciously diasporic and transnational, as a song composed in Leogane, Haiti, could be sung in Brooklyn a week later (and vice versa).

The New York Raras sang a variety of songs: carnival songs, religious songs and new songs about the diasporic context and the racism to which they are subject as black youth in the United States. Song lyrics also reference the close proximal Caribbean culture of the Rastafari, and its rich religious and political imaginary. Songs about Haiti itself can take on a particular resonance for American Haitians. One song, common in the New York Rara scene, is sung in the voice of a pilgrim who is about to set off to the feast for Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the “Miracle Virgin” who is unofficial patron saint of Haiti. It makes reference to her famous pilgrimage to the waterfall near Ville Bonheur in central Haiti.

*Sodo m’prale, en verite bon dye sodo m’prale*  
*limen limyè-a pou mwen prale*  
*sonen ason-an pou mwen m’prale*  
*Sesil-O Vièj mirak-O banm demann m’prale.*

[I’m going to Saut d’eau, really God, I’m going to the waterfall  
Light a lamp for me, I’m leaving  
Shake the ason (priest’s rattle) for me, I’m leaving  
Cecil Oh, Virgin of Miracles, give me my wish, I’m leaving.]

Through these lyrics, the music makers orient their musical compass to the diasporic horizon of a Haiti only recently departed, to which they rhetorically plan to return as pilgrims to the Virgin. Haiti and its Saut d’eau waterfall are places where prayers are granted, and where the deities are living and are active participants in people’s lives. This Haiti, because of the transnational character of the New York Haitian diaspora, is an immediate and accessible space, unlike the distant and vague Kongo. It is both a recent past and a potentially imminent future, and through Rara songs like this, people inflect New York spaces with an Afro-Haitian geography. The performance of Haitianness and the distinctive tones of the Rara sound make this spatiality available to New York Haitians.



My third example of Rara allows us to see that some people may choose which diasporic horizon to orient themselves to through a conscious deployment of music making. Grupo Kalunga Neg Mawon is a group of young Dominican and Puerto Rican (mostly) men, at least one of whom grew up partly in a Dominican *batey* (cane plantation) and partly in the Bronx. The Gaga band (a Dominican form of Rara) they have formed is a consciously diasporic arts group that wants to reconcile the long-standing animosity Dominicans have for Haitians. They look to a Kongo past for wisdom, pride and self-identity. Most members of the group are educators and political and cultural activists who participate in grassroots projects both in the Bronx and in the Dominican Republic. This group orients their thought back to the original horizon of Kongo. Their brochures and website state:

Our aim is to preserve aspects of African tradition and identity existing in QuisqueyaAyiti, known today as the Dominican Republic and The Republic of Haiti.

We use the name Kalunga to highlight the Congolese cultural aspects retained in Dominican/Haitian culture and throughout the African Diaspora of the western hemisphere, such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, etc. Kalunga is a Goddess of the Congolese people known also as the Muntu-Bantu or Bakongo. She is the universal cosmos, the great bang from which all life comes, including the depths of the seas and the oceans. Kalunga also represents a time when Congolese culture was dominated by a matriarchal system where women played a prominent role in society.

The Gaga members envision a pre-Christian matriarchy and a Congolese religious orientation that is more meaningful to them than either the Roman Catholicism or Protestantism that predominate in the Dominican Republic. The New York Gaga members also foreground a strong sense of the role of Rara during the Haitian colonial period. Although they are Dominican, the Gaga members foreground the role of Rara parading and music in the maroon rebellions during the Revolution in ways that are more self-conscious than their Haitian counterparts in downtown Brooklyn:

Neg Mawon translates into Black Maroons—those who fought against slavery, many of whom were Congolese descendants like Sebastian Lemba. We use the term Neg Mawon to symbolize our resistance against slavery and colonialism in a struggle to maintain and develop our African identity against overwhelming odds.<sup>6</sup>

There is indeed historical evidence that enslaved Africans practiced Rara in some form during the colonial period, and that early Rara bands

functioned for the rebel armies as analogues to French military marching bands during the Haitian Revolution (see Madiou [1847] 1987). When communities of young Haitians and Dominicans in New York take up Rara music and ritual, its role in rebellion becomes an important association as a cultural resource that can provide a counternarrative to the prevailing colonial one.

Raquel Z. Rivera has explored the music, diasporic thought and progressive vision of political reconciliation between this group of Haitians, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. By constructing what Rivera calls “liberation mythology,” these New York youth self-consciously privilege a Kongo diasporic horizon as part of a pan-Hispaniola political project, (among other things) that wants to value a specifically Kongo past and set of Kongo religious principles. They fashion themselves as modern-day “urban maroons” who take stances of resistance against contemporary neocolonialism, capitalism and racism in both the Dominican Republic and in New York (Austerlitz 2007; Rivera, forthcoming). Comparing the Haitian Rara players with the Dominican Gaga players in New York highlights how diasporas are not unilinear, and how diasporic actors can use the polyvalent meanings of music and sound to position themselves with reference to multiple horizons.

Rara also points to another way of conceiving of diaspora, and of being in diaspora. My fourth example of Rara illustrates how music making can also articulate with longings for home-based people to be out in diaspora. One Rara band I recorded was formed of people from the south coast who tried to escape Haiti during the 1991 coup against Aristide in small boats and rafts to reach Miami. They were intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard and detained in Guantanamo, then repatriated to Haiti, where they ended up in the notorious slum of Cite Soleil. They used the Rara music to narrate their predicament. They sang of how they sold their goats and pigs and everything they had to go to Miami only to return to starve in Haiti.<sup>7</sup>

*Nou vann kochon, nou vann kabrit*  
*Pou'n ale Miami*  
*Kote nou rive nou retournen*

*Nou vann kochon, nou vann kabrit*  
*Guantanamo yo voye n tounen*  
*Guantanamo nou rive*  
*Nou vann kochon, nou vann kabrit*  
*lamizè pa dous O*  
*Guantanamo pa bon O*  
[We sold our pigs, we sold our goats  
To go to Miami  
Where we landed we were returned

We sold our pigs, we sold our goats  
 At Guantanamo they sent us back  
 We got to Guantanamo  
 We sold our pigs, we sold our goats  
 Poverty is not sweet O  
 Guantanamo is no good O]

Here, what's interesting, and what may complicate neat formulations of diasporic phases, is that this group is in the so-called "homeland," yet imagines itself as a part of the diaspora and longs to be out in diaspora. Rather than suffering from nostalgia for homeland and origins, this group diagnoses itself as fighting for survival in Haiti as an unviable, untenable space of starvation and death. These group members cast themselves as imagined migrants in a diaspora that they are waiting to join (Schuler 2008).

This musical expression points us to a diasporic irony: that articulated with the downward political and economic spiraling of Haiti. Because of the deadliness characterizing the life of the Haitian poor, those in Haiti participate in imagining spaces outside the homeland, in the diaspora, as the nostalgic spaces of possibility and full humanity. They turn typical diasporic condition of "imagining a homeland" on its head, and imagine themselves in diaspora, often constructed as a kind of paradise in many ways.

The examples I've discussed illustrate that Haitians in various locations relative to the African diaspora and the Haitian diaspora have emplotted Rara music as points on a sonic compass to orient themselves to diasporic horizons most meaningful, salient and useful in the cultural politics of their present situations. Insofar as it is a powerfully evocative-sounding music, Rara music and its bamboo horns index a far-distant Kongo past, a historical association with rebellion against colonial powers and a deeply and singularly Haitian parading tradition. Whereas the details will be quite different in the case of Christian music, Haitians will likewise hear hymns and praise songs as points on a sonic compass. Pentecostal Haitians create biblical compass points, which yield directions to a very different set of diasporic horizons.

## EVANGELICAL MUSIC AND THE 'DIASPORIC' CHRISTIAN KINGDOM

The Haitian majority has until recently been understood to be participants to greater or lesser extent in the traditional, Afro-Creole religious system that produces Rara and other rituals. But just as evangelical Christian forms have been growing rapidly throughout the Southern Hemisphere since the 1970s (Jenkins 2002), so are they on the rise in Haiti. It is now estimated that 30 percent of the Haitian social sphere is engaged with evangelical Protestantism, mostly in some Pentecostal form (and here I will refer to all

spirit-filled Protestant groups broadly as Pentecostal, although many are independent churches). This religious orientation relies on biblical scripture as God's inerrant truth, and takes the Bible to be truth, history and the ultimate authority on every aspect of life. Just as important is the idea that the biblical age is still accessible, that God still works in the world and makes himself felt and understood through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit can manifest itself through the "gifts of the spirit" including dreams, visions, aural communication, speaking in tongues, experiences of intense emotion, laughing, crying, shaking, stuttering, singing and ecstatic dancing, to perform healings and miracles. Pentecostals, like other evangelicals, emphasize the born-again experience, where an individual accepts Jesus Christ as savior and commits to undergo a process of sanctified living, separating themselves from sinful activities such as drinking, smoking, gambling, extramarital sex and social dancing. Pastors admonish their congregations to be "in the world but not of it" and to separate themselves into Christian social enclaves while still proselytizing the unconverted. To a much greater degree than Afro-Creole religious societies, Protestant networks tend to be formally interconnected with other churches and prayer groups throughout the globe. These interconnections have increased since the Haiti earthquake, as countless church groups were moved to respond with support.

The first thing to note about Haitian evangelical music is that there has been debate among Haitian Protestants about what rhythms, melodies and lyrics Christ-centered music should contain. It is clear to Christians that God loves music and that music making is a proper and good way to praise and worship the Lord, because the Bible refers favorably to music in hundreds of verses. Butler (2008) writes that many pastors wrestle with the dilemma that so much Haitian music is linked to un-Christian religious spirits. Not only might the rhythms and melodies that "belong" to certain spirits recall somatic experiences for congregants, but music itself has a spiritual force, and as a musical mode of "spiritual work," it could actually invoke the wrong spiritual presence to descend in worship. As for the popular dance music of *konpa*, the cultural associations and physical sensations it might convey relate to the pleasure of *balles* and the secular sphere of close romantic dancing. Some church bands choose to play imported gospel music from the United States or France in order to solve this dilemma.

Most Protestant churches in Haiti and the diaspora cleave to the safe repertoire compiled in the widely circulating hymnbook *Chants d'Espérance* (Songs of Hope). Texts of over eight hundred hymns and "joyous melodies" appear either in French or in Kreyòl. Many songs are translations of the French *Chants de la Ligue pour la Lecture de la Bible* (Songs of the League for Bible Reading) and from American Baptist and Methodist hymns from *Marantha Gospel Choruses* (Case and Case 1938) and *Old Fashioned Revival Hour Songs* (Fuller, Green and MacDougall 1950). No musical scores or notations accompany the hymns. Many songs are sung to the original melodies but some are not. As Butler notes, "*Chan desperans* lends

itself particularly well to multiple musical interpretations and facilitates the ‘Haitianization’ of imported church songs” (2002, 102). Fairly often the songs are transposed into a genre that has come to be called *konpa Jezi* (Jesus konpa) wherein the *tanbou* (hand drum) and the *graj* (metal scraper) that are used in Vodou music are omitted (Butler 2002, 104).

In counter-distinction to the conservatism Butler found, there is also a growing industry of professional Haitian gospel music, paralleling gospel music growth throughout the globe. In fact, Haitians consume Christian music videos and musical clips of church services from francophone Africa, Europe, Canada and the Antilles on television and Internet sites that feature a wide variety of musical and prayer styles. Some Haitian Christian music—especially that of the young—seems to replicate exactly the sound-styles of particular *konpa* bands such as Sweet Mickey, Carimi and Nu Look.<sup>8</sup> These musicians and composers are rooted in local churches, and so create a “feedback loop” where recent compositions (which may draw from *Chants d’Espérance*) released on albums may be taken up and sung in church, at the discretion of the pastor, of course.

Haitian Pentecostal music so far is thus a hybrid of Haitian, French and American influences. Insofar as Haitians typically sing in Kreyòl or French, and arrange their hymns with a lilting syncopation, they have developed a style of Christian music they fully ‘own.’ The Haitian case is consistent with Philip Bohlman’s assertion that “in the moment of performance, hymns pass from the ownership of a colonial religious institution into the local religious practices” (Butler 2002, 103). The Haitian Protestant community indigenizes imported Christian music to their own tastes and sensibilities, anchoring the gospel truth with their particular cultural sense of being “in their skin.”

Pentecostal congregations are free to cultivate the emotional energy and somatic sonic resonances that music produces into a locally specific musical repertoire that contributes to the sense of belonging that evangelicals feel to the church and the Kingdom of God. This cultural belonging mitigates against the uneven power dynamics created by the fact that Protestantism was an American import. It also helps create a buffer against the marginalizing posture Pentecostals adopt that one is sanctified, set apart and “Other” to the sinful society at large. The fact that anyone can “plant” a church and play almost any style of music, in one’s native language, shows that charismatic Christianity has the ability to avail itself of the emotional possibilities of music. This, in turn, is part and parcel of how it is able to reproduce so quickly: biblical content and basic and formulaic rituals are wrapped in the musical forms, styles, language and tastes of the local congregation.

In the case of Haitian Protestant music, specifically Haitian melody, rhythm and language are sonic indexes to belonging at the same time that lyrics produce a Christian vision and Christian spatiality. Because so many songs are imported, they contain almost no references to Haiti, or, for that

matter, to island or even hemispheric geographies. The vast majority of texts offer a simple single image, such as that of Jesus's love for us, Jesus dying on the cross or God preparing us a place in Heaven. Lyrical images in hymns are often phrases from scripture, so they reference the landscape of the ancient world, the Holy Land or the New Testament cosmology of heaven and earth. When spaces or places do appear, they are invariably biblical places, such as Jerusalem, Jericho and Nazareth, or the Christian spaces of heaven and earth. The following song is a good example of a single spatial reference to biblical time and place that is transposed to the present. A well-known hymn in Haiti, it was sung by people in at least one encampment in the months after the earthquake. Here, the ancient wall of Jericho, referenced in the Book of Joshua, is smashed, and the analogy is made to the spiritual realm in which Jesus can bring down any wall. The present tense underscores the idea that biblical space and events are still working in the present:

*Jericho Jericho miray-la kraze*  
*Nan pwen miray Jezi pa kraze*  
*Miray maladi,*  
*Miray mizè,*  
*Miray grangou, etc. etc.*<sup>9</sup>  
 [Jericho Jericho the wall is broken  
 There is no wall Jesus cannot break  
 The wall of sickness,  
 The wall of poverty,  
 The wall of hunger, etc. etc.]

In this simple text the important event is the one that happened in the biblical city of Jericho, in the world of the ancient Israelites more than two thousand years ago. In deploying the hymn after the quake, the people in the tent city sang biblical geography into the city of Port-au-Prince. They made meaning of their predicament, matching the sacred stories of the Bible with their current situation and naming themselves as the righteous and the sanctified. In the face of the worst national catastrophe in the Americas, the quake survivors used religious music to orient themselves in time and in space through the musical enactment of biblical mythmaking.

The following song from *Chants d'Espérance* also evokes a simple image, figured in the call-and-response mode of a question and answer:

*Kote w prale?*  
*M pral kay yon wa*  
*M pral kay Jesi Nazarèt*  
 [Where are you going?  
 I'm going to the house of a king  
 I'm going to the house of Jesus of Nazareth]

In this image, the answerer delivers the pith of the image: she is a sojourner, on her way to some place. That place is definitely known: it is the House of King Jesus of Nazareth. The song invokes the past Christian horizon through naming the place of Jesus's birth: Nazareth. The idea of futurity is also presented here, and of course refers to the spiritual condition of the pilgrim: upon physical death she will enter the House of the Lord. It is obvious but worth stressing that the future Christian horizon is the time and space of the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. Evangelical Christianity stresses that the end times are near, and that the second coming of Christ is "at hand." This Christianity invites its believers to imagine and long for the immanent future when God will rule over all of humanity in His Kingdom according to His perfect peace and justice. This is the future that all born-again Christians are sure they will see. This is the future horizon that evangelicals set their sights on.

These brief examples show how through music, evangelical Haitian images point to a temporal and spatial past and future that is part of a religious cosmology, yet that mirrors the kinds of diasporic sensibilities that ethnic groups cultivate. This should not be too surprising, because diaspora theory and Christianity share similar deep structures of thought. After all, the term *diaspora* originates in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of Hebrew scripture. In the ancient world (the fifth to first century BCE) the Hebrew diaspora was cast as a necessary dispersion that prefigured the final return to Jerusalem. Martin Baumann writes, "'Diaspora' turns out to be an integral part of a pattern constituted by the fourfold course of sin or disobedience, scattering and exile as punishment, repentance, and finally return and gathering" (2000, 317). The New Testament takes up the term *diaspora*, which is found in three places (in James 1, Peter and John). Early Christian writers spun the trope of diaspora in terms of a dispersed community, who would be as the "seed" to spread the gospel of Jesus. In the early Christian eschatological view, the dispersed Christians would soon be reunited upon the return of the messiah in the "heavenly city of Jerusalem" (Baumann 2000, citing Arowele 1977, 476). When the hopes of the imminent return of Christ faded and then the Christians rose to political dominance in the late fourth century, the image of diaspora lost its eschatological valence, and came to be a sign for a Christian minority living in a doctrinally different society (Baumann 2000, 320). *Diaspora* was an 'inside term,' one for Jewish and Christian thinkers up until the 1960s.

Then, interestingly enough for our purposes, it was African Studies that took up the concept with the introduction of the notion of the "African diaspora," and the subsequent appropriation of the term throughout the academy. Still, our anthropological theories of diaspora retain a connotative echo of Jewish and Christian thought. Brubaker notices and complains about the teleological character of the diaspora concept when he says, "Diaspora is often seen as destiny—a destiny to which previously

dormant members (or previously dormant diasporas in their entirety) are now ‘awakening’” (Sheffer 2003, 21, cited in Brubaker 2005, 13).

Like national and ethnic diasporic groups, evangelicals see themselves as a dispersed people through their appropriation of the story of the tribe of the ancient Hebrews, the original and most famous diaspora. Now, Christians are dispersed throughout the globe, and cultivate a rhetoric of feeling marginalized (and even sometimes martyred) by their opposition to secular society and what they see as social sin and evil. Like diasporic groups that maintain boundaries and long nostalgically to return to homeland, evangelicals separate themselves through the practices of holiness and long to “return,” for the first time, to the “New Jerusalem” in the eternal realm.

In adopting a saved and sanctified identity, Pentecostals also produce a new form of spatiality that in turn inflects national and ethnic identity. To be saved is to be oriented towards biblical geographies, both past and future. Among evangelicals in Haiti or in places in diaspora, a common rhetorical stance is to proclaim that citizenship in God’s Kingdom trumps one’s Haitian identification. I heard one pastor preach, “I don’t need to go back to Haiti because I have Jesus.” This imagined Christian citizenship is shared among other groups in the Caribbean. Said a young person in the Virgin Islands with great rhetorical flair to another researcher: “I am Christian. I am first and foremost a citizen of God the Father’s kingdom, adopted into his family through Jesus Christ, whose ambassador I am to his honor and glory, in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Harkins-Pierre 2005, 33). How much more glorious it is to hold a passport to God’s Kingdom than a passport from Haiti, now declared a “failed state” and the poorest country in the hemisphere! We can see that on a rhetorical level, Caribbean Pentecostals make a move to “leave” the Haitian diaspora to “join” the Christian diaspora (see Johnson 2007).

But it is a paradox that even as they proclaim identities as members of the Christian community, Haitians live their lives mostly in ethnic enclaves. Even as citizens of the kingdom, diasporic Haitians overwhelmingly join Haitian congregations. Above all it is their use of Kreyòl language that makes it easier to participate in Haitian spaces. Haitians are also intensely connected to family and transnational institutions in Haiti, and many do plan to return when they retire. So it is more proper to describe Haitian Pentecostals as standing simultaneously in two imagined diasporas—one of which might be described as ethnic and the other religious.

The following French hymn from *Chants d’Espérance* is one of the few to mention the country of Haiti. It would seek to perform the enormous symbolic work of re-positioning the entire nation as a Christian nation “consecrated to God.”

*Soldats de Christ et Haitiens*  
*Du ciel nous sommes citoyens*  
*Dans la parole du seigneur*



*Nous trouvons le seul vrai bonheur*  
*Sauve, Seigneur, benis notre chere Haiti*  
*Petite nation avant vers Sion*  
*A Dieu consacre-toi fais Jesus ton roi*  
*Sauve seigneur, benis notre chere Haiti*  
 [Soldiers of Christ and Haitians,  
 We are citizens of heaven  
 In the Word of the Lord,  
 We find the only true happiness.  
 Save, Lord, bless our dear Haiti!  
 Small nation, hasten towards Zion  
 Consecrate yourself to God, make Jesus your King . . .  
 Save, Lord, bless our dear Haiti!]

The hymn, one of those composed by a Haitian evangelical for the *Chants d'Esperance*, gives voice to the double identity of “Christian soldiers and Haitians” who are also “citizens of heaven.” These special saints have the burden of bringing Haiti to Christ. In this hymn they stand as both evangelizers and intercessors; they implore Haiti to “hasten towards Zion” and implore God to “save and bless Haiti.”

For Haitian evangelicals in diasporic places, the past is a complex one. Haiti is the immediate homeland, the place where family, foodways, language and music are beloved and distinct. Yet the beloved *Haiti cheri* is also a place where the land itself is home to non-Christian, even what some consider, demonic, forces. The more distant biblical diasporic past is a powerful one and also understood as God’s truth. This past holds the story of the tribe of Israelites, which has become the Christian story through the great commission to bring the gospel to all nations. The diasporic future horizon that really matters is the Eternal Kingdom.

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has looked at the ways groups use music consciously to orient themselves to diasporic horizons. One “in diaspora” stands in a host society and remembers a home society. To be “diasporic” means to cultivate an identity and maintain boundaries, to retain “diaspora consciousness” and often to “long for return” to the homeland. Haitians’ lives are oriented towards multiple, overlapping diasporas, from the streams of African ethnic groups coming into Saint-Domingue out through the waves of out-migration. Haitian identity formation can be theorized from the perspective of the “African diaspora” and the “Haitian diaspora,” and groups can long to return to Haiti or can long to join the diaspora. I have shown that if we listen carefully to the forms of spatiality inherent in musical texts, we can find multiple registers of diasporic formations. I offered the metaphoric

image that groups place sonic points on cognitive compasses that position them in relation to past and future diasporic horizons. When we take seriously the orientations groups form with regard to religious conceptions of space, time and narratives, we can see that people and groups may privilege extranational diasporic identities, including that of modern-day “Kongo maroons” or nonethnic identities as soldiers in a “Christian diaspora.” Through religious strands configured either as ‘traditional’ or as ‘Christian,’ Haitians use sound, and music, as knowledge—of a Kongo past or of biblical truth—and as an expressive tool to create identities in various registers—ranging from Kongo, Kreyòl, Haitian, pan-Hispaniola, to saved and sanctified, and global citizen of God’s Kingdom.

## NOTES

1. This chapter is dedicated to my husband, Oli, who has listened, traipsed, recorded, transcribed, discussed and produced so much music with me over the past seventeen years. Thanks also to Ken Bilby, Melvin Butler, Paul C. Johnson, Jason Craig Harris, Marc Hertzman, Paul Uhry Newman, Raquel Z. Rivera and Mark Slobin for their ideas and comments, as well as to M.J. Kenny and Robin Nagle.
2. Rara bands are often formed at the request of the Afro-Creole spirits, and according to protocol, the bamboo plant must be asked for its use and a small payment must be left in its place.
3. Central African Babembe bamboo horns are recorded on an LP called *Musique Kongo*, kindly shared with me by Robert Garfias, personal communication, May 2009.
4. You can listen to this song towards the end of the track titled “*Notre Dame de 7 Doleurs*” on (Gillis 1991) or as track 5 on the CD that accompanies my book on Rara (McAlister 2002).
5. This work is part of the project to trace the pasts of cultural groups, *not* because groups are bounded, have essential and inherent characteristics, are unchanging and knowable, but precisely because groups fashion themselves as groups in historical processes of change, their identities change, fade and renew themselves, and we want to attend these processes in order to come to some understanding of social formation and cultural production.
6. See <http://www.myspace.com/grupokalunga> (accessed May 7, 2009).
7. Readers can hear this song recorded on track 17 (*Rhythms of Rapture: Sacred Musics of Haitian Vodou* 1995) and view field video online at <http://rara.wesleyan.edu/rara/politics/index.php> (Last accessed on December 29, 2010).
8. Listen, for example, to how closely the group Revelation Mizik sounds like Gracia Delva on their music video, filmed in Haiti: “Satan m’pa pe w” (Satan I’m not afraid of you; at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0wp3-3Sq74>) (Last accessed on December 29, 2010). They perform the song at a church in Philadelphia, online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJR11WoI8Yc&feature=related>.
9. Translation mine. Readers can see and hear this song performed by Jean-Marie Desir at the church Eglise de Dieu de Delmas 17 in Haiti, on Youtube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMqYn2j18vY> (accessed January 4, 2010). The hymn is found in *Chants d’Espérance*, although the Christian

recording artist Jean Marie Desir takes credit for the composition, the title track for his 2006 album *Jericho*. You can also hear quake survivors singing the song in an “Audio Postcard” broadcast on National Public Radio on January 20, 2010. Interestingly, Wyclef Jean reproduces the lyric toward the end of his track “Ghetto Racine” on his 2002 album *Masquerade*, and in an unconventional twist, Rara *banbou* play in accompaniment.

# 11 The Reproduction of Color and Class in Haitian Bilingual Classrooms

*Fabienne Doucet*

*Mwen di, back home gen ran, wi. Mwen di, se isit nan Etazini'k pa gen ran. Se pa prejije non, men gen yon seri de bagay nap fè ki trop pou laj nou. Paske si'n te lakay nou patap fè yo. Mwen di, back home gen ran. Paske boujwazi, ou nan ran'w. Ou middle class, our gen kote pa'w. Ou malere, ou gen pa'w. Men, m'di, kom Etazini se lakou rekreyasyon-an, nou tout mele, so bagay la . . . dlo a mare, men back home gen ran.<sup>1</sup>*

I was interviewing the mother of one of my study participants in Boston, Massachusetts, when, while discussing issues of discrimination on the job, she made the preceding statement. At the time of the interview, this woman was working in a nursing home as a nurse's assistant. Irrespective of educational attainment or occupational niche in Haiti, and much to my informant's consternation, medical services comprise one of the top two occupational niches in which Haitian women in Greater Boston find themselves (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2000). The implications of this circumstance are that Haitians who in Haiti would have had no occasion for social contact, find themselves working side by side but not developing social relationships (Buchanan 1983). In Haiti, this woman worked as a receptionist for the telephone company. Phenotypically, she is what Haitians would describe as *wouj* (red) or *griffonne*, in reference to her light-brown skin and black, relatively fine, long hair. Over the course of the two years, during which I conducted fieldwork in the Haitian communities of Boston and Cambridge, I came to understand that her statement captured a feature of social relations among diasporic Haitian immigrants, namely, the process of reproducing in the United States the class and color distinctions that exist in Haiti.<sup>2</sup>

My objective in this chapter is to highlight the challenges of community formation among diaspora Haitians. Historically, the Haitian community has been marked by notions of separateness that fall along class and skin-color lines.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, the bilingual classrooms of Boston and Cambridge are the primary sites for exploring reproductions of these class and color divisions. Following Ortner (1997), I argue that the postcommunity that is the Haitian diaspora is an imposed community and thus “not achieved ‘naturally’—instead it is constructed out of a range of selections,

exclusions, and boundary-maintaining mechanisms that follow the lines of cleavage” of class, culture and racialized difference (70). I outline the historical roots of these divisions and describe how some Haitians replicate, reify and reinforce these divisions as a self-protective mechanism to dissociate themselves from those whom they feel threaten their already tenuous status in the United States.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF COLOR AND CLASS IN HAITI

One of the vestiges of Haiti’s colonial past is a hierarchy of social status based on an elaborate computation of affluence, family name and lineage, education (including language), social conduct and skin color (Buchanan 1983; Lobb 1940; Wingfield and Parenton 1965). For my purposes here, I will focus on the relationship between skin color and two other dimensions of social class, affluence and education. In Haiti, as in the United States, class and skin color are intertwined and difficult to examine apart from one another.

The legacy of racism can be found throughout former European colonies of the Americas, notably manifested in the construction of color hierarchies (Hoetink 1985). It was the French colonist Méderic Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry who, in 1797, devised an intricate system of classification based on color combinations in order to differentiate among the offspring of white slave owners with black slaves (Arthur and Dash 1999). Included in Saint-Méry’s thorough survey of Haiti (then Saint-Domingue), thirty-two pages are devoted to describing the different classifications of nonwhites. Consider the following examples of ten such classifications:

black (0–7 parts white, 128–121 parts black)  
*sacatra* (8–16 parts white, 120–112 parts black)  
*griffon* (24–32 parts white, 104–96 parts black)  
*marabou* (40–48 parts white, 88–80 parts black)  
*mulatto* (56–70 parts white, 58–72 parts black)  
*quadroon* (71–96 parts white, 57–32 parts black)  
*métif* (104–112 parts white, 24–16 parts black)  
*mamelouc* (116–120 parts white, 12–8 parts black)  
*quarteronne* (122–124 parts white, 6–4 parts black)  
*sang-mêlé* (125–127 parts white, 3–1 parts black)

As Saint-Gérard (1984) argues, these classifications served the colonial ideology of divide and conquer by creating a false sense of superiority among those whose features reflected their claims to a share of the French colonists’ power. Many of these terms have survived over historical time (Hoetink 1985; Saint-Gérard 1984), although how they are defined has changed. It is imperative to note, however, that such classifications should

not be understood as equivalent with the meanings given to so-called racial classifications in the United States, an issue to which I will return in greater detail later. Indeed, there is a certain fluidity to the phenotype-based classifications of the Caribbean (Mintz 1974), and in Haiti, it is possible for a person with very dark skin to be designated mulatto because of her or his social standing. Hoffman (1980, 31) explained this construction of color, or as he put it, ethnic type, as having both social and political nuances:

Social, because while the illegitimate child of a Black working woman and a White sailor on shore leave might be described as *mulâtre* in appearance, he would certainly not be considered as belonging to the *mulâtre* (i.e., upper) class . . . Political, because Haitian political factions have traditionally formed along class- and therefore color-lines.

Thus, whereas it would be misleading to argue color classifications do not matter—they matter a great deal (Buchanan 1983; Lobb 1940; Mintz 1974; Simpson 1941)—when contrasting the Haitian case with the U.S. one, we must understand how the historical underpinnings of these categories are uniquely different in the two countries.

Wealth matters as well, of course. Business ownership and commerce typically are associated with mulattoes and with foreign-born elites who migrated to Haiti, such as the Germans and the Syrians (Simpson 1941). Increased immigration from Europe and the Middle East in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries had introduced German, English, Danish and Arabic names to the roster of elite Haitians. Because they entered as elite, these immigrants to Haiti, and their descendants, comprise their own separate class group (Simpson 1941).

Another important dimension of the way class is constructed in Haiti is its link with education, which has come to represent an important way for Haitians to define themselves and to draw the lines by which status is determined. In fact, education traditionally has been valued above wealth in Haitian society (Buchanan 1983). This can be traced to at least two related historical occurrences. First, after its independence in 1804, it became crucial that Haiti establish its intellectual viability vis-à-vis France in the face of strong skepticism regarding the Negro's ability for self-rule. Second, after independence, conversations ensued surrounding the belief that the mulatto was intellectually superior to the Negro, and would therefore be more skilled at establishing the Haitian nation-state (Arthur and Dash 1999). Scholars mused that only mulattoes could establish democracy in Haiti because former slaves were capable of establishing only a tyrannical form of government, not because they were black, but because they lacked civilization (Hurbon 1987). Later, this reflected in the split within the elite class in Haiti, one faction having obtained their status through military involvement (i.e., the black elite) and the other through ancestry and education (i.e., the mulatto elite; see Wingfield and Parenton 1965),

with education here signaling both the English meaning, namely, schooling, and the French meaning, namely, manners and comportment.

Related to education, language represents another marker of social status for Haitians. Although French was the country's only official language until 1987 (Schiefflin and Doucet 1994), folk wisdom has it that in Haiti, 100 percent of the population speaks Kreyòl, whereas only 20 percent speaks French. According to researchers, the gap is even greater—only 7 percent of Haitians are considered truly French/Kreyòl bilingual (Schiefflin and Doucet 1994). According to Thiery (1976), true bilingualism is defined as the ability to pass as a native speaker of two languages. There is a fascinating historical relationship between French and Kreyòl that establishes an important foundation for understanding the intricacies of language use among Haitians living in the United States. Although Haiti won its independence from France in 1804, French continued to be used as the standard language of government and the courts, although it was not legally recognized as the official language until 1918 (Schiefflin and Doucet 1994).

With the emergence of the *noirisme* movement of the 1930s (triggered by the U.S. occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934), however, the inherent injustice in excluding Kreyòl from educational, legal and political arenas was recognized (Zéphir 1995). The 1957 Constitution maintained French as Haiti's official language but allowed for the use of Kreyòl in situations when the exclusive use of French could put a Kreyòl monolingual person at a disadvantage, such as in a court of law (Mintz 1974). The fight for the legitimization of Kreyòl continued, and, in 1979, the Bernard Reform formally introduced Kreyòl instruction into schools. This was viewed as problematic on all levels of the Haitian social spectrum—by the wealthy because it threatened to take away the symbolic power of French and by the poor because it threatened to keep them subordinate by cutting off their access to French (Fontaine 1981; Zéphir 1995). In spite of these obstacles, further milestones quickly followed, including the formalization of an official orthography for Kreyòl in 1980, the recognition of Kreyòl as an official language in 1983 and the establishment of Haiti as a bilingual country (i.e., with two *official* languages) in 1987 (Schiefflin and Doucet 1994). The battle over the legitimacy of Kreyòl continues to rage in Haiti, however, and, significantly for this chapter, rages with perhaps even more ardor in the diaspora, as I will show later through my data.

In spite of the subtle relationships between class and color in Haiti, at the most general level, Haitian society can be divided into two separate populations: the rural laborers and the urban elite (Weinstein and Segal 1984). As a caveat, please note that the term *elite* is used differently by different scholars, and, in this section, the term denotes the owning, versus laboring, class and should not be confused with the bourgeoisie, which I will describe later. Drawing a general line between the two groups is not to suggest that either group is unidimensional, or that these two groups can easily be identified by outsiders via superficial characteristics such as skin color, religion

and language (Mintz 1974). In fact, there are many dimensions of culture that are shared among Haitians, regardless of class (Trouillot 1995), such as food, religion, music, dance and the pervasive use of Kreyòl. But the relationship between the elite (owners) and the *peuple* (literally: people; laborers) is one of interdependence:

The peasant is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent on it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the peasantry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the peasantry, there would be no elite. [ . . . ] Elite and peasantry, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti, as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. (Mintz 1974, 271)

Scholars writing about Haiti's social classes in the early twentieth century painted a portrait of the *peuple* as politically disengaged (Nicholls 1978), but more recently others have argued that the social structure of the country created and reinforced this seeming lack of involvement (Arthur and Dash 1999; Mintz 1974). In fact, the laboring class has played crucial roles in historically significant events and movements (Nicholls 1978; Wilentz 1989). Certainly the ouster of Jean-Claude Duvalier was propelled by a swirl of "popular agitation" (Trouillot 1995, 130), and the twenty-five years since his departure have seen increased engagement from the *peuple*, especially in the wake of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's *Lavalas* movement (Aristide and Richardson 1995; Ives 1995). As the *noirisme* movement of the early twentieth century, fathered by Dr. Jean Price-Mars, awakened in Haitians of all backgrounds an appreciation for and pride in Haitian folklore and indigenous culture (Price-Mars [1928] 1983), Aristide awakened an urgency for justice in disparaged Haitians (Farmer 2005), the full reach of which remains to be seen. These important historical precedents have shaped Haitians in Haiti and the diaspora, but to further understand the challenges of community formation among Haitians, we also must look at the characteristics of the United States that contribute to these challenges.

## THE AMERICAN OBSESSION WITH RACE

The U.S. social hierarchy, although undeniably complex, is so deeply obsessed with race that scholars have likened the U.S. system of racial classification to a caste system (Mintz 1974). Of course, this characterization is not without controversy, and theoretical conversations abound regarding the true definition of a caste system and the accuracy of labeling the United States as such. These discussions have a long history, an examination of which is far beyond the scope of the current chapter.<sup>4</sup> What the characterization of race as caste in the United States offers, however, is a framework (albeit imperfect) for analyzing the rigidity of racial classification in the



United States in contrast to the more fluid and flexible understanding of race in Haiti. Whereas ascriptions of racial belonging in the United States are limited to skin color, as evidenced by the one-drop rule, in Haiti (and in other Caribbean countries), skin color is but part of the equation, as one's facial features, eye color and hair texture also are taken into consideration (Buchanan 1983). In Haiti, a person with mahogany skin, dark eyes and straight black hair with texture similar to someone from India is known as a *marabou*. That same person with tight, curly hair is a *noir(e)*. Haitians call a person with caramel-colored skin, eyes that are light brown, green or something in between, and light-brown to blondish hair a *grimeau* or *grimelle*. That same person with dark eyes and hair is a *griffon(e)*.

In the United States, all of the preceding people are black and nothing else. The U.S. system of racial classification is a binary one, based on white as the default category, hence the widespread use of the term *nonwhite*, which Aspinall (2002) declared as the most ethnocentric of the various terms used to refer to persons of non-European descent en masse. In the U.S. context, then, Haitian immigrants are faced with new rules for determining status than the ones they are accustomed to following, a fact that status-conscious, lighter-skinned Haitians in particular can find disturbing (Hoetink 1985; Mintz 1974). Furthermore, racism in the United States still plays a powerful role in determining where black people live and work, forcing some Haitians to congregate in ways they never would have in Haiti. I propose, then, that for these upper-class Haitians, the Haitian diaspora can be described as an imposed community, one that they have not chosen for themselves but that the U.S. context assigns to them. I am not suggesting here that class conflict among diaspora Haitians should be blamed on racism in the United States; as I asserted previously, social stratification in Haiti is absolute and comprehensive. This divisiveness is destructive both in Haiti and in the United States (Zéphir 2001), but it is arguably even more damaging in the U.S. context, where Haitians are subject to racism and ethnic discrimination from Americans.

### **My Location in the Research Context**

This chapter is based on both ethnographic research and my impressions of color and class relationships among Haitians in Greater Boston. Therefore, it is important that I identify my own place on the social scale as it would be understood in Haiti because of its bearing upon the way I am perceived by my fellow Haitians here in the United States.

From 2000 to 2002, I conducted ethnographic research in the Boston and Cambridge Public Schools for a comparative study of Haiti- and U.S.-born Haitian youth. I wanted to examine the educational values, beliefs and practices of these youth and their parents. I spent much of my time in classrooms and hallways, volunteered as an advisor to two Haitian clubs in area high schools, interviewed teachers and administrators, students and their parents.

I also became involved in the Haitian community in Greater Boston, joining the board of a community organization, participating in community events and speaking to groups of young people in various forums.

Like the woman I quoted earlier, I also am phenotypically griffonne. Although both of my parents are Haitian, I am mistaken on a regular basis for Latina—either Puerto Rican or Dominican (incidentally, my informant also noted being regularly taken for Puerto Rican). Both sides of my family in Haiti belong to what Wingfield and Parenton (1965) called the “non-elite bourgeoisie” of Haiti. According to these scholars, and commensurate with my experience, members of the bourgeoisie are “world oriented.”

They possess education and command of the French language . . . Class solidarity is the most outstanding trait of the bourgeoisie. It is rooted in a strong family system, blood relationship, and common heritage . . . are found in the professional, managerial and administrative occupations . . . [and] [t]heir style of life is pleasant and leisurely. It has an archaic French colonial flavor and it resembles the style of other Latin American elites. Their social life consists of large family reunions which include relatives several degrees removed. (Wingfield and Parenton 1965, 340–341)

I identify my family as belonging to the nonelite constituent of the bourgeoisie because, whereas all members of the bourgeoisie enjoy a relatively comparable standard of living, the private social lives of the elite bourgeoisie are not open to the nonelite. Elites come from a family line of business ownership, political involvement and significant wealth (in the United States, the Kennedy family is a useful prototype). Nonelites may experience political and financial success, but they do not possess the social background provided by ancestry like elites (Wingfield and Parenton 1965, 341). My maternal great-grandfather was a German Jew who migrated to Haiti in the 1800s. Growing up, I was not permitted to address adults in Kreyòl; I had to learn the nuances of the Haitian language from friends in my neighborhood. I also traveled to the United States on a yearly basis, where my mother lived (I was raised by a great aunt and uncle), had subscriptions to children’s magazines that were mailed from France, spent Sunday afternoons in large family gatherings and grew up in a household with a woman who cooked, another who cleaned and a man who took care of the yard and washed my uncle’s government-provided car every morning. My uncle was an accountant in the Ministry of Finance.

During the course of my fieldwork, my social status—marked by the color of my skin, my education, my social class standing and my affiliation at the time with Harvard University—was both a blessing and a curse; it permitted me access to certain spaces and forbade me access to others. Because of my privileged status, I was able to gain the confidence of school officials as I tried to negotiate *entrée* into the world of public schools.

While recruiting families to participate in my project, I was able to answer parents' questions in whatever language they chose, and, for parents who spoke French, this was important as it allowed them to locate me within the Haitian status hierarchy. On the other hand, because of my skin, for the first time in my life, Haitians I met in Boston and Cambridge did not recognize me as Haitian and were amazed when I opened my mouth and spoke Kreyòl. This occurred mainly among the youth—1.5-generationers who had moved to the United States at a young age or the second generation who were born in the States and had never been to Haiti. Older students (aged fifteen and older), students who had visited Haiti and parents and other adults who participated in the project were much less surprised because they were aware of the color variations that exist in Haiti. More widespread among the Haitians I met was surprise that I was not from an elite family, that I attended school at the *Centre Classique Féminin*, formerly a solid, but not socially exclusive, school, and that I grew up in *Fontamara*, a very middle-class neighborhood. But my case is a good example of the very thin layers of experience that separate Haitians on the wealthier side of the economic divide, nuances that are often difficult to detect, but that undoubtedly shape relationships among Haitians in the U.S. context.

#### (RE)CONSTRUCTIONS OF COLOR AND CLASS IN THE DIASPORA

The history of Haitian migration to the United States serves as an important backdrop to the story of how class and color divisions come to be recreated in Haitian bilingual classrooms. Haitians have emigrated since the colonial era, when the children of enslaved African women and male French colonists were sent to France to be educated (Zéphir 1995). In the twentieth century, Haitian migration was marked by two major waves. The first wave, triggered by the dictatorial presidency of François Duvalier, began in the 1950s and represented the mass exodus of upper-class, professional and educated individuals and families to the United States, Europe, Canada and Africa (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1990; Mintz 1974; Stepick and Portes 1986). These families established themselves in their new countries of origin, and many were able to find employment in the occupational sectors for which they were educated or trained (Buchanan 1983; Woldemikael 1989). In the United States, these families settled primarily in New York and Boston (see Laguerre 1984; Jackson, this volume), with a smaller group establishing themselves in the Chicago area (Woldemikael 1989; Zéphir 2004).

The late 1970s and early 1980s marked the beginning of the second wave. The more recent émigrés are more impoverished than their counterparts who migrated during the first wave (Stepick and Portes 1986). Political upheavals in Haiti in the mid-1980s engendered conditions of traumatic

experiences (Desir 2006) and interrupted schooling for children, and conditions for living in Haiti became unbearable for many impoverished families who saw the United States as a land of opportunity. The arrival of these new Haitians of lower social status was disturbing to many of the first-wave immigrant families who perceived this new group as more vulgar, less educated and as painting a negative image of Haitians in the eyes of Americans (Buchanan 1983). I was aware of these issues among adults, but I had not had opportunity to witness their manifestations in the lives of young people. Schools, I discovered, were sites for the reproduction of these ideas. One of my first insights occurred on March 15, 2001, while I was recruiting (with not much success) second-generation participants at a middle school; the following is excerpted from my field diary:

As I was sitting at one of the tables during 8<sup>th</sup> grade lunch trying not to get too discouraged, a young woman came up to talk to me and said I was “just too damn pretty to be Haitian.” This child is Haitian American herself!!!! I said that she was mistaken, asked if she had not noticed that we have a beautiful people. She told me to look over at the table where the bilingual students were sitting, [saying] “They’re ugly. You think they’re beautiful?” I said, “Yes, they are beautiful, and so are our people in Haiti.” She didn’t say any more, but she and her friend could see on my face that they had offended me; the friend kept poking her.

I discovered that Haitian youth in the middle and high schools of Boston and Cambridge were struggling with identity issues. Many second- and 1.5-generation youth who had migrated early enough to lose their accents denied, or avoided talking about, being Haitian. At some schools, there was an aura of stigma around being in bilingual or ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. These findings were not surprising to me given the work of other scholars on “undercover Haitians” (see Stepick et al. 2001; Zéphir 2001) and on the experiences of immigrant youth in schools in general (Olsen 1997). I also was aware that immigrant students encountered prejudice at the hands of American teachers both from the literature (Katz 1999; Olsen 1997; Stanton-Salazar 2001; Suárez-Orozco 1989; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova 2008). For instance, stories that circulated in the field, and the anecdote at one of the high schools where I conducted my research about a teacher who used to spray her classroom with air freshener whenever a Haitian student left the room because she claimed they left a trail of foul odor, confirmed the scholarly accounts. I had not, however, read or heard about the interactions between Haitian immigrant students in bilingual classes and their Haitian teachers.

Among the demands generated by the influx of new immigrants and refugees from Haiti was a dire need for teachers who could provide children with language instruction. In 1971, Massachusetts became the first state to institute mandatory bilingual education for English language learners

(ELLs). The law required that any district with twenty or more ELL students sharing a given native language had to provide instruction for students in that native language, as well as provide English-language instruction (Roos 2007). During the early years, programs assumed that bilingual instruction for Haitian students called for French speakers because French was the official language of Haiti. But as increasing numbers of Kreyòl-speaking children (part of the second wave of Haitian immigrants) began to populate Boston and Cambridge schools, the need for Kreyòl as a language of instruction also increased. This led to heavy recruiting among members of the Haitian community for teachers, even though some of these people had no formal training. Aside from the logical consequences we might anticipate from allowing minimally trained adults to teach in classrooms, one unintended consequence has been the negative treatment some students have received at the hands of their teachers.

Although I never witnessed such interactions during my fieldwork, I became aware of the problem through interviews conducted with parents, school administrators and other staff. Independent of one another, two parent participants and several school personnel—including guidance counselors, bilingual program directors and a school psychologist—shared with me that they were concerned about Haitian children in the Boston and Cambridge public schools being verbally abused by their teachers. I was informed that teachers insulted their students with epithets berating their social status (e.g., *abitan*, *sòt*, *gwo soulye*, *moun mòn*, *restavèk*)<sup>5</sup> and that they suggested that these students did not belong in the United States, or that being here still should not be taken as an indication that they had transcended their origins (a sentiment echoed by the mother I quoted at the beginning of this chapter). By invoking status distinctions that hold meaning in the Haitian context, these teachers actively engaged in redrawing the boundaries around social class and status. The meaning of such practices can be understood as maintaining social distance, so that lower-class Haitians in the United States will not become overly confident or overstep their bounds (Buchanan 1983).

As noted earlier, language holds significance with regards to social status in Haiti, so the presence of Kreyòl, rather than French, in Haitian bilingual classrooms created another opportunity for the re-creation of class-based hierarchies. Two stories from my field notes serve to illustrate the role of language in maintaining class boundaries. The first occurred on May 3, 2001, and the following is summarized from my field diary.

I had been invited to speak to a group of high school students by a Haitian bilingual teacher at a neighborhood school in Boston with a large concentration of Haitian immigrants. The teacher felt that the students were not getting along very well, splitting themselves into factions based on the perception among some that their peers were not “Haitian enough.” He wanted me to address these issues in my talk with them. The conversation had been proceeding very well with the students expressing honestly

to one another how they perceived their own identities, but a major discussion ensued when a student criticized those of her peers who did not want to speak Kreyòl. I offered that it was important to be proud of one's heritage, and that language was one of the markers of heritage that should be embraced. A young man, R., raised his hand and observed that I was speaking of Kreyòl as if it were a real language, when in fact it is not a real language (it should be noted that the language of this exchange was, ironically, Kreyòl). I could not believe my ears. I had heard arguments like this before, but from adults of my parents' generation. I was stunned, and disappointed, to hear them from a teenager. The comment triggered a heated debate among the students, some of whom felt R.'s statements symbolized exactly the problems with which we had begun the discussion in terms of having unity within the Haitian community. When I asked R. from where he got his ideas about Kreyòl, he said he had been taught by his father. He also indicated that the strongest evidence against Kreyòl being a real language was that no one studies it. I explained that he was quite wrong, that there were scholars of all stripes who studied Kreyòl, one of whom, Michel DeGraff, was on the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) only a few miles away! R. was surprised to hear this, and I could tell that this new bit of information was a significant discovery, but I knew that one hour on a random afternoon was not enough to counter eighteen years of teaching from his father. About a month later, I was invited back to speak to the same group of students.

I went back to talk to the Haitian bilingual class at Southside High today . . . In addition to giving them an overview of Kreyòl Language Studies, I gave them a copy of the Kreyòl alphabet and of the grammatical rules for reading and writing Kreyòl put out by the Haitian National Bureau on Alphabetization. At first I thought the students were kind of bored because they were very quiet while I was talking, and I wasn't getting that many head nods, but as soon as I finished they started asking a million questions and discussing among themselves and with me what was the future of Kreyòl . . . I talked about how we as Haitians were taught to view our language as inferior because of enslavement and racism, and explained how internalized racism causes us even today to be ashamed of our language and view it as lesser or inadequate. [R.] of course had many arguments, but it was a wonderful exchange and I was invited to come back next school year.

The second story was relayed to me by a Haitian administrator, Mr. T., who directed the bilingual program at a high school in a suburb of Boston and was the advisor for the school's Haitian Club. I had been extensively involved with the Haitian Club at this high school during the first year of my fieldwork, but by the middle of the fall of my second year of fieldwork,

I had not been contacted by Mr. T. about the planned activities for the new school year. The following is excerpted from my field notes:

Quick conversation with Mr. T., whom I have not seen all year because there was no Haitian Club at Westside this year. He tells me he's been having a bad week because of dealing with a teacher. She's a Haitian woman who teaches French at the high school. The odd thing about her is that she refuses to speak Kreyòl, whether speaking to other Haitian teachers, Haitian students, or their parents. She says Kreyòl is not a language, and claims she does not mean it disrespectfully. Mr. T. [is angry about this] because even when he speaks to her in Kreyòl, she responds in English. She started a French club and got the Haitian kids to join it since the Haitian Club was slow to get started. Mr. T. feels like she has stolen all the kids who would be in Haitian club and he can't get them to participate in any Haitian activities. (February 29, 2002)

Not surprisingly, a deep animosity developed between Mr. T. and this teacher, and he tried using his influence as an administrator at the school to get her fired. However, because on all other levels she was performing the functions of her job well, he could not justify to his colleagues letting go of a qualified Haitian teacher. Processing these bits of data in the broader context of what I was learning about the functions of Haitian bilingual classrooms in these communities, I began to understand these stories as part of the same practices of boundary creation that were occurring between the bilingual teachers and their students described earlier.

In her exploration of the differentiated meanings of French and Kreyòl for monolingual and bilingual speakers, Flore Zéphir (1995) argued that, contrary to expectation, it is not only the bilingual bourgeoisie who have resisted attempts to reform Haitian education by using Kreyòl as the primary language for instruction. Indeed, the monolingual lower class has a vested interest in acquiring French "because of its symbolic power for social mobility" (190).

One way to understand these practices is to recall the history of Haitian migration to the United States in that, for the first wave of educated, elite or middle-class migrants, being Haitian was a source of pride that distinguished them from black Americans, whose marginalized and oppressed status in the United States made them an undesirable reference group (Woldemikael 1989). These Haitians enjoyed the prestige associated with being speakers of French, a language that invokes images of sophistication and refinement, and relished in being nicknamed "Frenchie" (Woldemikael 1989; Zéphir 1995). By contrast, representations in the media of the second wave of Haitian migrants as deprived "boat people," concurrent with the steady barrage of images of Haiti as "the poorest country in the Western hemisphere," and of Haitians as the harbingers of AIDS, shifted

Haitian identity from being a source of pride to being a source of shame (Buchanan 1983; Stepick and Portes 1986). It became a matter of self-preservation for members of Haiti's bourgeoisie living in the United States to maintain their distance, both physical and psychological, from the masses now arriving on U.S. shores. Whereas in Haiti material wealth was one way for the Haitian upper class to create distance between themselves and the masses, the U.S. economic structure is such that a larger percentage of the population can amass the "material symbols of high status, such as cars, televisions, stereo sets, expensive furniture, etc." (Buchanan 1983, 14). In response, social markers such as knowledge of French, a well-known family name, proper upbringing and good manners take on the function of determining status among Haitians, even if this differentiation cannot be detected by mainstream U.S. Americans for whom the most meaningful marker of social status is race.

## CONCLUSION

Sherry Ortner's (1997) idea of the postcommunity, a constructed community that exists beyond the physical and original space in which it originated, informs the data I have presented here. Haitian bilingual teachers actively created and recreated a diasporic Haitian community by selecting those who belonged, excluding those who did not, and drawing clear boundaries to distinguish among these factions. In Ortner's paper, the postcommunity takes on four forms: the neocommunity, comprised of people who remain in close proximity to the location of the original community; the invented community, which, although it is physically distant from the original community, replicates its forms; the translocal community, or network of contacts; and the community of the mind, to which Ortner also refers as memory. Whereas I certainly could have used most of these concepts as a lens to analyze the case I have presented here, I have offered instead a fifth possibility and proposed that what we have seen here is evidence of an imposed community.

Specifically, life in the United States imposes certain conditions on Haitian immigrants:<sup>6</sup> they are identified as black, irrespective of their color classification in Haiti; neighborhood segregation makes it more likely that they will live near each other, even if this would not have been the case in Haiti; and without mastery of English, educated professionals may find themselves working alongside illiterate countrymates. Thus, as Buchanan (1983) asserted, life in the United States has a leveling effect for Haitian immigrants, or, to quote my informant, the United States is a *lakou rekreyasyon*, a schoolyard at recess. Furthermore, as noted earlier, many Haitians resent being classified as African American and, those who can, use French as an emblem of their distinction from American blacks as well as lower-class Haitians.



Rather than invoke images of victimization with my choice of the concept of imposed community, I have told a story of very calculated human agency. In this story, upper-class Haitians, in resistance to the impositions of American society on blacks and immigrants, devised their own methods for maintaining their sense of rightful place. I have argued that this is a self-protective mechanism, whereby Haitians dissociate themselves from those whom they feel threaten their already tenuous status in the United States. But the practices taking place in bilingual classrooms that I have discussed here are not the only means of denoting status for Haitian immigrants. Buchanan (1983) reports that, among Haitians living in New York City, there was a ranking of the boroughs and neighborhoods within Haitian enclaves, with Brooklyn at the bottom of the scale and Queens at the top (and even within those boroughs certain sections were ranked higher). Workplaces also are sites where class conflict erupted, as evidenced by the participants in my study and by Buchanan's (1983) finding that some upper-class Haitians refused to speak a word to their lower-status countrymates on the same assembly line.

On the matter of agency, an important consideration missing from the current chapter, due to the constraints of my data, is an equivalent analysis of the agency of the students who were/are being discriminated against in the classrooms of Boston and Cambridge. In other words, we know what upper-class Haitians did to maintain their status, but we know very little about how their lower-status counterparts resisted and/or contested these practices. In the story about the discussion of Kreyòl as a real language, students who disagreed with R.'s position were not afraid to speak up and attack his claims, but these were peer interactions. Elsewhere I have shown that Haitian clubs at high schools around the city were sites where students negotiated meanings of ethnic identity and where Kreyòl was used as a symbol of authentic Haitianness (Doucet 2008; see also Zéphir 2001), but these also were peer interactions. I have no data on how students in classrooms where teachers were lobbing out insults dealt with those situations.

Theoretically speaking, the concept of the social mirror, or the messages about ourselves we receive through our relationships with others, as discussed by Carola Suárez-Orozco (2000) is relevant here. She argues that immigrant youth often encounter negative reflections of themselves in society's mirror, and that, with respect to ethnic identity development, immigrant youth tend to display varying degrees of three adaptation styles: co-ethnic identity, ethnic flight and transcultural identity (Doucet and Suárez-Orozco 2006; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2001). The co-ethnic style has two variations. Some youth have a strong ethnic affiliation because they have limited contact with the mainstream culture or because they want to distinguish themselves from disparaged minorities in the host culture—e.g., Haitian youth not wanting to be identified as African American (Waters 1999; Zéphir 2001). The other variation of co-ethnic identity is adversarial, whereby youth construct identities around rejecting—after

having been rejected by—the institutions of the dominant culture (see Portes 1993; Vigil 1988).

As its name suggests the ethnic flight style is the opposite of co-ethnic identity, as here, youth completely divorce themselves from their culture of origin. Among Haitians, the term for youth who adopt this identity is “undercover Haitians” (Stepick et al. 2001; Zéphir 2001). Finally, transcultural identity is marked by a synthesis or fusing of native and host cultures. Transcultural youth do not choose one culture over the other; instead, they take elements from two or more cultures and integrate them to create something altogether new. The majority of immigrant youth take on this identity style, and many who start out at one of the other two extremes may later develop a more transcultural style. Furthermore, it should be noted that all three ethnic identity styles are fluid and multilayered and should not be understood as facile groupings into which all immigrant youth can be neatly categorized. And whereas it might seem a foregone conclusion that the Haitian students in bilingual classrooms where they are being abused would reject Haitian culture and go “undercover,” the story surely is more complex. Previous research shows that the social and emotional support immigrant youth receive can change the course of negative trajectories, and that the individual resolve of some students should not be underestimated (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova 2008).

Over the course of preparing this chapter and discussing it with various relatives and friends, people asked whether what was happening in the bilingual classrooms was not simply a transplant of what happens in many of the most prestigious and well-regarded schools and classrooms in Haiti, where (at least according to the experiences of those who raised the issue) teachers tend to be rather harsh, and sometimes insulting, toward their students. I was told stories (reenacted with great humor) about *Frère* So and So, the priest/teacher at a certain parochial school who would refer to his students as idiots, or about *Maître* Somebody, the serious intellectual with the tiny glasses who liked to ask his students if they had brains in their heads. Indeed, corporal punishment still is an acceptable method of classroom management in Haiti, and, particularly in the older grades, teachers have been known to shout obscenities at students who they felt were being lazy or arrogant or otherwise inappropriate (J. Viala, personal communication).

However, the argument that the treatment students in Boston and Cambridge experienced is merely evidence of transplanted classroom management techniques fails to take important facts into account. I maintain that the specific ways in which students were being abused carry a larger story, one that is rooted in elitism and classism, for two reasons: content and context. First, it should be noted that the specific words chosen by the teachers, such as *abitan* (peasant), *sòt* (stupid/uneducated), *gwo soulye* (unrefined), *moun mòn* (hillbilly), *restavèk* (servant), explicitly invoke class status. Remember that the stories I was told about teachers in Haiti occurred in

settings where upper-class teachers were instructing upper-class students.<sup>7</sup> It is highly unlikely that teachers in Haiti would use explicitly classist epithets against their students, if for no better reason than fearing parents' reactions. Insults on a person's station in life are attacks on their dignity; these are not the sorts of battles upper-class teachers of upper-class students in Haitian schools wish to take on.

In Boston and Cambridge, however, there was a class differential between teachers and students, one in which teachers had the advantage. Thus the content of the insults reflected the practice of redrawing class boundaries, and, possibly, the desire to attack students' dignity in order to feel more important.

This is also related to the second tenet of my argument, which is that there are significant contextual differences between the Haiti example and the U.S. example. Because of the class differences between teachers and students in Boston and Cambridge, any use of demeaning and demoralizing language serves to reify class boundaries, whether or not this is the teacher's intended objective. Elsewhere (Doucet 2005) I have written about the school context as a contested space for Haitian immigrant youth, a space where students negotiated identity, color and class and family boundaries on a daily basis. Suffering abusive teachers represents another contest for some students—this one over their sense of self-worth. Without this class differential in the Haiti example, the issue is less about self-worth than it is about symbolic power; the authority of a teacher in his or her own classroom to set a tone for a strict code of conduct and high expectations. Although teachers in Haiti may have been abusive, their power over their students was ostensibly limited to the classroom, and perhaps also the school, and had little risk of impacting these students' life chances (i.e., their ability to graduate from school or get jobs), because the students' parents were in positions to protect their children's futures. I do not say this to diminish the psychological impact of abuse; to be sure, even upper-class students in Haiti can be demoralized by teachers who don't believe in them. But in addition to psychological damage, the power of bilingual teachers in U.S. classrooms is tangible and has implications for students' future trajectories.

Teachers in bilingual programs play an important role in decisions about when, and to what extent (e.g., part-day or full-day) students are ready to be mainstreamed into English-only classes (Stefanakis 2000). Of course, so-called objective tests of students' language competencies are used as well, but bilingual program directors also rely on the assessments of teachers, introducing the possibility that teachers could keep students in bilingual classes even if this might undermine the students' best interests. Whereas solid bilingual programs, where students receive language support and are challenged to reach their academic potential, are vitally important to the academic success of ELLs (Carter and Chatfield 1986; Ramírez, Yuen and Ramey 1991), low-quality programs can limit students' opportunities by

keeping them from the academic courses that can prepare them for college (Callahan 2002; Olsen 1997).

Ultimately, all Haitians in the diaspora suffer the consequences of perpetuating divisions and prejudice within Haitian communities (Buchanan 1983; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1990; Zéphir 2001). The divide-and-conquer ideology of colonialism thrives in the contest for superiority. And although the Haitians who actively seek to elevate their own status by belittling others might gain some personal satisfaction, they will continue to be black in the eyes of U.S. Americans and suffer the implications of U.S. racism along with all blacks, irrespective of wealth, education or position.

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## NOTES

1. "I said, back home there are rankings, you know. I said, it's here in the United States that there are no rankings. It's not prejudice, but there are some things you all are doing that are beyond your limits [literally in Kreyòl, too advanced for your age]. Because if we were home [in Haiti] you wouldn't do these things. I said, back home there are rankings. Because bourgeoisie, you have your rank. You're middle class, you have your place. You are poor, you have yours. But, I said, since the United States is the schoolyard at recess, we're all mixed together, so things are . . . the water is murky. But back home, there are rankings."
2. This is not to imply that these issues are unique to the Haitian communities of Boston and Cambridge, but as these were the sites of my research, I do not presume that my observations generalize to other communities of the diaspora. However, for a thorough investigation of class issues among Haitians in New York, see Buchanan (1983).
3. I deliberately refer to skin color, and not to race, because in Haitian society, "race" is more similar conceptually to what is referred to in the United States and Europe as "a people" or "lineage"—for example, in the majority of interviews I conducted with Haitian adults, the response was *Ayisyen* (Haitian) to the question, "Eske ou ka di-m nan ki ras ou klase tèt ou?" (Can you tell me in what racial group you classify yourself?). The notion of *ras* in Haiti also can be used more narrowly to indicate the region of the country from where one originates, as well as blood lineage (d'Ans 1987). This is an important distinction, because the way race is constructed and lived in the United States is one of the first "culture shocks" Haitian immigrants experience, an issue that will be explored later in this chapter.
4. Das (1971) presents an informative historical review of "caste theory" as well as the arguments against it. There also are scholars who have argued that the Haitian social hierarchy is a caste system, but as early as 1942, Price-Mars refuted this characterization (Mintz 1974).
5. Peasant, stupid/uneducated, unrefined, hillbilly, servant.

6. Obviously some of these circumstances are by-products of migration to any country.
7. This is not to say that there are no examples of upper-class teachers insulting lower-class students in Haiti, but for the purposes of this particular chapter, I am focusing on the scenarios and stories that were relayed to me.

# 12 Language, Identity and Public Sphere in Haiti's Diaspora

## The Evolution of the Haitian Creolists' Internet Network

*Angel Adams Parham*

The development of community media has been central to the Haitian diaspora's ability to maintain community ties and to organize socially and politically over the years. Since the 1960s when large numbers of political exiles fled Haiti for the United States and Canada, newspaper and radio have been the major community media used to sustain transnational ties. These media have helped to establish a field of communication that has provided crucial information during critical periods of Haiti's tumultuous political history. At the same time, however, newspaper and radio are limited in their capacity to support discussion and collaboration beyond the local and regional levels. Thus, whereas newspaper and radio continue to be the most frequently used community media for obtaining news and information, a growing number in the diaspora are turning to the Internet for more interactive communication and networking across distance.

Research on Haitian immigrant communities explores the social and political aspects of transnational communities, but relatively little attention is given to their use of media to create transnational forums for discussion and networking. Through their use of radio, fax and now the Internet, the community has created a public sphere that transcends borders. Although some attention has been given to newspaper (Laguerre 1998) and radio (Eugene 1998; Glick Schiller and Fouron 1990; Laguerre 1998), the Internet has been the focus of little study (Parham 2004, 2005).

As the following analysis will show, whereas Internet use is still largely the domain of the educated and relatively well-off in the Haitian diaspora, many community leaders who are rooted in key population centers of the diaspora use Internet forums and websites to promote community interests. The following section situates the discussion theoretically within literature on the Internet and public sphere in diaspora communities. The chapter then considers the major characteristics and concerns of Haitian Internet users. The final sections are devoted to a case study of the *Rezo Entènèt Kreyolis Aysisyen* (REKA) or, the Haitian Creolists' Internet Network, and their website Kreyol.org. This case study illustrates how innovative use of Internet media has allowed users to expand the reach and versatility of a Kreyòl language movement whose participants were

only loosely associated across their dispersed locales before the availability of the Internet.

## INTERNET AND PUBLIC SPHERE IN DIASPORA

Arjun Appadurai (1996) was one of the earliest theorists to emphasize the potential social and cultural impact of the Internet for diaspora communities. He suggested that diaspora communities were using the medium to create “virtual neighborhoods” and “diasporic public spheres” that allowed members to think in new ways about how to sustain community across distance.

Whereas many researchers adopt the vocabulary of the “public sphere,” their analyses rarely engage the extensive body of theory on the public sphere. The idea of what a public sphere is and how it should function has been much debated (Benhabib 1992; Calhoun 1992; Fraser 1992; Habermas 1989, 1996). At the core of the concept, however, is the idea that participation in the public sphere should allow individuals to develop a considered opinion on issues of concern to the community and provide them with channels to actors and institutions that are in a position to make decisions concerning that community. Traditionally, the idea of the public sphere has been rooted firmly within the bounds of the territorial nation-state because it has been within these boundaries that decisions concerning social and political life have been made. Gradually, however, innovations in communications technology, reduced fares for travel and political leaders’ increased openness to the participation of diaspora communities in home state affairs has led to an expansion of the borders of the national public. These developments have made it easier than ever to be an active part of a community from which one is far removed. At the same time, however, whereas online technologies open up the possibilities for community-making in diaspora, the development of enduring online publics may depend greatly on the presence of solid place-based social ties. The case study of REKA’s evolution will show both the benefits of online networking and the limitations of the place-based networks that helped to sustain it.

Whereas much of the scholarship on the public sphere highlights its positive aspects, critical theorists have raised concerns about how social inequalities among would-be participants allows some to dominate while others are either silenced or excluded (Buchstein 1997; Schneider 1996). Researchers who examine the effects of Internet use on the public sphere often raise concerns about class stratification online. There is also the reality of geographic stratification as the poorest areas in the world often have a very limited communications infrastructure.

Other public sphere theorists have raised concerns about variations in the cultural styles or capacities of users who seek to be heard within a single, large public sphere. In a much-cited essay, Nancy Fraser states the

main thrust of this critique while making the argument for multiple publics within multicultural settings:

Public life in egalitarian, multicultural societies cannot consist exclusively in a single, comprehensive public sphere . . . [This] would effectively privilege the expressive norms of one cultural group over others and thereby make discursive assimilation a condition for participation in public debate. . . . In general, then, we can conclude that the idea of an egalitarian, multicultural society only makes sense if we suppose a plurality of public arenas in which groups with diverse values and rhetorics participate. (1992, 126)

In this same essay, Fraser proposes the term “subaltern counterpublic” to describe the networks of media outlets and organizations created by those located outside of the social, cultural or political mainstream. Participants use their media and organizations to “circulate counter-discourses [and] to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (123). In a similar fashion, Seyla Benhabib (1992) calls for a “critical model of public space and public discourse” that would allow those whose interests or identities are submerged to make their interests public “in the sense of making [them] accessible to debate, reflection, action, and moral political transformation” (94).

Considering the lessons and cautions of this body of work on the public sphere, three areas of interest deserve special consideration in our exploration of the Haitian diaspora's Internet use. First, to what extent are online publics accessible to community members with different resources and in different geographic areas? Second, given that diasporic communities in general and Haitian communities in particular are often social and cultural minorities in their areas of settlement, in what ways do Internet media allow members to define identity and create community in empowering ways? Finally, how does innovative use of the Internet allow dispersed members of the Haitian community to create and implement new kinds of community projects aimed at advancing their interests?

The following section addresses the first question by examining the characteristics of Haitian Internet users from selected sites. The latter two questions are discussed in the case study of the Haitian Creolists' Internet Network.

## HAITI'S DIASPORA ONLINE

Within the emerging online public sphere of the Haitian diaspora, issues of linguistic multiplicity and class inequality pose threats to the ability to create an accessible and egalitarian public sphere. Let's consider the challenges of linguistic plurality. Whereas there are many multilingual websites and forums within Haiti's online diaspora, there is also a tendency for one



language to dominate. The creation and utilization of Haiti Global Village (HGV)—one of the largest single websites on Haiti and its diaspora—highlights these issues.<sup>1</sup>

When HGV's founder, Henri Deschamps, set out in 1995 to create a comprehensive Haitian website targeting the diaspora, he and his associates determined that English was the language most likely to be spoken and written by potential users.<sup>2</sup> As a result, whereas the site does offer content in French and Kreyòl, the default language is English. In May of 2000, participants in a discussion forum for students dealt with this issue in a debate initiated by a woman named Dodly who objected to English-language dominance on the site. The following is the full text of her message:<sup>3</sup>

Hi, Bonjour, Sak Pase,

My name is Dodly Alexandre and I am very happy to use this site.

However, it's a pity to see how it is very 'English language oriented.' I am an Haitian and I master our two national languages (Kreol, French), and the major international language English.

*C'est bien malheureux de constater que même l'introduction est écrite en anglais. Mwen kwè Genyen anpil moun-n en Ayiti ki pa pale anglè. Konsa yo paka kominike sou sit-sa.* I have nothing against the English language. Indeed, I master this language as I've completed my graduate studies in the Massachusetts. I only think that the site would be more accessible to the majority of Haitians if the participants did the little effort to write at least in one of our national languages (Kreol, French). If we want this site to be an Haitian one, please let's think about our cultural background and heritage.

*Map tan-n repons-oua. J'attends vos commentaires.* I accept to debate. (May 2000, Haiti Global Village)

Despite several errors in spelling and grammar, Dodly manages to deliver her challenge in the three languages most spoken by the Haitian diaspora. It is worth noting, however, that the number and kinds of mistakes in the text suggest that Dodly's writing skills are strongest in French, good in English and weakest in Kreyòl. This weakness in written Kreyòl from a writer who is otherwise well educated points to the continued difficulties of promoting Kreyòl literacy in and outside of Haiti. It is also interesting to note that, despite the concerns she expresses, full comprehension of the message demands good reading knowledge of English as this is the language used in the majority of the text. Nevertheless, Dodly's challenge is symbolically important in that she demonstrates an ability to make herself understood in each language and calls others to emulate her efforts at linguistic egalitarianism.

The majority of the responses that follow Dodly's message are supportive of her argument.<sup>4</sup> A significant subset of respondents, which seemed to

be made up of Haitians residing in the United States, was less sympathetic, however. They responded with messages like the following:

I understand that you would like this site to utilize more of French and Kreyol. When you suggested this idea have you ever thought about all the Haitians who are not fluent in french. Did you think about the students who were born in America who do not know how to write or read french, but would like to be part of this site? It is good to know that you have mastered the english language, therefore use it on this site. It would be better to use a language that all of us would be able to communicate and that would be English.

P.S.—Don't get me wrong, for a Haitian-American I speak Kreyol very well, but I can not write it.

This and other messages in this vein expressed a clear desire for non-English-speaking members of the diaspora to give in to Haitian-American desires to operate in the “international language” of English. This demand expresses the core of Fraser's concern that “discursive assimilation” might become a condition of participation within a single, dominant public sphere. In the case study of the Haitian Creolists' Internet Network we encounter the example of a diaspora organization that is set up to resist such assimilation and to encourage use of and advocacy for Haitian Kreyòl.

## THE AMBIVALENT POSITION OF KREYÒL IN HAITI AND THE DIASPORA

*REZILTA LANG KREYÒL LA*

*Pou nou menm vrè Ayisyen*

*Ki kwè nan batay Desalin pou libere nèg nwa*

*E ki kwè nan tèt nou,*

*Kreyòl se youn nan zam ki pi enpòtan pou nou*

*Se nan bèl lang sa a ewo nou yo te kominike*

*Pou te kapab kase chenn ki te anchennen pye nou*

*Ak espri nou*

### [SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KREYÒL LANGUAGE

For us true Haitians

Who believe in Dessaline's battle to free black people,

And who believe in ourselves,

Kreyol is one of our most important weapons

It is with this beautiful language that our heroes communicated

In order to break the chains that bound our feet

And our spirit]

(E.W. Védrine, excerpt posted to the Haitian Creolists' Internet Network, December 2000)

Language is more than self-expression. It helps to shape reality, define peoples and—in an increasingly globalized world—determine access to resources and advancement. Each of these is true in Haiti where language clearly reflects current social cleavages. Despite the fact that everyone in Haiti is fluent in the language and most in the diaspora seek to maintain the language as a mark of their heritage and ethnic pride, Kreyòl's proper place in Haitian public and intellectual life has long been the subject of contentious debate.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas Kreyòl has been the only language of the monolingual masses for all of Haiti's history, it has always struggled to gain recognition as a fully respected language. Because of ambivalence on the part of Haitian leaders about the proper role of Kreyòl in the public sphere, it has only been approved as a language of instruction at the primary school level since 1979, and it only became an official language of the state in 1987. The change in the official status of the language came about in 1979 when by presidential decree Kreyòl became a subject for instruction and a language of instruction in primary schools. Then in 1980 the Ministry of Education launched a reform effort that had as its goal establishing Kreyòl as the language of instruction for the first four years of primary school. Before these reforms were enacted, French was the only formally acknowledged language for education and official state business.<sup>6</sup>

The assumption for most of Haiti's history was that French was the better, more refined and complete language whereas Kreyòl was primitive and limited in comparison. This view has gradually given way to the embrace of Kreyòl by intellectuals and finally by the state. One of the strongest movements to endorse Kreyòl was the *Mouvman Kreyòl*—or Creole Movement—which emerged in the 1960s in Haiti.

From the beginning, members of the *Mouvman Kreyòl* have been at the forefront of developing a theory and practice of Kreyòl language and politics that begins with the mechanics of the language and, for many, extends to a critique of global inequality and resistance to those aspects of culture reminiscent of colonialism. This view is well articulated in *Notebook #3* of a series of booklets published in 2000 by Edisyon Koukouy. The *Notebook* is a collection of essays, interviews and letters that recount the entire history of the movement. One of the letters is written by Pierre Banbou and is addressed to Jean Price-Mars—the undisputed father of indigenous social thought in Haiti. Price-Mars's book, *So Spoke the Uncle*, originally published in 1928, is an anthropological reflection on the importance and legitimacy of Haitian culture and heritage, which he argues should not be compared to or contrasted with that of the French. He argued strongly that an authentic Haitian culture had much to offer the world and urged Haitians to value and respect its integrity.

It is because of Price-Mars's elevation of indigenous social thought that Banbou addresses the movement's letter to this cultural icon. He expresses the cultural value of Kreyòl, linking it to struggles for justice across the world:

Beyond a simple *Indigenisme* that is strictly Haitian . . . we invite all other social groups, all other collectivities, all other nations born or yet to be born . . . all those that have been marked by the stamp of European colonialism, black or yellow, all those who still struggle with economic, political, and cultural underdevelopment, to work for the flowering of their respective *indigenismes*. Beyond the borders of Haiti, we will be Caribbean, beyond the borders of the Caribbean, we will be American, beyond the borders of the Americas, we will be "Kreyòl," we will be human. (Banbou 2000, 41–42; my translation)

Interestingly, this open letter was written in French. Because many of Haiti's most educated are still more comfortable reading and writing French than Kreyòl, Kreyòl proponents alternate between using French and Kreyòl, depending on the audience they are trying to reach. Still, Banbou argues that it is through the use of a Creole that is both particular to the Haitian experience, yet universal in its resistance to European colonial influence, that movement members are able to articulate a distinct cultural identity and social conscience.

The extent to which Kreyòl proponents see their work as a commitment to social justice is reflected in another of Banbou's essays published in 1974. In that essay, Banbou emphasizes that Kreyòl learning and research is more than an intellectual pursuit. It should instead be thought of as a contribution to learning that helps to address the real needs of people in underdeveloped countries. In the case of Haiti, this means addressing the country's staggering illiteracy rate and the need for better educational materials.

In the diaspora, the status of Kreyòl is also ambivalent, although the hierarchy between French and Kreyòl remains the same. In her work *Haitian Immigrants in Black America*, Flore Zéphir (1996) sketches a "sociolinguistic portrait" of the U.S.-based diaspora community. She finds, as other researchers do, that Haitian immigrants learn early on about the low status of African Americans and seek to distance themselves from this group (Waters 1999). During this negotiation of the new racial terrain of the United States, Haitian immigrants think of their language as an important marker that sets them apart from the larger black population. Kreyòl becomes, more than ever, a mark of national pride.

Members of REKA are a subset of the diaspora that is unusually attuned to the politics and culture of language. With their group they have sought to be strong advocates of the language and to overcome ambivalence with a clear statement about the worth and integrity of Kreyòl as a language and cultural resource. REKA is one of a few Internet-based groups that

have pioneered the creation of a widespread reading and writing public for the language. Unlike radio—the most popular medium in and outside of Haiti—Internet-mediated discussion allows for ongoing dialogue that contributes to the development of *written* Kreyòl. The ability to write Kreyòl—and to write it according to the standardized orthography—is less widespread in the diaspora than its use in everyday speech. REKA messages can be saved and retrieved, new or already published texts may be circulated and individual contributors may initiate and sustain relationships with each other. This creation of a Kreyòl language site with the capacity for dialogue and collaboration provides the ideal qualities for the creation of a Kreyòl-language-reading public. This in turn provides an infrastructure for strengthening identity and collective action in diaspora.

#### NOTES ON METHOD: INTERNET RESEARCH IN DIASPORA COMMUNITIES

As transnational, electronic and other forms of dispersed community have increased in number, social researchers have noted the importance of revising old methodologies and creating new ones (Appadurai 1996; Ortner 1997; Wilson and Peterson 2002). Whereas early work on Internet communities emphasized online interactions, recent work has more carefully explored the interactions between online and off-line environments (Georgiou 2002; Graham and Khosravi 2002; Miller and Slater 2000). Within diaspora communities this kind of research involves fieldwork in and analysis of multiple sites.

My study of REKA has involved three years of online observation, telephone interviews and meetings with REKA members during visits to Miami and Montréal. The group has undergone considerable change over the course of the study period. What initially began as a discussion list has since turned into an online journal and now a website that archives but no longer publishes new editions of the journal. The research discussed in the case study represents data from three distinct periods of the group's history:

1. an early period of regular discussion
2. an interim period when the group's form and function were being renegotiated
3. the group's current incarnation as a website with its archived journals

The work reported here is based on the coding and analysis of three months of representative messages collected during the earliest period of the study, e-mail responses from and interviews with individual group members and analysis of several editions of the *Journal Kreyòl Ayisyen*—the Haitian

Creole Journal. Taken together, these sources allow us to situate REKA within an emerging Kreyòl-language public sphere online.

### CREATING A CREOLE LANGUAGE PUBLIC SPHERE: THE EVOLUTION OF THE HAITIAN CREOLISTS' INTERNET NETWORK

*REKA se yon konbit men nan men tout moun  
Ki anmore lang Kreyòl Aysiye an.  
REKA so yon zouti pou moun ki vle aprann ak pwodui an Kreyòl  
dekwa pou land nan ka pwogrese  
Enpi jwe wòl lid we jwe nan devlopman peyi nou an, Ayiti.*

[REKA is a group of people working together  
Who love the Haitian Creole language.  
REKA is a tool for people who want to learn and produce in Kreyòl,  
so that the language can progress  
And play the role it should play in the development of our country,  
Haiti.] (*Source: www.kreyol.org*)

As the preceding quote suggests, the main goal of REKA is to provide an outlet for expressing oneself in Kreyòl and for advocating for positive change in the status and development of the language so that Haiti will prosper. REKA members are well acquainted with the politics of Haitian Creole language use in Haiti and its diaspora. The group has important continuities with the *Mouvman Kreyòl*. One of the founding members of the group—Jan Mapou—was also a founding member of the *Mouvman Kreyòl*. Although the movement was shut down by the Duvalier regime a few years after it was founded, the spirit of this movement has continued in the diaspora. One of the most significant manifestations of this spirit is the *Sosyete Koukouy*—the Society of Fireflies. The society was founded in New York by Jan Mapou and is composed of writers, artists, intellectuals and others who gather together to celebrate Haitian language and culture. It has expanded since the New York chapter was founded and now consists of several chapters in North America as well as one chapter in Haiti.<sup>8</sup>

In order to put REKA into its full social and cultural context, it is necessary to understand how important place-based *Sosyete* roots and institutions were to the founding and work of the online organization. In an early interview for this research, Jan Mapou explained that *Sosyete Koukouy* members in the Canada chapter were the ones who initially told him about using the Internet to create a discussion list in Kreyòl. They invited him and others to join and by 1998 REKA was born. Two years later, after existing solely online, REKA members decided to come together in Miami for

an organizational meeting. In the year 2000, they met at Libreri Mapou, a bookstore and cultural center owned by Jan Mapou and the site of much of *Sosyete Koukouy*'s work in the Miami area. At this meeting, the group began to formulate its organizational structure and to shape its mission.

### REKA AS DISCUSSION LIST: 1998–2002

During the time that it was an active discussion list from 1998 to 2002, REKA had seventy subscribers and twenty-seven full members. According to the group's constitution, the distinction between subscribers and full members is that members agree to pay yearly dues and are able to vote in elections for leadership. Many REKA participants are first-generation immigrants to the United States or Canada, although a few are located in Haiti. Several are writers who have published plays, novels and poetry, whereas others are educators and scholars. An analysis of a hundred messages collected from October 2000 to January 2001 provides insight into the dynamics of online interaction within the group. These messages were coded and sorted into descriptive categories and the two largest categories were literary/linguistic and Kreyòl links. In messages coded as literary/linguistic, the writer is either commenting on a linguistic issue or literary work or submitting a Kreyòl-language piece such as a poem. Messages included under Kreyòl links are aimed at expanding the Kreyòl-language-reading public by promoting specific Kreyòl-language websites or books.

Twenty-eight percent of messages were literary/linguistic and these messages often involved debates of some kind. One of the most extended exchanges took place December 6–14, 2000. The discussion began when one participant made a remark about another writer's (Writer #2 in the following) spelling of the word *recherchis*—researcher. The following excerpts provide a brief summary of the conversation.<sup>9</sup>

*Writer #1:* Where did you unearth this word “recherchis”? Look, bury it quick . . . so that meddlesome critics don't rap you on the head.

*Writer #2:* Words grow, in the same way that children do. . . let's record the voice of the Haitian people as proof, how they use the language. . . I take all of this under consideration in my linguistic research.

*Writer #3:* I think that defenders of Creole have a bit of a tendency to give too much reverence to those with diplomas . . . those from important universities . . . I think, ‘thank God’ that was not one of the errors made by the people who came out with the basis for the 1979 orthography. It appears, rather, that they went to listen to and gather sounds from the mouths of the majority of people in the four corners of the country, the real Haitian people. This is

what made them leave out a sound like 'r' which [Writer #2] is trying to defend today.

*Writer #4:* All Haitians who speak Creole, who are used to hearing Creole, suffer an earache when they hear the sound 'r' in the word 'recherchis.' I could say a lot more on this. '*Kreyòl pale, kreyòl konprann.*'

This dialogue illustrates how contentious linguistic issues can still inspire heated discussion within the Haitian community despite the general agreement on the official spelling system adopted in 1979. According to this system, there are several acceptable ways to write the word *researcher*. These include: *chèchè, rechèchè* and *rechèchis*. Despite the fact that Writer #2's version, *recherchis*, is not among the sanctioned spellings, he wants to make the case that the official system should be open to changing or evolving forms of expression and pronunciation. For those who oppose this approach, what is at stake is the need to commit to a standardized form of Kreyòl so that the written language will be accorded the respect that it has been lacking for so long. REKA members are particularly concerned that there be a united front in this effort so that there is no room for critics to argue that Kreyòl is a second-class language that has no formalized system.

Other literary/linguistic messages discussed literature written in Kreyòl. One notable message was from the author Kiki Wainwright, who wrote in to greet REKA members and to provide his updated e-mail address. Wainwright is a well-known writer and musician who has been very active in the *Sosyete Koukouy*. At the time of his writing to the list, Wainwright had recently published a children's book written in Kreyòl. The book, called *Bonifas ak Malefis*—the names of two fictional characters who stand for Good and Evil—was the object of some discussion during the months of the study period. One REKA member, a mother who was thinking of her children as she read Wainwright's book, had this comment:

It is a great book filled with pictures . . . it will be of interest to children, but my problem is that its stories are too negative. Because we all know that our parents already raise us with such negativity, for us to fear each other, I think that some of the stories reinforce this attitude and this way of thinking, especially when we consider that this is the age at which children are learning.<sup>10</sup>

A few days later, another member writes back in response to her note cautioning her to keep in mind the larger point of the book. This larger point is that both good and evil exist in the world and the two characters, *Bonifas* and *Malefis*, represent the most extreme poles of good and evil. Furthermore, he argues, one can read the book as a commentary on Haitian history and society. He writes:



We can even go further with this psychological analysis in order to engage in an analysis of conscious vs. subconscious, we can analyze these two poles within the dialectical framework of the book and see [how this analysis illuminates] the duality of Haitian culture. Yes, negativity is there, but what does the author want to show through this (through the character of *Malefis*)?<sup>11</sup>

Soon after this latter comment on the book, Wainwright himself writes in to respond to the first critique:

I read the critique, let's say commentary, you wrote on "*Bonifas and Malefis*." I am pleased to see that you read the book. Unfortunately I cannot please everyone. . . . No one likes negative things. . . . But I have to speak about negativity too . . . All of the stories conclude with something positive, but I have to show both: where things are positive and where they are negative so that I can shed light on this question. . . . you are a beautiful flower in the garden of culture! Continue to bloom, don't wither away!<sup>12</sup>

This discussion of *Bonifas ak Malefis* offered a rare opportunity for people in the diaspora to engage in written intellectual engagement of Kreyòl literature while writing in the Kreyòl language. This is part of the reason REKA was founded, to provide an intellectual forum that would allow discussion and debate in the language to flourish in the context of a diaspora experience dominated mainly by English and/or French.<sup>13</sup> These linguistic and literary uses of the forum illustrate some of the ways that REKA members were able to cultivate a circle of Kreyòl-phone readers and critics and to resist the pressures of linguistic assimilation. Related to this purpose is the role REKA was able to play in building a larger reading public for the language. This purpose is addressed in the discussion that follows.

The second major category, Kreyòl links, made up 16 percent of the messages written during the three-month period. As illustrated with the examples following, these kinds of messages encourage the creation of a Kreyòl-language-reading public. The following message, which was sent out by the list manager, offers a typical example of how REKA members used their forum to contribute to the expansion of the Kreyòl-reading public. In the note, the manager is introducing a list of Kreyòl websites compiled by another REKA member:

Dear REKA members, when you can visit these sites, and send a message of encouragement to them (and other sites which are not on this list), this helps us to give the movement support. (October 2000)

The message attached includes seventeen Kreyòl-language-related websites. The "movement" referred to in the note is, of course, the movement to

advance the Kreyòl language. Members of REKA generally see their work as furthering a movement that will help to give Kreyòl the visibility and gravitas necessary for improving the social and linguistic situation in Haiti.

Other Kreyòl links messages encourage group members to support authors who publish in Kreyòl. Most of these are posts where the writer recommends specific books to list members and provides information about where to buy them. Information concerning procurement is important because there are so few outlets in the diaspora for buying and selling books in Kreyòl. During the three months of messages examined here, one REKA member, located in Montréal, used the list to promote his newly published book. In order to widen the audience for the book, a REKA member located in New York invited the author to do a book launch in Brooklyn. The list was then used to circulate knowledge of both the book and the event. These face-to-face events provide an opportunity for writers to gain greater exposure within the diaspora and they also make it easier for interested readers to buy texts that are otherwise difficult to acquire.

#### OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITS OF REKA'S DISCUSSION LIST

In the subset of REKA messages examined in the preceding, the high concentration of literary/linguistic and Kreyòl links messages illustrates how the group carried out some of the basic functions of what Fraser termed a subaltern counterpublic. First, the promotion of Kreyòl authors' books and Kreyòl-language websites provided a way for members to encourage the growth of a Kreyòl-reading public and was consistent with their expressed desire to contribute to the advancement of the language. Second, the discussion list functioned as a forum for dialogue and opinion formation concerning contentious linguistic issues. These uses are consistent with Fraser's argument that subaltern counterpublics have a special need for spaces and organizations of their own that allow them to communicate using their own discursive conventions in order to clarify community issues and set group agendas for action within the larger public sphere.

There were, however, some limitations to the dynamics of interaction within the group. During the three-month period analyzed here 37 percent of the messages were part of ongoing dialogues concerning issues raised by list members, and twenty-three of approximately seventy registered list members contributed messages. These figures suggest that the list was only moderately interactive. It is instructive to note, however, that just one user composed fully 39 percent of all the messages posted during this time, and this raises some concerns about the degree of balance in points of view on the list.

Whereas the 2000–2001 period was fairly active, over the course of the next two years, contributions began to dwindle. It soon became clear that REKA would effectively cease to exist if nothing changed. Given this

situation, members of the group's administrative council met in Boston during the month of April in 2002 to decide what to do. The outcome of the meeting was an agreement to acquire an organizational website. Up until this time discussion had been conducted using a forum on Windows on Haiti—a website owned by a REKA member named Guy Antoine. Following this decision they established the Kreyol.org address that is still in use today. The council then resolved to create an online journal at this site.

### REKA: RE-CREATION AS ONLINE JOURNAL AND WEBSITE

REKA's electronic journal was named *Journal Kreyòl Ayisyen* and the first edition appeared on July 13, 2002. The *Journal* includes articles by REKA authors from across the diaspora in Haiti, New York, Canada and beyond. The opening article of the first issue helps to make the transition from the previous phase to the current one by restating the group's collective memories and identity. It recounts by name prominent members who joined over the years and chronicles the group's accomplishments—in particular the Miami conference and the writing of letters to the Haitian state to advance the official use of Kreyòl in state communications.

Issue number three of the first volume embodies the earlier group's commitment to promoting linkages between different parts of the Kreyòl reading public. This issue highlights the celebration of the International Day of Creole on October 28. This is the day each year when Creole languages and cultures are celebrated across the world through conferences, symposiums and cultural displays. This edition of the *Journal* included reports from Montréal, Haiti, Cuba and Boston. The contribution on the celebrations in Cuba was particularly interesting because, although it is known that there is a small community of Haitian descent in the country, that community is rarely included in discussions of the diaspora (see Hume, this volume). The Cuba piece was borrowed from Guy Antoine's website, Windows on Haiti, and this borrowing illustrates the continued interconnection of different sites within the growing Kreyòl-language-reading public.

Comments from readers in the fourth *Journal* issue of volume one further illustrate the level of connectedness across the diaspora. The author of the message that follows represents a Kreyòl-language organization based in Haiti:

Everyone from AMAPP (Association of Literacy Group Leaders and Participants in Port-au-Prince) thanks REKA's leadership for all the useful information they circulate about the Creole language in a way that shuts the mouths of people who disparage it by saying that it's not a language. We want to tell you that you're not alone in the struggle. We have a book that we published in 1995 for International Creole Day called 'Reading and Writing Techniques for Haitian Creole,'

we are asking that you help us in some way to promote this book in the United States, we've already gotten KEPKAA (International Association for the Promotion of Creole and Literacy) in Canada to help. (Mario Coty)<sup>14</sup>

There was no direct response in the *Journal* to Coty's request. He did, however, continue to contribute to future editions of *Journal Kreyòl Ayisyen*, which suggests that he continued to find the literary outlet a useful one in relation to his work and passion for the Kreyòl language.<sup>15</sup>

The last edition of the journal was posted in June 2004. The editors explained that the cessation was due to the difficulty of finding enough people to contribute regularly to the journal. Whereas *Journal Kreyòl Ayisyen* offered a very nice blend of poetry, essays and social commentary in Kreyòl, the problem seemed to be the relatively small audience available to read and to encourage the production of such a journal. Other efforts like the journal *Tanbou* ([www.tanbou.com](http://www.tanbou.com))—which is published both online and off-line—deal with this difficulty by publishing in the three languages of the diaspora: Kreyòl, French and English.

Since the decline of the journal, REKA has ceased to exist as an organization, but its former leadership continues to maintain the website *Kreyol.org*. The website offers one of the only places on the Internet to find in-depth discussion of Haitian social and literary issues written in Kreyòl. One section of the site provides profiles and samples of work from several of Haiti's best known writers. In addition, Jan Mapou's column "Ti Gout pa Ti Gout" (Little by Little or Drop by Drop)—which is also published in the diaspora newspaper *Haiti en Marche*—is often posted to the site.<sup>16</sup>

Mapou's articles address a number of topics concerning social and cultural issues in Haiti and the diaspora. Recent topics from January 2008 include: "Let's encourage our children to read" and "Critique: A necessity in order to advance." Although this most recent incarnation of REKA is much less ambitious than what the founders set out to accomplish, the coordinators have provided a stable online existence for the language that can be accessed and researched by beginning or advanced Kreyòl-language readers.

## CONCLUSION

At REKA's founding, members had hoped to be able to work together on concrete projects that would further the status of Kreyòl. Given what members had in mind at the beginning, the accomplishments of the group are somewhat limited achievements. What accounts for this outcome despite the initial network of place-based relationships that helped the group to get going?

In reflecting on the lag in writing and the difficulty of translating ideas into action, REKA president Jean St. Vil—who is better known as

Jafrikayiti—pointed to the large distances between members and the structure of the group as weaknesses:

I think [it's] the fact that we don't see each other and we cannot have that person right in front of us working, and the plans that we're making cannot be *applicable in a direct environment or in Haiti*, most of us would like to have an impact. . . . The fact that we don't pick up the phone and talk to . . . each other, except for the ones that are in the same city, I know that I do that. . . . But for the others it's very rare that I would pick up the phone and call someone in another city let alone another country. It makes it difficult. . . . The challenge may have been miscalculated, what it really takes to function as a virtual organization. And of course the fact that people are involved in so many things. (emphasis added)

Even among the leadership, contact was not as regular as it should ideally have been. The president explained that at one point one of the leaders fell silent, and it took several months to figure out that he was not at his regular residence and had not been checking his mail at all.

The idea of running a “virtual organization” is indeed quite new, and Jafrikayiti's response points to the continued importance of place-based concentrations of members within Internet-mediated groups working on concrete projects. Early place-based relationships facilitated by the *Sosyete Koukouy* as well as the web space afforded by Windows on Haiti have helped to get the group off the ground. When members' participation ebbed over the years and early enthusiasm regarding the possibility of collaborating on joint projects declined, the administrative council—whose members were concentrated in Boston—were able to work together to acquire independent web space for the group and to mount the online journal. The Kreyol.org site continues to offer useful and rare Kreyòl language content on the Internet. This site has recently been joined, however, by the establishment of *Sosyete Koukouy's* website: *Sosyetekoukouy.org*. This new site provides background on the role of *Sosyete Koukouy* in the historic *Mouvman Kreyòl* as well as updates on current work in the organization. Still, the *Sosyete* website does not have as its purpose the creation of a reading public for the Kreyòl language in the way that is true of REKA and the current Kreyol.org site.

REKA's experience offers just one case of how the Internet can provide a way for traditionally marginalized groups to establish an alternative public space that addresses their interests and needs (Fraser 1992; Gilroy 1993). Issues concerning repressed or declining language are also of concern for the larger family of Creole languages to which Haitian Kreyòl belongs. Members of the Louisiana Creole community, for instance, have used the Cajun/Creole list to locate others who share their relatively rare linguistic aspirations and cultural identity.<sup>17</sup> The linguistic goals of Cajun/Creole

participants are described as aspirations because—unlike the case of Haitian Kreyòl—Louisiana Creole is literally in danger of dying out as an older generation passes on. Because of the scarcity of people conversant in the language, Cajun/Creole list members have a very difficult time learning and preserving the language and thus are especially grateful to have access to Internet forums that allow them to connect with others who share their particular cultural concerns. Some members attempt to write in Louisiana Creole on the list whereas others make do with English. In addition, a group of Cajun/Creole list members has actually organized conference calls in order to listen in on Louisiana Creole lessons.<sup>18</sup>

Haiti is thus just one of many countries within this larger Creole-speaking world where prospective Internet users may have a difficult time finding spaces in which to read, write and—in some cases—speak their language. In most of these countries, the Creole language is part of a complex linguistic situation where it may be stigmatized or is dying out. Future research would be helpful in determining how Internet media may be helping some of these communities to revive or strengthen linguistic and cultural identities.

## NOTES

1. Although HGV is no longer active, for many years it was a large and vibrant site for Haitian diaspora exchanges.
2. Interview conducted by the author with Deschamps.
3. The portions in italics are translated here: Part 1: It is really unfortunate to see that even the introduction itself is written in English. I think there are many people in Haiti who don't speak English. Therefore, they can't communicate on this site. Part 2: I am waiting for your response.
4. A total of twenty-four messages followed Dodly's. Of these twelve were pro Dodly's position, six con and six neutral.
5. See Stepick (1998, 80–84) on the desire to maintain Kreyòl in the diaspora and Zéphir (1996, 141–142) on the importance of maintaining Kreyòl in the United States as an ethnic marker that distinguishes Haitians from African Americans. On debates in Haiti about the proper role of Kreyòl, see Dejean (1993).
6. For more on this transition, see Zéphir (1995), from which this brief discussion is summarized.
7. Last accessed on December 29, 2010.
8. See [www.sosyetekoukouy.org](http://www.sosyetekoukouy.org) for more information. All information on the site is written in Kreyòl. Last accessed on December 29, 2010.
9. Following, the written dialogue is reported in the original Kreyòl written by the writers:  
Writer 1: *Kote ou detere mo sa-a <<RECHERCHIS>>? Gade non kouzen, antere-l vit . . . pou Konpè fouyapòt pa we-w ak zoklo!* (December 6, 2000)  
Writer 2: *Mo yo grandi, menm jan ak timoun. . . . ann anrejistre vwa yo pou prEv kijan y ap itilize langMwen pran tout koze sa yo an konsiderasyon nan rechEch lengwistik mwen.* (December 7, 2000)  
Writer 3: *Mwen panse defansè kreyòl yo gen yon ti tandans fè twòp lareverans devan diplòm . . . gwo invèsite. . . . M panse "grarsadye" sa pa t yonn nan erè moun ki te vini ak baz otògraf (1979) n ap sèvi a te fè. Li parèt, yo*

*te pito al koute epi ranmase son anba bouch majorite moun nan 4 kwen peyi a, veritab pèp Ayisyen an. Se sa k fè yo wete son tankou "R" sa (Writer 2) ap eseye defann jodi a. (December 8, 2000)*

Writer 4: *Tout Ayisyen ki pale kreyòl, ki abitye tande kreyòl, ap soufri maladi zòrèy lè yo tande son "r" la nan mo "recherchis."* *M ta di anpil sou sa. Kreyòl pale, Kreyòl konprann.* (December 8, 2000, English translation in the text by the author)

10. Following is the original in Kreyòl:  
*Se yon bèl liv chaje ak desen . . . l'ap enterese tout timoun men, pwoblèm mwen sè ke li twò negatif nan istwa yo. Paskè nou tout konnen ke paran nou yo leve nou deja nan negativite, pou nou tout pè lòt alòs mwen panse ke gen kèk nan kont yo ki ap ranfòse atitud ak panse sa yo sitou lè nou konnen ke se laj pou timoun aprann.* (December 1, 2000, English translation in the text by the author)
11. Following is the original in Kreyòl. The quote includes the larger context summarized in the preceding text as well as the direct quote:  
*Bon, m ta di (Previous writer) pou l fèt atansyon lè l ap kritike yon tèks / zèv, yon liv. Nan de pèsonaj Kiki WAINWRIGHT prezante nan liv li a (\*Bonifas ak Malefis\*), [pèsonaj] Bonifas reprezante BYEN, tout sa k byen, moun k ap fè byen nètalkole (la a se POZITIVITE). Imaj BONDYÉ [pèsonaj] Malefis reprezante MAL, tout sa k mal, moun k ap fè mal nètalkole (la a se NEGATIVITE). Imaj DYAB Nou ka menm al pi lyen nan analiz sikolojik pou n ta antre nan yon seri analiz "konsyans" vs. "sibkonsyans," pou n analize de pol yo nan kad dyalektik liv sa a pou wè plas analiz sa yo nan dyalite kilti ayisyèn nan.*  
*Wi, NEGATIVITE a la men kisa otè a vle montre nou atravè l (nan pèsonaj Malefis)?* (December 4, 2000, English translation in the text by the author)
12. The original Kreyòl is included here:  
*Mwen li kritik ou, an nou di kòmantè, ou te fè sou "Bonifas ak Malefis."*  
*Sa fè-m plezi pou m' wè ou li liv la. Malerèzman mwen pa ka plè tout mounn. . . . Nan pwen mounn ki renmen bagay negatif. . . . Men fò m'pale sou negativite tou. . . . Tout kont yo fini ak youn kote pozitif, men fò m'montre toude:kote pozitif ak kote negatif pou m'ka fè limyè sou kesyon an. . . . ou se youn bèl flè nan jaden lakilti ! Kontinye fleri, pa fennen twò vit!* (December 5, 2000, English translation in the text by the author)
13. Most REKA members are located in Canada or the United States.
14. Coty's contribution is found in the section entitled *Korespondans Lektè Nou Yo* and can be found at: [www.kreyol.org/achiv/reka1/achiv/JKA4/KorespondansJAN.htm](http://www.kreyol.org/achiv/reka1/achiv/JKA4/KorespondansJAN.htm). Accessed on December 29, 2010.
15. Also see contributions from Coty in volume one, number six, and in volume two, number three.
16. *Haiti en Marche* was established in Miami, Florida, in 1986. The year of its founding marked a watershed in Haitian political history—the departure of François Duvalier. This paper is located in the political center between two other mainly French language Haitian diaspora newspapers—the conservative *Observateur* and the left-leaning *Haiti Progrès*.
17. See <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/cajuncreole/>. Last accessed on December 29, 2010.
18. Discussion on this issue began in 2004 and continues as of the time of this writing in 2008.

# 13 Going Home Again and Again and Again

## Coffee Memories, Peasant Food and the Vodou Some of Us Do

*Gina Athena Ulysse*

For centuries now, especially in popular imagination, Haiti has been incarcerated by labels and phrases that maintain its place somewhere at the bottom of the world order. Haiti needs new or at least other narratives, for the old ones no longer suffice. Not only do many of these maxims uphold archaic notions of the republic and in some cases are not factually accurate, they also persist in obscuring the complexity that has historically characterized this other half of Hispaniola.

Undoubtedly, Haiti and Haitian studies need a paradigm shift. One of the ways that this could be done is through a broadening of the scholarly gaze to include those who have been previously ignored, especially by mainstream scholarship. More specifically, as I have argued elsewhere, Haiti “could benefit from more feminist approaches especially reflexivity that seeks to deconstruct the visceral, which is usually relegated to the arts, yet remains embedded in the structural. [Such an approach would open spaces] to create an *alter(ed)native* form of inquiry that considers a fuller subject” (Ulysse 2008, 25), or in this case a more nuanced and diverse Haiti. Here I would like to take things a couple steps further and suggest that such reflective narratives actually consider the senses—that is, smelling, tasting, touching, hearing and seeing—precisely because, as historian Mark Smith writes, “senses are not universal . . . and can only be understood in their specific social and historical contexts” (2008, 3). Because the senses are subjective, they present an excellent opportunity to show how one’s position and location as well as other indices of identity intersect to operate in ways that disrupt the simple binaries on which popular tropes (Trouillot 1990, 2003) are founded. Indeed, these must be dismantled as they support the recurring dominant perception of Haiti’s exceptionalism within the region (Trouillot 1990).

More work that questions Haiti’s rich versus poor schema is needed to better explicate the complexities in Haiti’s class system. For example, how does it relate to local, regional and global dynamics (Dupuy 2006; Fatton 2002; Schuller 2007)? The lack of such accounts reinforces the disavowal (Fischer 2004) and liminality of those who fall anywhere in between these extremes (Ulysse 2006a, 2006b, 2008). The significance of



inquiry that considers this positioning has the potential to not only enrich understanding of Haiti and pluralize Haitians—wherever they may be—but in so doing move away from creating yet another damning and totalizing narrative.<sup>1</sup>

In the following, I create an auto-ethnographic montage from my memories of roasting coffee, my mother's cake baking and my claiming of Vodou to consider the subjectivity inherent in concepts of home. In this chapter, I use poetry, literature, narrative analysis and snapshots from an anti-memoir (*Ulysse 2006a*) to create a textured piece that reflects the complex experiences it attempts to convey. More specifically, with these moments, I show how scent, taste and sight function as homing devices in the aftermath of migration that reveal the ties that bind and the ones that do not in the growing Haitian diaspora. This presupposes the question of what occurs upon one's *retour au pays natal*. What happens when one returns to a native land and finds that again and again and again, as Grant Farred (1996) asserts, they just cannot stay?

Indeed, there are myriad reasons why many among those who have made their homes abroad can no longer stay. Understanding these are crucial to recognizing differences among Haitians in the diaspora and at home. That said, the point of this chapter is not to make an all-encompassing claim about migrant adjustment abroad. Rather, my goals are mainly to present a few snapshots of moments that explore gaps in memory, illustrate some of the contradictions inherent in longings for home and show how socio-cultural negotiations occur in the trenches. Such processes are reflective of their time. They are in constant flux. Hence, I deliberately refrain from producing a logical story because that would only reinforce the very hegemonic concept of culture as holistic, bounded and static that I oppose.

Thus, I position myself to write against the grain, as Faye V. Harrison (2008) calls it. I use several experimental techniques (such as shifting between the ethnographic past and present to resist linearity and code switch between genres) to present a dynamic and nuanced narrative. My aim is not to enclose the object of study by providing theoretical or even ethnographic coherence of any kind where in fact there is none. For as soon as these moments were captured, documented and reproduced here after they were experienced, written, rewritten and edited, they ceased to be what happened and in fact became what was said to have happened (Trouillot 1996).

Knowing the power of the story, I also abstain from recreating ethnographic authority and providing resolution. Conclusions serve the purpose of making things neat and provide meaning and order. My goal with this chapter is to entice readers with moments of critical ethnographic engagement (Abu-Lughod 1990). Indeed, something is happening. In the process, I hope to challenge them to extract and recycle some meaning out of disorder.

Swiss novelist Alain de Botton offers another perspective on *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* (*Remembrance of Things Past*) that illuminates my path. In *How Proust Can Change Your Life*, de Botton revisits the master tomes and makes several claims that I argue are rather apt for my argument that Haiti needs new narratives—absent of clichés. He writes: “The problem with clichés is not that they contain false ideas, but rather that they are superficial articulations of very good ones” (1997, 88). For example, it’s not that Haiti isn’t poor. De Botton continues, “If we keep saying this [the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere] every time we encounter [or discuss Haiti], we will end up believing that this is the last rather than the first word to be said on this subject [Haiti]. Clichés are detrimental insofar as they inspire us to believe that they adequately describe a situation, while merely grazing its surface” (ibid.). (Indeed, an unknown fact is that the country also has the largest number of millionaires per capita in the entire region.) And this, de Botton rightly insists, matters precisely because “the way we speak is ultimately linked to the way we feel, because how we *describe* the world must at some level reflect how we first *experience* it” (1997, 88; emphasis in the original).

#### COFFEE MEMORIES, CAKES AND PEASANT FOOD (UNDER THE AGE OF TEN)

The one smell that brings me back home to my childhood the quickest is that of roasting coffee beans. Note: not roasted, but roasting. I figured out a way to do this in my apartment. An avid incense consumer, I prefer Jamaican or Haitian blue beans instead of incense resin on those round burning pieces of charcoal. If I could simulate the clouds of smoke, without setting off the fire alarm . . . I would. My need for this scent is that great.

As I took fewer trips to Haiti, I became a junkie desperate for more than the monthly aroma-fix that used to appease me. Soon, I was burning my beans twice in one week, not just on the weekends after cleaning the apartment. Before Christmas 2005, the uncles actually called Mother and told her that even if there was an emergency, we should not come. There are too many kidnappings. No one is safe. Things are not the same anymore. What was I supposed to do? How else can I get back there? When the beans start to burn, I am transplanted. . . . Actually it is more like beaming, the Starship Enterprise’s primary mode of transport. I become Captain Kirk. ‘Beam me up, Scotty.’

The coffee beans are my Scotty that transcends both time and space to bring me back to Saturday afternoons at Tante Botte’s house. She was the family piercer (who had done all our ears—one of the first steps in the making of girls), as well as a midwife and healer. A woman of many talents. On Saturdays, she had the most important job of all. Her entire

household congregated in the yard to roast coffee and make tons of peanut butter from scratch.

A huge fire would be burning in the yard. On it sat a gigantic cauldron where beans were being roasted. I am not quite sure; I think she roasted the peanuts first. They would be in a large winnowing tray that adults used to separate the roasted skin from the actual nut. You hold the tray away from your body. You tilt it up. With consistency you throw the beans up and then you catch them. The motion is what separates the broken skin from the bean. (The same winnowing process is used to clean rice before washing it.) Once there wasn't a single piece of burnt reddish skin left, the nuts would be poured into one of those huge stainless steel grinders that could eat your finger if you were not careful. You had to be big to use it. Kids did not get to touch it. You keep putting nuts into the grinder, add a little oil and salt and out of the metal mouth would come *manba* (peanut butter). There were special batches made with a little hot pepper. After she was done, the *manba* was doled out into jars of various sizes and sold. Everyone got to taste. I liked mine on a hot square biscuit with a little butter on it first.

For years the only way I recollected Haiti was through food. These pieces of memory beamed me back to my past as quick as a small bite of Proust's Madeleine cake. A whiff of Gouda or Edam cheese at a party or in a store would suddenly produce the vision of rows of *batonnets* or cheese sticks lined up on a baking tin. They had been made from scratch with butter, flour, Edam cheese (*Tête de Maure* or Moors Head, to be precise) and finely diced red peppers with even finer chopped parsley. The dough has been rolled hundreds and hundreds of times so that each *batonnets* was light and flaky. A little longer than one inch, and a dark yellow. They earned their additional coloring from the egg yolk that had been brushed onto each doughy stick before going into a hot oven. They would melt in your mouth one after another. Mother would give each of us the exact same number.

Back then, Mother baked cookies and cakes on a regular basis. Three different street peddlers sold these on busy streets and in front of the *Lycée* (high school). During those cake-baking days, we would all sit around her trying not to get in the way. We would watch the incessant beating of the butter with huge cups of sugar until she added the eggs. We were there to stake claims to utensils used to whip up the batter. Then Mother would send us off to go play outside or something because there were too many of us around. When the mixing was done and pans had been floured, she would call us back again to get our rewards. As I got older, I was able to call dibs on the mixing bowl. But that took years and could never be cleared solely; it was to be shared. Until then, if I was lucky I ended up with a mixing spoon. Until after age seven (give or take a year or two) all I got was a tablespoon dipped in the batter especially given to us little ones with the following imperative: "*Men! Al chita on kote pou demare pye'm*" (Here . . . now go sit somewhere and stop crowding around my feet). Once her illness returned, she stopped baking.

Despite the delicate French finger foods and the Haitian cakes made from secret recipes that women in my family protected even from each other, the flavors that bring the most serene smile to my face, even as I write this, are from a meal that we think of as peasant food. That association can be traced back to our colonial past. Slave owners gave the enslaved salt fish because it was cheap. They added roots and vegetables grown on plots of land they cultivated near their home bases. Those little plots of land actually play important roles in local farming and the making of local internal-market systems throughout the Caribbean.

Our choices were simple when it came to our daily meals. At night, there was a light supper. Before that, lunch was taken at school carried in one of those tiered aluminum lunch boxes. When breakfast wasn't some kind of porridge or oatmeal, it was eggs or *fwadi* (liver) or some salted fish like *arenso* (smoked herring), *arensel* (salt herring) or *moru* (codfish) with a root starch. My favorites were either the boneless smoked herring in a tomato sauce or salt fish in a white sauce served with either ripe plantains or *banan fig*. I was happier if the plate had several slices of bright green avocado stacked like an accordion on one side of it. It's the combination of sweet and savory.

I didn't like *fwadi*. That may be the case because I saw what liver looked like before being cooked. Breakfast was meant to get us going in the morning after the daily dose of cod-liver oil. It was sturdy and would last until midday when we had box lunches. Funny, I don't recall crying over not wanting breakfast; but I have tales to tell about those late suppers.

### Labouyi Banan (Plantain Porridge)

*it was 21 degrees below zero  
the sun was shining  
i hadn't seen it for a while so i skipped class  
i found myself walking up and down south u for ten minutes  
before finally deciding to go to class  
i rushed to east engineering opened the door  
and was welcomed by a whiff of labouyi banan  
i stood there still unable to move  
not wanting to move  
trying to figure out where the strong scent was coming from  
i breathe it in deeply  
i breathe it in  
and went back to our house on rue chavannes  
the house by the lycée  
the house with the mango tree by the gate  
i breathe it in and went back to the dining room  
between the living room and the foyer*

*i was sitting around the table pouting  
 my fist pressed against my cheek  
 my elbow where it shouldn't be  
 next to the deep white plate filled with labouyi  
 my spoon clean and the plate untouched.  
 i eye the sugar bowl at the center of the table.  
 i eye it longingly.  
 anytime now manmi tete and i will start  
 i will refuse to eat the labouyi because she won't let me put sugar in it  
 she won't let me sprinkle heaping spoons of brown sugar over  
 the dark grey substance only to watch the clustered grains sink to  
 the bottom  
 leaving crystallized rings and trails like starbursts  
 mother and i will restart again and tears will follow  
 because i won't eat it even with the sugar in it.  
 i don't like it this way.  
 it wasn't sieved. all the strings (fibers) of the banan are still in it  
 "fil. fil ou pap manjel pase li gen fil . . .  
 kantite moun lan peyi isit ki pa gen manje"  
 (strings strings you don't want to eat it because it has strings.  
 The number of people in this country that don't have food to eat)  
 she would chipe (kiss her teeth) with distaste.  
 "interesant wap fe mache. se pitit Wawa ou konpran ou ye"  
 (You're just showing off. You think your daddy's rich)  
 i would start to cry  
 because these words meant i have to eat it  
 but i didn't like this labouyi  
 it was made with the chrome blender from the store on rue darguin.  
 it wasn't sieved  
 li gen trop fil ladan  
 (there's too many strings in it)  
 it was 21 degrees below and i stood in the doorway  
 of this building in ann arbor  
 the scent so strong but in my head  
 i let my mind take me behind the elevator  
 to the unpaved staircase made of rocks  
 that led to the two small cement rooms  
 painted salmon not pink she would say  
 the door to the right was locked the other one was open  
 a large gasoline lamp sat on the concrete counter  
 lighting the left side of the room  
 where ivela squatted on a little chair  
 her wide skirt gathered and piled between her legs  
 around her what would soon be the labouyi  
 to her left a fresh pile of banan vert*

*next to that a new pile of the skins  
 she had stripped off the plantains she was grating in the bowl  
 that rested lightly on her crossed ankles.  
 she would grate and grate until it looked like she was grating her  
 fingers  
 she'd peel another banan dunk it in the water bowl and grate  
 mother would call out  
 and ask her how things are going and if she'd seen me  
 everything is ok and gina is right here in the kitchen  
 when the pile of plantain skin was high  
 and the bowl on her ankles full  
 she would stand in front of the concrete stove  
 to add the grated banan to the boiling pot  
 she'd throw in a couple anisette  
 cinnamon sticks sugar carnation evaporated milk  
 a little salt  
 sometimes she'd even put some condensed milk in it.  
 she'd stop stirring  
 and tell me to open my hand and close my eyes  
 then i would feel the cold sweetness of the sticky milk  
 in the middle of my palm*

According to Alan Hirsch, “healthy individuals can smell 10,000 odors, but no two people will respond the same way. Who they are, where they live, whether they have smelled the odor before and under what circumstances all enter the reaction” (2006, 187). The preceding poem illustrates his argument. Indeed, the unexpected whiff of *labouyi banan* conjures a particular incident from my childhood concerning a battle with my mother about my unwillingness to eat this porridge because it was too fibrous.<sup>2</sup>

The porridge moment certainly evokes existing class tensions and highlights the class liminality of those who are neither at the bottom of the pyramid nor at the top. As my mother’s statements made very clear, who did I think I was? There are too many people in Haiti who cannot even get food to eat and here I was rejecting what was on the plate. Then she put me in my place asking if I thought my father was rich. He was not. But we were not in abject poverty either. Whereas there is extensive awareness of the increasing ingestion of clay cookies to combat hunger pangs there is even less concrete knowledge about upper-class consumption patterns. There are others yet who struggle to get three meals a day; nonetheless, there is food on the table. Very little is known about people like us. How we manage remains invisible. Yet, understanding of these conditions and experiences would actually add nuance to characterizations of Haiti that could explicate some of the tensions that continue to underline the sociocultural and economic divide.

As I show in the following, my recollections of the past contain various shards of class narratives. There are specifics to my memories. Initially, my returns are either about food or spirits. De Botton is useful here again. He makes a similar point as Hirsch although he asks his question differently. What separates voluntary from involuntary memory? he asks. His answer is simple. It is all about the nuances that add texture to memories that are otherwise lifeless. He asserts that it is the critical details in Proust's tomes "that suggest it would be more accurate to describe the madeleine as provoking a moment of *appreciation* rather than mere *recollection*" (1997, 144; emphasis in original). As my own little battles and other returns through recipes reveal, appreciation for cooking is central to how I came back to my love for Haiti. It is a complicated love no longer driven by a sense of displacement but fraught with the contradictions inherent in wanting to return.

### AFTERMATH OF MIGRATION (THE TEENAGE YEARS)

To make better sense of this you need to know that after we arrived in the United States, at some point, I decided I would only go back to Haiti when things changed. I don't recall the exact moment of my decision, but I remember being tired of explaining what was wrong with my country. And people were always asking. They never had anything positive to say. I felt that I had to defend a country I did not know especially given how sheltered I was growing up. Although at the time (late 1970s), I was unaware of my ignorance because we lived a life in which certain things were not spoken.<sup>3</sup> When the opportunities arose for trips back, I refused. Father went on a regular basis and Mother less so.

We had left relatives behind who sent cassettes and letters with family friends or so and so who made a trip. Sometimes, they also sent special teas and herbs. Dried mushrooms to make black rice. A cousin sent us special cakes. The trips that Mother made were planned ahead. Large suitcases were kept in the closet and would be filled with old and new items that had been purchased months before. Parents were gone less than two weeks. Vacation time. I looked forward to their return because the bits of the country that I remembered were brought back. *Dous makos* (a tricolor fudge made in TiGoave) cut into lengthwise strips that would melt once I enclosed it in my mouth. If I shifted it to the side away from my tongue, it would last a little longer. The spicy peanut butter on *Kassav* (cassava bread) was another treat that I could not explain. The minute that I got my hands on these items they beamed me right back to the Haiti I lost.

Once we came to the United States, nothing was the same. For years, I never felt like I belonged anywhere, let alone in my family. I found myself in the middle of expectations that made little sense. The culture clashes that ensued were as unbearable for the parents as myself. As I have discussed elsewhere (Ulysse 2006b) tensions arose between us. We battled

over who they had raised me to be (good Haitian girl with rather specific classed aspirations) and who I sought to become—someone who did not share these objectives (I wanted to be a rock 'n' roll singer). Moreover, I was determined and had vowed that I would not replicate their ideals. In my defiant teenage years, I moved away from all things Haitian associated with the parents and embraced a world I could navigate: the hyphen precisely because it was a lacuna that allowed for self-actualization. While at home, I sought distance; in public, ironically, I remained an unabashed defender of Haiti. Although I could not fully explain it, I knew that there was much more to Haiti than what was being represented in the media.

### MY FIRST RETURN (EARLY TWENTIES)

My first trip back to Haiti occurred while I was 5,135 or so miles away. To be exact, I was in Stockholm, Sweden, studying abroad for my junior year when I made what would become one of many symbolic returns.

I was the only black person on the Swedish program. I was *too* aware of this. When I walked on the Stockholm University campus, I was in a sea of unsmiling white faces. I read revolutionary black poetry and I tried to write my own. Something was wrong here. No one ever smiled. I went to the gym and made friends with Asly, an Eritrean nurse in exile who lived on my hall. Two black women sharing similar sentiments.

Then one day, I got a compliment that would change my relationship with family and the Haiti that I left behind. U, a Finnish boy also living on the hall, said he thought that I was American (which annoyed me then) until he saw me cook my first meal. He pointed out that unlike L, the white American girl who lived in the same wing, everything I cooked was from scratch. I hadn't noticed it. That's just how I had been raised.

From that day on, I started to bake. Soon I was baking for everybody. On weekends, I became totally dedicated to my cooking. There was a French cyclist who lived one floor below. We hit it off. With our shared colonial past, some of my dishes made more sense to him. On Sundays, he became my official taster even though I never failed to remind him what France had done to Haiti. We could converse in a common language. Sometimes, he cooked. For some reason, I really got into pastries and baking. I had no idea that while standing there watching Mother during those years that I had stored so much so deep in memory.

One time, I decided to make *beyen* (banana fritters). Although I had never made them before, I just mixed the ingredients without even using a measuring cup. Somehow, that night, I added the precise amount of vanilla extract, salt and sugar and just kept mixing. When I could not locate a whisk, on instinct I grabbed two large forks crossed them and proceeded to beat the eggs just like I had seen Mother do. I diverted from our recipe by adding about a pinch of cardamom, cloves and ginger—spices that



Asly often used in her cooking. I am a big believer in cultural borrowing when it comes to cooking. Without reservation, I ignore all rules and creolize everything.

That tendency to play with recipes comes from years of watching most of the women in my family prepare all types of food. I spent a considerable amount of time hanging around them and unknowingly absorbing knowledge that would reveal itself to me when I longed for home. These revelations are evidence of my habitus or the logic of practice—that is, the process by which I came to be predisposed to re-create this pattern (Bourdieu 1984). In my generation, there are several of us who are quite adept at making dishes or cakes the way a great-aunt used to. By the time most of us migrated to the United States (we came at different times), it became clear that family recipes had not only made the crossing, but that they would be protected (not shared with strangers) and passed on for continuity. What we were not as prepared to uphold were our spiritual responsibilities and legacies that now contended with other modern marvels.

#### A BRIEF DETOUR: THE VODOU SOME OF US DO

Very little of what I actually know about Vodou came from family. Most of my knowledge stems from extensive research. Over the years, certainly before I was even born, different family members moved away from our *lakou* (family compound) in what was once a rural area. Their individual connection to Vodou became increasingly tenuous, leaving responsibility mainly to those who remained behind. As time passed, fewer within the family upheld these obligations. Thus, it is not surprising that newer generations have more or less turned completely away from this heritage. This change, which I experience as a loss, took on greater importance when I began graduate school to study anthropology. Since, I have been on a salvage mission hoping to preserve a disappearing cultural practice to no avail.

Most family members no longer see the value of fulfilling spiritual obligations. That includes the ones who migrated as well as those who remained at home. Vodou now competes with other modern marvels and is concomitantly loaded with stigma because, as a cousin recently announced, Vodou is not modern. It's for the old folks. Indeed, for a number of Haitians, it is no longer in vogue. Haitians and non-Haitians alike have maligned it. And why shouldn't they? It is perhaps the blackest part of ourselves in a new world that prefers its black without the complexities of blackness.

It is undisputed that Vodou is the umbilical cord to Africa, as Mariel Matze puts it.<sup>4</sup> It is evidence of our enslavement and African past—a synthesis of traditional religions of Dahomey, Yourubaland and Kongo that is expressed through spirits, dances, drum rhythms, healing rituals and community practices. Infused with Catholicism, it is, as Robert Farris Thompson eloquently refers to it, “Africa reblended” (1983).

The religion has been under siege since the Middle Passage. Slave codes forbade it. With postindependence isolation, Vodou became embedded in the fabric of Haitian culture. In her extensive archeology *The Spirit and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (2011), ethno-historian Kate Ramsey delineates how governments have attempted to manage the religion by officially prohibiting many of its practices from 1835 to 1987. Many have also deployed aspects of it to gain and manipulate political power. In 2003, then president Jean-Bertrand Aristide declared Vodou an official religion in Haiti that “is an essential part of national identity.” Whereas Vodou has made some gains, it remains vulnerable and no longer thrives as it once did. It faces extreme competition especially from wealthy and well-organized North American religious groups that generously offer food, lodging, health care and literacy to those in dire need. Conversion is undertaken in exchange for spiritual as well as material salvation.

The fragility of Haiti’s socioeconomic reality is such that both state and nation depend almost exclusively on foreign aid of all kinds from abroad. This dependence has had its impact on Vodouists who are abandoning their responsibilities. Certainly, not all Haitians are Vodouists and not all Vodouists are Haitians or ever were.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as Drexel Woodson argues, present-day Haiti is influenced by what he calls a “triangle of religious forces,” that is, the practices of Catholicism, Vodou and Protestantism (quoted in Rey and Stepick 2006). Rey contends that Protestants actually constitute one-third of the island’s entire population. She further stresses that even among Catholics there are those who are *fran katolik* (pure Catholic) who do not wittingly practice Vodou (2004, 370).

In recent years, Vodou has been under increasing attack from evangelical Christians who engage in holy invasions to mount crusades in attempts to rid Haiti of its purported “pact with the devil” or Boukman contract. That is the deal that Boukman (the presiding Vodou priest) made with the spirits on August 14, 1791, at the ceremony de Bois Caiman, which preceded the revolution that eventually ousted the French. According to this belief, Haiti’s socioeconomic devastation is rooted in the country’s “voodoo” practices. The republic sealed its fate on that night over two hundred years ago. Thus, in 2004, on the eve of the Haitian Revolution’s bicentennial, a consolidation of Christian groups spearheaded a yearlong prayer movement to “take Haiti back from Satan.”<sup>6</sup> The imperialist proportion of this revisionist narrative points to yet another issue. It certainly serves as a reminder of Marcel Mauss’s claim that the logic of gift-giving ([1922] 1990) is as applicable to the benevolence of missionaries.

Whereas Vodou may be synonymous with evil among Christians and Haiti remains trapped in other stereotypes that seem too entrenched to dismantle, these dynamics are particularly illuminating in the ways Haitianess play out in the diaspora. For example, who gets to claim Vodou, how they express it, why they do, who loves or who turns away from it and/or despises it, reflect the complexities inherent in Haitian communities.<sup>7</sup>

Popular roots music or *mizik razin* may be revered and consumed by Haitians across all classes; for many others, serving the spirits whose chants are the roots remains a closeted practice done *en soudine* (in secret) that they do not admit to in part because association with Vodou is laced with shame. Fear. Misunderstanding. Others actually dare to claim it. Proudly display it. A sign with multiple significations. Defiance. Embrace. Self-making. Blackness of a particular kind.

On April 25, 1997, thirteen Haitian scholars established Kosanba, the Congress of Santa Barbara. This group dedicates itself to the promotion and study of Vodou in ways that discern the pervasive Hollywood myths from realities. In recent years, Kosanba has published several anthologies from their conference proceedings. According to the Kosanba declaration:

The presence, role, and importance of Vodou in Haitian history, society, and culture are unarguable, and recognizably a part of the national ethos. The impact of the religion qua spiritual and intellectual disciplines on popular national institutions, human and gender relations, the family, the plastic arts, philosophy and ethics, oral and written literature, language, popular and sacred music, science and technology and the healing arts, is indisputable. It is the belief of the Congress that Vodou plays, and shall continue to play, a major role in the grand scheme of Haitian development and in the socio-economic, political, and cultural arenas. Development, when real and successful, always comes from the modernization of ancestral traditions, anchored in the rich cultural expressions of a people. The Congress of Santa Barbara invites other Haitian scholars and non-Haitians who subscribe to its goals and objectives to join it in the defense and illustration of this *poto-mitan* (main pillar) on the Haitian cultural heritage that is such an integral part of the nation's future.<sup>8</sup>

On January 9, 2008, a number of Vodou priests and priestesses from across the country came together to announce the formation of a federation of practitioners in Haiti with Max Beauvoir at its helm. Three years before in 2005, Vodouists from different regions in the country congregated to form *La Fédération Nationale des Vodouisants Haïtiens ou (Federasyon Nasyonal Vodouyizan Ayisyen—FNVA)* or National Federation of Haitian Vodouists. Their attempt, they assert, is to make Vodou more central in the social, economic and political life of Haiti. Whether such a feat is even possible remains to be seen. This new organization is a merger of *Bode Nasyonal*—a not-for-profit organization created in 1986 to unite initiates of Vodou that was based in Port-au-Prince with *Zantray Nasyonal* another pro-Vodou outfit based in Gonaïves. Still in its infancy, little is known about this federation, its mandate and its ability to formalize or institutionalize a practice that has historically existed on the fringes and operated autonomously. This moment, with its myriad controversies (including the

naming of a single representative as well as questions regarding the process by which Beauvoir was selected), is an attempt to consolidate and recognize spiritual power as another form of religious capital, as Bourdieu calls it (Rey 2007), that both Claudine Michel and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith have argued has historically held and continues to hold the potential to contribute to changes in Haiti (2006).

Another organization in the diaspora, *Dwa Fanm* (women's rights) is based in New York. They define themselves in the following way:

Dwa Fanm (meaning "Women's Rights" in Haitian) started as a volunteer-run community-based organization in 1999 when a group of eight Haitian and American women from diverse backgrounds met to discuss the state of women's rights in Haitian immigrant communities in the United States and in Haiti. Having established itself as a human rights organization, Dwa Fanm's mission is to empower all women and girls with the freedom to define and control their own lives. Through service, education, advocacy and grassroots programs, Dwa Fanm works to end discrimination, violence, and other forms of injustice in New York City and abroad. Dwa Fanm's members share a commitment to women's rights as well as to social and legal equality, justice, peace and democracy. We envision a world where women fully and equally participate in processes that favor their well-being and economic independence, where they have the freedom to define their lives and where all girls can develop to their full potential.<sup>9</sup>

In 2007, *Dwa Fanm* staged a production of Eve Ensler's *Vagina Monologues* in Brooklyn and in Haiti. The performances were meant to benefit Haitian women survivors of violence in Haiti and in the United States. The following year, March 2008, *Dwa Fanm* took a historic turn when they honored four Vodou priestesses as women of devotion. The honorees were Mme. Alourdes (Mama Lola) Macena Champagne Lovinski, Mme. Marie Jocelyne (Manjo Mazaka) Pierre Louis, Mme. Nicole Thomas-Miller and Mme. Lucienne Pierre. This represents a point at which Vodou, and not just its influence on *mizik razin* (roots music), which has historically been socially acceptable, has made it through the crossroads beyond shame. It can be read as an attempt to (re)claim and even protect this practice that seems to be on the verge of loss.

These moments point to the interactions among Haitians in the diaspora and at home. The Federation's Kreyòl declaration was posted on YouTube two days after the event.<sup>10</sup> These are also examples that confirm Laguerre's (2005) assertion of the role of the diaspora in Haitian affairs. They are noteworthy and ought to be acknowledged as moments of active agency. Nonetheless, these acts of reclaiming are not without their own contradictions. Indeed, for everyone who boldly expresses pride in these moments (especially in cyberspace where one can now record their dissent), there are as many who

make it a point to distance themselves from these. They strongly assert that Vodou is not synonymous with Haiti; not all Haitians are Voudouists. In so doing, they are insisting there is a plurality of Haitians.

I consider the establishment of Kosanba, the Federation and *Dwa Fanm*'s recent awards as part of a series of attempts, albeit discontinuous ones, by Haitians scholars, practitioners and civic organizations at home and abroad at self-making. These examples seek to dispel misrepresentations and dismissal of Vodou for what they are: racist and archaic ripostes to black freedom and black self-actualization that fermented in the last two centuries.

### A FINALE? A CATERER'S QUEST (LATE THIRTIES)

For as long as I can remember women in various branches of my extended family have had some dealings with food. In Haiti, a great-aunt had been a pastry chef at a hotel. Another made different foodstuffs she sold out of her home and another still cooked *fritay* (fried foods) and sold it on the side of a busy road. The three women were siblings. The differences in their relationship to the food industry reveals how class and color operate in Haiti within families. Indeed, how these sisters came to occupy the positions they did indicate circumstances of their respective parentage, education and subsequent opportunities those fostered or impeded. Their respective jobs as food workers also highlight the prominence of women's participation in different parts of local economy especially within the region (Ulysse 2008). In the United States, their children, the generation that first migrated, pursued other goals. Over the years, since their arrival, many among them have been service workers, factory workers as well as semiprofessionals. Their connection to the food of their mothers was mainly through consumption and the parties that brought friends and family together.

After we moved to New Jersey,<sup>11</sup> one of the ways we stayed in contact with family was the weekly Sunday drive to Brooklyn. There were occasional Saturday night parties. A cousin or aunt presided over a *tet ensam* or get-together where we got caught up on news from home and enjoyed the foods that symbolically brought us back. The host would spend the entire day preparing an elaborate buffet while the young ones ran around on concrete, sat outside on the stoop (weather permitting) or wreaked havoc in the basement. Upstairs, the women would catch up and engage in harmless gossip. At times, the discussion would turn to the difficulties of following recipes while abroad. During these moments, there was talk of where to find certain produce or who sold the best avocados or freshest shallots. At some point, a paper bag full of *militon* (chayote) would be passed to the sister or cousin or friend who had moved to an area without a migrant community where such items are unobtainable. During her last visit, she had lamented desire to make *legumes berejen* (stewed eggplant dish). The

conversation would then turn to someone else's desperate search for an ingredient even harder to locate.

One of my most salient memories is an elusive quest for the Edam cheese that was key to the making of the *batonnets* of which I spoke earlier. Over the years, at some point in time several women in my family have claimed they found the *Tete de Maure*—a semihard mild Edam cheese with a hardened red skin. This became especially significant as several of us (myself included) at some point entered and actively participated in the food industry (in hotels, restaurants and as caterers) for work as we pursued higher education degrees. The irony of us becoming our mothers, as poet Lorna Goodison (1986) so aptly puts it, has much to reveal about the pursuit of economic autonomy and self-making abroad. It is also indicative of immigrant labor patterns and sociocultural mobility.

The search for this cheese also tells another story. It is a mild obsession with some competition about who can get back to the Haiti we left behind. Years ago, one of the aunts claimed she found it. Another cousin tried without success. Most recently, my older sister insisted she found it or something close. This interest reemerges sporadically especially during preparation for a big family gathering where most of us are present. They try another brand not even to make *batonnets* (which are hardly ever on the menu of our parties anymore) but just to see if that is indeed it. In the kitchen or by the table, the conversation restarts. There is a piece in the fridge. Give it a try. After a taste and a little disappointment, the issue is dropped and other stories about the past are brought to the fore again.

This pursuit could be easily ended once and for all. No one actually seeks to end the quest as it is less about finding the cheese itself than of revisiting memories of a Haiti in the past that is now archived in our bodies.

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## NOTES

1. One of the most complex narratives of one's relationship to their homeland was written by the late Aimé Césaire. In his epic poem, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*), Césaire voices the complexity of the colonial experience with all of its contradictions. In "A Poetics of Anticolonialism," historian Robin D.G. Kelley points to the

fullness of Césaire's subjective presence in yet another of his works, *Discourse on Colonialism*. Kelley (2000, 10) writes:

Césaire's text plumbs the depths of the unconscious so that we might comprehend colonialism through his entire being. It is full of flares, full of anger, full of humor. It is not a solution or a strategy or a manual or a little red book with pithy quotes. It is a dancing flame in a bonfire.

That same flame ignites in Césaire's poem. From an anthropological perspective, the sociocultural significance of *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* renders it an exemplary piece of what Paul Stoller refers to as sensual scholarship. That is, ethnography, which returns to the senses and does not divorce the head from the heart. Because such work regards the subject as embodied and possessing of various ways of knowing, it also demands the corporeal awareness of the researcher because "ethnographic things capture us through our bodies" (1997, 23).

Césaire wrote textured screams throughout which all of his senses are honored in ways that constantly remind the reader that although he may have been dismembered by colonialism, he remains a full and sensual subject. At times, the poem is full of beings who cross the river to be displaced by exile, whether voluntary or not. In other cases, even when bodies make the crossing, the heart and spirit remain home. That said, attempts to go home again, discursively and physically, have the potential to reveal the sensual detours that one confronts when attempting to make the journey. How these diversions manifest tells us as much about who the persons were before they made the departure that took them *lot bo dlo*, on the other side of the water, as it does about who they aim to become where they are and when they go back.

2. Hirsch stresses that the conditions created by recollections of scents produces the stage for narratives of nostalgia. He writes:
 

as children grow up . . . moving into new environments . . . [they] relinquish something pleasant in the life that is left behind. As the old milieu recedes, the screen of memory emphasizes the pleasant aspects and filters out the unpleasant ones. More than any other sensations, odors are particularly effective in inducing a vivid recall of an entire scene or episode from the past. A special odor may revive a clear image of the past and, more important, the enhanced emotional state associated with that image. (2006, 187)
3. I explore this sense of obliviousness in greater detail in *Ulysse* (2006a) as symptomatic of repressed memories.
4. Personal conversation with Mariel Matze.
5. The increasing number of Caribbean nationals, North Americans and Europeans who have turned to this practice and have undergone some stage initiation remains an unexplored phenomenon in Vodou houses in the diaspora. These do not include those who are initiated as a rite of research.
6. See <http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/11197.htm> (accessed June 13, 2008).
7. For more on this, see *Ulysse* (2006a).
8. See <http://research.ucsb.edu/cbs/projects/kosanba.html> (accessed May 3, 2008).
9. See <http://www.dwafanm.org/history.html> (accessed May 3, 2008).
10. See [http://youtube.com/watch?v=sSC\\_6S\\_sv90](http://youtube.com/watch?v=sSC_6S_sv90) (accessed May 3, 2008).
11. When we arrived in the United States in 1978 to join my father, who was already in this country, we first settled in Brooklyn with family. Several months later we relocated to Montclair.

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# Index

Note: Page numbers ending in “f” refer to figures. Page numbers ending in “t” refer to tables. Page numbers ending in “m” refer to maps. Page number in *italics* refer to photos.

## A

Abelmann, Nancy, 139  
Abenon, L.-R., 44  
Abu-Lughod, Lila, 266  
activities: in Bahamas, 101–103, 107–108; in Dominican Republic, 64; transnational activities, 101–103, 107–108  
Adrien, Leslie, 40–41  
advocates, 39, 52–55, 63–68. *See also* human rights  
Africa, xxiv, 1–2, 8, 45, 117, 162 n16, 166, 181–182, 212, 215–216, 222, 236, 274  
“Africa rebleded,” 274  
African diasporic horizons, 207–228  
Afro-Caribbean ethnicities, 46, 72–81, 88, 209  
Afro-Creole religion, 207, 212–216, 220–221  
Afro-Haitian religion, 215–217  
AIDS crisis, xxii, 59, 105, 133, 150–151, 189, 240–241  
Alarcón, Alexis, 86  
Alber, Erdmute, 187  
Alexandre, Dodly, 250–251  
Alexis, Nord, 31  
Alexis, Sergio, 118  
Allen, James P., 146  
Alvarez Estevez, Rolando, 72, 77  
amnesty, 36–37, 77, 97, 105–106  
Anglade, Georges, 1–2, 6  
Anglade, Mireille Neptune, 1  
*antihaitianismo*, 60  
Antoine, Claude, 37–38  
Antoine, Guy, 260  
Appadurai, Arjun, 139, 187, 248, 254  
Aristide, Jean-Bertrand, xxvii, 31, 91, 103–110, 177–178, 189, 219, 233, 275

Aristide, Marx V., 233  
Arowele, Aiyenakun, 224  
Arthur, Charles, 230, 231, 233  
Aspinall, Peter J., 234  
assimilation, 10, 46–47, 64, 133, 143–144, 251–252, 258  
*Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, 116  
Assunção, Matthias Röhrig, 74  
asylum requests in France, 123f, 124t–125t  
Austerlitz, Paul, 219  
Axel, Brian Keith, 11, 34

## B

Bahamas: citizenship in, 95–108; discrimination in, 98; Haitian migrants in, 91–110; as intermediate space, 92–95; racism in, 98  
Bahamianization, 95–98  
baking memories, 265–274  
Banbou, Pierre, 252–253  
*banlieue*, xxiii, 113, 115, 130–131, 133,  
*Baobab, Le*, 173–174, 179, 181  
Baraguá Protest, 71  
Barranca settlement, 79–88  
Basch, Linda G., xxv, xxvii, 1, 3, 91, 105, 109 n10, 139, 175, 188, 195, 202 n7, 210  
Bastian, Thomas, 96–97  
Bastide, Roger, 117, 118  
*bateyes*, xxiii, 54–60, 64–67, 69n7, 70n15, 74–89, 218  
Batty, Michael, 1  
Baumann, Martin, 224  
Baur, John E., 23, 25, 29  
Bazin, Marc, 176–177  
Beaubrun, Lolo, 208

- Beaubrun, Mimerose, 208  
 Bebel-Gisler, Dany, 43, 44  
 Bellegarde-Smith, Patrick, 277  
 Benhabib, Seyla, 248, 249  
 Benjamin, René, 132, 133  
 Bennett, Dollie, 175  
 Benoit, Catherine, 47  
 Berger, Peter, 116  
 Besson, D., 44  
 Bettelheim, Judith, 76  
 Bibeau, Gilles, 191, 193  
 bilingual classrooms, 229–246  
 bilingual teachers, 238–241, 244  
 Blackwell, Chris, 207  
 Blanc, Cristina Szanton, 1, 3  
 Bluestone, Barry, 140, 141  
 “boat people” xxvi, 17, 151, 240  
 Bobo, Rosalvo, 30  
 Body-Gendrot, S., 115  
 Bogle, Paul, 28  
*Bonifas ak Malefis*, 257–258  
 Bonilla, Yarimar, 43  
 Boston: classrooms in, 229–246;  
     community in, 136f, 139–160;  
     diaspora in, 135–162; dis-  
     crimination in, 153; Haitians in,  
     135–162, 146m, 148t, 149t; key  
     events in, 135–162, 136, 136f;  
     population in, 140–142; racism in,  
     135–139. *See also* Massachusetts  
*Boston Globe*, 137, 138, 154  
 “Boston Haitians,” 10, 137–160  
 Boswell, Thomas D., 188  
 Bougerol, Christiane, 47  
 Boukman Eksperyans, 207, 208  
 Bourdieu, Pierre, 274, 277  
 Bourgeois, Philippe, 59  
 Bowerbank, Louis Q., 26  
 Boyarin, Daniel, xxvii  
 Boyarin, Jonathan, xxvii  
 Boyer, Jean-Pierre, 9, 22–30  
*braceros*, 52–58, 61–63, 77  
 Braziel, Jana Evans, 3  
 Brenner, Neil, 5  
 Brewer, Toye H., 59  
 Brodwin, Paul, xxiii, 6, 9, 34, 37, 39,  
     43, 47, 73, 98, 103, 281  
 Bronfman, Alejandra, 17  
 Brown, Jacqueline, 139  
 Brown, Karen McCarthy, 47, 84  
 Brown, Monica, 200  
*Brown v. Board of Education*, 135  
 Brubaker, Rogers, 8, 212, 224, 225  
 Brutus, Mary Lucie, xxvi  
 Bryan, Patrick, 18, 21  
 Buchanan, Susan H., 229–231, 234,  
     236–238, 241–242, 245  
 Buchstein, Hubertus, 248  
 Burnham, Thorald M., 21  
 Burrows, Dunstan, 107  
 Burrows, Maryann, 97  
 Burton, Richard, 45, 80  
 Butler, Kim, 163, 221–222
- C**  
 Cabral, Carlos Dore, 55  
 Caglar, Ayse, 139  
*cai mama*, 85  
 cake-baking memories, 265–274  
 Calhoun, Craig, 248  
 Callahan, Rebecca M., 245  
 Cambridge, 229–246  
*campesinos*, 79  
 Canada: Haitians in, 185–190; racism  
     in, 189; youth delinquency in,  
     190–192, 195–196  
 Carbado, Devon W., 159  
 Caribbean: diasporic horizons in,  
     207–228  
*carnet*, 75  
 Carr, Barry, 72  
 Carter, Thomas P., 244  
 Case, Robert C., 221  
 Case, Russell, 221  
 Catholic churches, 106, 114–115,  
     130–132, 145, 156  
 Cedeño Caroit, Amelia, 61  
*cédula*, 61, 68  
 Céleste, Chérubin, 43  
 census records, 4–5, 19, 126–130. *See*  
     *also specific communities*  
*Centro Cultural Dominicano-Haitiano*  
     (CCDH), 54, 62–67  
 Cervantes-Rodríguez, Margarita, 6  
 Césaire, Aimé, 279, 279n1  
 Chalom, Maurice, 191  
 Chan, Wendy, 193  
*Chants d’Espérance*, 221–227  
 Chatfield, Michael L., 244  
 cheese, and memories, 268, 279  
 Charles, Carole, xxvi  
 Chierici, Rose-Marie, 170  
 Christian diaspora, 208–228. *See also*  
     religion  
 Christophe, Henri, 22, 23  
 Chow, Rey, xxvii  
*cimarrones*, 74  
 citizenship denial, 56, 61, 65–66, 108

class: in classrooms, 229–246; Haitian history of, 230–233; reconstructions of, 236–245

classrooms: bilingual classrooms, 229–246; Kreyòl in, 232–245; teacher attitude in, 243–245

clichés, 48, 267

Clifford, James, 8

coffee memories, 265–280

Cohen, Phillip, 155

Cohen, Robin, 188

collective identity, 34–35, 48–49, 81, 87, 115, 211

Colon, Yves, 99, 106

color: in classrooms, 229–246; Haitian history of, 230–233; reconstructions of, 236–245

community disunity, 57–58

community populations, 4–5, 4t. *See also* census records

community, sense of, 86, 141, 164, 169–180

community-building: in Dominican Republic, 62–65; in Michigan, 163–184. *See also* networks

Condé, Maryse, 44

“conjugated oppression,” 59

contemporary diasporas, 49

Conyers, John, 177–178

cooking, and memories, 265–280

Corzo, Gabino La Rosa, 74

Craton, Michael, 92, 96, 98, 104

Creole Movement, 252–255, 262

criminality stigma, 186, 189, 193–194

*crise des banlieues*, la, 113, 130

Cromwell, Adelaide, 140

cross-cultural organizing, 10, 76, 87, 173, 181–183

Crosswell, Noel, 27

Cuba: Barranca settlement, 79–88; *bateyes* in, 74–88; communities in, 79–88; Haitians in, 71–90; identity in, 72–73; making a living in, 82–86; movement to, 71–90; Santiago de Cuba, 71, 74–79, 84–85

Cuban Revolution, 71

*cubanidad*, 72

cultural belonging, 46–48, 196–202, 222

cultural difference, 73–75, 80, 179

cultural identity, 80, 86, 100, 202, 242–243, 253, 262–263

cultural intimacy, 46–48

## D

*Daily Gleaner, The*, 17, 30

Damianos, Athena, 99, 106–107

Daniels, John, 140

Dash, Michael, 230, 231, 233

Davenport, Jane, 188

Davila, Arlene, 75

Davis, Curtis, 153

de Botton, Alain, 267

De Genova, Nicholas, 186

de la Fuente, Alejandro, 72

DeWind, Josh, xxvi

Debien, Gabriel, 18, 76

Dejean, Paul, 188

Delachet-Guillon, Claude, 7, 118, 120

democracy, 61, 70, 176, 189, 231, 277

Denton, Nancy, 140

deportations, 98, 185–204. *See also* forced return migration

*depoté*, 185, 195

Derby, Lauren, 42

Deschamps, Henri, 250

Desir, Charlene, 161 n21, 237

Desrosier, Caleb, 157

Dessalines, Jean-Jacques, 23

*D’Estang*, 29

Detroit: Haitians in, 163, 167–168, 171–172, 176–179, 183. *See also* Michigan

Diallo, Amadou, 137

diaspora: dimensions of, 163; music and, 207–228; popularization of, xxiv–xxviii; religion and, 208–228; rethinking, 12; uses of, 135–162; viewing, 8–12

diasporic consciousness, 12, 87, 159, 209, 216, 226

diasporic subjectivity, 9, 34–49, 73

differences: cultural difference, 73–75, 80, 179; between generations, 185–204, 203n8; idea of, 72–73; politics of, 73–75

discrimination: from Americans, 234; in Bahamas, 98; in Boston, 153; crime and, 186; ending, 60–64, 277; at work, 55, 129, 140, 229; of youth, 191

*Dixième Département* (Tenth Department), 1, 12n1, 17, 42, 91, 177–178

Dixon, Chris, 20

*djaspóra*, 17, 42, 195, 208, 210

domestic violence issues, 58, 64, 67

Domingue, Michel, 22, 30

- Dominican Republic: activities in, 64; citizenship in, 61, 65; community-building in, 62–65; democracy in, 61, 70; educational levels in, 59–60, 64; Haitians in, 51–70; harassment in, 60–61, 64, 70; legal reform in, 64–65; oppression in, 51–70; racism in, 60–64
- Dore Cabral, Carlos, 60, 61
- Doricent, Marc, 38
- Doucet, Fabienne, xxii, 11, 229, 232, 242, 244, 281
- Doucet, Rachelle Charlier, 232
- Douglass, Frederick, 29
- Douyon, Emerson, 191
- Drotbohm, Heike, xxviii, 10, 185, 190, 281
- Duany, Jorge, 5
- Dubois, Laurent, 22, 216
- Ducosson, Dany, 47
- Dumont, Jean-Cristophe, 5
- Dunham, Katherine, 174
- Dupuy, Alex, 144, 265
- Duvalier, François, 1, 24, 117, 136f, 143, 166, 188, 236
- Duvalier, Jean-Claude, xxvi, 56, 117–118, 136f, 150, 175, 233
- Dwa Fanm*, 277–278
- E**
- earthquake: of 1842, 23; of 2010, xxi–xxii, 1, 208, 221, 223
- economic dislocation, 53, 57
- educational levels, 59–64, 128t, 229–246. *See also* classrooms
- Edwards, Brent, 139
- Edisyon Koukouy, 252
- Enslar, Eve, 277
- Esping-Andersen, Gosta, 114
- Espoir* (Hope), 173–182
- Estimé, Dumarsais, 31
- Eugene, Emmanuel, 247
- Evangelical music, 220–226
- exiles, 19–32, 247
- Eyre, Edward, 28–29
- F**
- Falmouth Gazette*, 27, 28, 30
- family networks, 34, 77, 80–85, 102–103, 158, 164. *See also* networks
- Farred, Grant, 266
- Fatton, Robert, 265
- feminist approaches, 12, 66–67, 150, 265
- Ferguson, James, 5, 34
- Fernández, Leonel, 56
- Fernández, Nadine, 75
- Ferrer, Ada, 72
- Fick, Carolyn E., 216
- Fielding, William J., 98
- Figarola, Joel James, 71
- Firmin, Anténor, 30
- Fischer, Sybille, 72, 265
- floats, parade, 104
- Flores, Juan José, 24
- Flynn, Ray, 152, 154
- Fontaine, Pierre-Michel, 232
- food, and memories, 265–274, 278–279
- Forbes, Anthony, 105, 107
- forced return migration, 10, 185–204. *See also* deportations
- Foucault, Michel, 34, 42
- Fouchard, Jean, 168
- Fouron, Georges, xxvi, 17, 34, 42, 91, 105, 139, 155, 175, 187, 191, 202, 236, 245, 247
- Fox, Gloria, 152
- France: asylum seekers in, 123f, 124t–125t; citizenship in, 114–118, 133; economic activity in, 129t; educational levels in, 128t; Haitian immigrants in, 113–134, 118t, 119t, 121t; migration to, 117–130, 121t; residence changes in, 120t; temporary student status in, 126t; unemployment rates, 129t; welfare system, 114, 116–117; workers by nationality, 122t. *See also* Paris
- franceses*, 76, 89n8
- Fraser, Nancy, 248–249, 251, 259, 262
- Fraser, Peter, 21
- Freedman, Jane, 42
- Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador*, 163
- French Antilles, 45, 119t, 120t
- French identity, 45, 89
- French Republicanism, 114–116
- Fuller, Charles, 221
- G**
- gadezafê*, 46–47
- Gagá, 71, 218–219
- Geffrard, Fabre Nicholas, 9, 22–30
- Geggus, David, 18, 22
- General Migration Law, 52

- generational differences, 185–204, 203n8
- geographies, listening for, 207–228
- geography, xxi–xxii, xxviii; remapping, 1–13
- Georgiou, Myria, 254
- Gilroy, Paul, 262
- Glaude, Smith, 132
- Glick Schiller, Nina, xxi, xxiii, xxv, xxvii, 1, 3, 8, 17, 34, 42, 91, 105, 139, 155, 159, 175, 187–188, 191, 195, 210, 236, 245, 247, 281
- global networks, 91–94. *See also* networks
- “Glorious Thirty, The,” 7
- Goetze, Rolf, 141
- Goodison, Lorna, 279
- Gordon, George William, 28
- Gordon, Milton, 116
- Graham, Mark, 254
- Grand Rapids: Haitians in, 163, 167–168, 171–172, 176–179, 183. *See also* Michigan
- Grasmuck, Sherri, 93
- Grey, Earl, 23
- Griffin, Joseph, 135
- Grosfoguel, Ramón, 6
- Gross, Joan, 34
- Guadeloupe, French West Indies: cultural intimacy and, 46–48; Haitian Pentecostal churches in, 37–44; institutional marginality in, 36–37; legal marginality in, 36–42; marginality in, 34–50; residence cards, 37–38; stereotypes and, 42–48; symbolic marginality in, 42–46
- Guadeloupean Creole, 38, 44–45
- Guarnizo, Luis E., 49, 92
- Guerrier, General, 24, 26
- Gupta, Anil, 34
- Guzmán Molina, Ubaldo, 51
- H**
- Habermas, Jurgen, 248
- Habitations à Loyer Modéré*, 41
- Haiti en Marche*, 261
- Haiti Observateur*, 144
- Haiti Progres*, 144
- “Haitian community,” xxiv–xxv, xxvii
- Haitian diaspora: in Boston, 135–162; in Cuba, 71–90; identity in, 247–264; language in, 247–264; music and, 207–228; practices of, 91–110; public sphere in, 247–264; remapping geography of, 1–13; roots of, 17–33; uses of, 135–162
- Haitian exiles, 19–32, 247
- “Haitian Fathers,” xxv–xxvi
- Haiti Global Village, 250–251
- Haitian Immigrants in Black America*, 253
- Haitian marginality, 34–50
- Haitian paradigm shift, 265–266
- Haitian Revolution, 20, 75, 115, 210, 219, 275
- Haitian-Cuban *bateyes*, 78–82
- “Haitianize,” 97–98, 222
- Haitians: in Bahamas, 91–110; in Boston, 135–162, 136f, 146m, 148t, 149t; in Canada, 185–190; in Cuba, 71–90; in Dominican Republic, 51–70; in France, 113–134, 118t, 119t, 127t, 128t; in French Antilles, 45, 119t, 120t; in Guadeloupe, 34–50; in Massachusetts, 148t, 149t; in Michigan, 163–184; oppression of, 51–70; in Paris, 113–134
- Haity, 71
- Hall, Stuart, 34, 73
- Halter, Marilyn, 140, 152
- Hamilton, Ruth Simms, 163
- Handlin, Oscar, 116, 139
- Hannerz, Ulf, 135
- Hapgood, Fred, 145
- harassment, 41, 60–61, 64, 70, 73, 106, 153
- Hargreaves, A. G., 36, 116
- Harkins-Pierre, Patricia, 225
- Harrison, Faye V., 266
- Harvey, David, xxiii
- Hayes, Helene, 142
- healings, 46–47, 221, 274–276. *See also* Vodou
- health care issues, 57, 59, 98
- Hefferan, Tara, 176
- Heinl, Nancy, 23, 24, 25, 28
- Heinl, Robert, 23, 24, 25, 28
- Helg, Aline, 72
- Herskovits, Frances S., 210
- Herskovits, Melville J., 210
- Herzfeld, Michael, 47, 48
- Heuman, Gad, 28
- Higman, B. W., 19
- Hirsch, Alan R., 271–272, 280n2

- HIV infection, 59, 189. *See also* AIDS crisis
- Hoetink, Harry, 230, 234
- Hoffman, Léon-François, 231
- home, returning, 265–280
- Horowitz, Donald L., 114
- Horton, James Oliver, 140
- Horton, Lois E., 140
- houngan*, 46–48
- How Proust Can Change Your Life*, 267
- Hu, Ping, 19
- human rights, 8, 52–57, 62–68, 79, 97, 107, 155, 277
- Human Rights Watch, 56, 61
- Hume, Yanique, xxiv, 9, 71, 260, 281
- Hurbon, Laënnec, 43, 231
- Hurlich, Susan, 5, 77
- hymns, 220–226
- I**
- identity: belonging and, 91–110, 196–202; collective identity, 34–35, 48–49, 81, 87, 115, 211; Cuban identity, 72–73; cultural identity, 80, 86, 100, 202, 242–243, 253, 262–263; in Haitian diaspora, 247–264; transnational identities, 91, 192–196
- identity card, 61, 68, 75
- illiberal democracy, 61
- immigrants: adaptation of, 113–134
- immigration laws, 39, 42
- immigration raids, 97, 105–107, 110n13
- Independence Parade, 104
- institutional marginality, 36–37
- Inter-American Development Fund, the, xxix
- Internet network, 247–264
- Internet research, 254–255
- invités*, 165–166, 170–173, 178–180
- Itzigsohn, José, 139
- Ives, Kim, 233
- J**
- Jackson, Regine O., xxix, 1, 135, 142, 145, 279, 282
- Jacobson-Widding, 216
- Jafrikayiti, 261–262
- Jamaica: migration patterns in, 18–22, 31; roots of Haitian diaspora, 17–33
- James, Joel, 86
- Jean, Wyclef, 213
- Jean-Juste, Gérard, 106
- Jean-Louis, Andre Yvon, 135–137, 136, 139, 147
- Jean-Rabel, 101–102, 136f, 153
- Jenkins, Philip, 220
- Jessop, Bob, 5
- John Paul II, Pope, 154
- Johnson, Paul, 209, 211, 212, 225
- Johnson, Violet S., 140
- Johnston, R. J., 6
- Jones, Andrew, 153
- Jones, Martin, 5
- Journal Kreyòl Ayisyen*, 254, 260–261
- K**
- Kane, Gary, 97
- Kasinitz, Philip, 19
- Kastoryano, Riva, 114
- Katz, Susan Roberta, 237
- Keaton, Tricia D., 139
- Kearney, Michael, xxvii
- Kennedy, Joseph P., 157
- Khosravi, Shahram, 254
- King, Mel, 152–153
- Kingston, Jamaica, 18–31
- Knight, Franklin, 72
- Kongolese diaspora, 213–220, 227
- Kongwa, Raymond, 100
- Kosanba, 276, 278
- Kousik, John, 191
- Kreyòl: in classrooms, 232–245; language, 11, 39, 45–46, 80–81, 151–154, 247–263; music and, 210, 213, 221–222, 225, 227
- L**
- “La Diaspora,” 2–6, 3m
- Labelle, Micheline, 1, 3, 5, 7, 188, 189
- labels, 74–75, 81–82, 89n7, 89n8
- Labouyi Banan (Plantain Porridge), 269–271
- Lacerte, Robert K., 23
- Laguerre, Michel, 1, 3–4, 7, 17, 34, 141, 155, 159, 191, 236, 247, 277
- laïcité*, 10, 114–115, 130–134
- Lamont, Michèle, 114
- Lamothe, General, 28
- language: in Haitian diaspora, 247–264
- Lansing: Haitians in, 163–173, 176–179, 183. *See also* Michigan
- Le Baobab*, 173–174, 179, 181
- LeBon, André, 121, 126
- legal marginality, 36–42
- legal reform, 64–65
- Lemaître, G., 5

Levin, Carl, 178  
 Levitt, Peggy, 188  
 Lewis, Martin W., 8  
*Ley General de Migración*, 52  
 Lie, John, 139  
 Lieberman, Robert, 114  
 Lightbourne, Keva, 97  
 Lobb, John, 230, 231  
*Lois Pasqua, Les*, 36  
 Louis, Bertin, 92, 98, 103  
 Louisiana Creole, 210, 262–263  
 Lui, Liming, 141  
 Lytton, E. B., 26

**M**

MacGill, Chris, 106  
 MacLeod, Murdo J., 25  
 Madiou, Thomas, 23, 219  
 Magloire, Paul E., 31  
 Manigat, Leslie, 168  
 Mankekar, Purnima, 35  
 Mannur, Anita, 3  
 Mapou, Jan, 255  
 “marginal migrations,” 17–18  
 marginality: forms of, 34–50; Haitian diaspora and, 71–90; institutional marginality, 36–37; legal marginality, 36–42; stereotypes and, 42–46; symbolic marginality, 42–46  
 Marley, Bob, 207  
*marronage*, 77, 168–169  
 Marshall, Dawn, 96, 98  
 Martí, José, 72  
 Martínez, Samuel, xxiv, 9, 18, 51–56, 58, 60, 66, 79, 93–94, 98, 282  
 Massachusetts: Haitians in, 148t, 149t.  
*See also* Boston  
 Massachusetts Miracle, 147  
 Massey, Doreen, xxiii  
 Massey, Douglas, 140  
 Mattapan, 145–147, 146m, 152, 154, 156, 157, 161 n9  
 Maughan, Basil, 72  
 McAlister, Elizabeth, 11, 207, 213, 215, 282  
 McArdle, Nancy, 141  
 McCarthy, Kathy, 106  
 McLeod, Marc Christian, 18, 72, 76–77, 85  
 mediating institutions, 113–134  
 Meintel, Deirdre, 191  
*Melbourne, The*, 25  
 memories of home, 265–280

Méndez, José Ernesto, 60  
 Merisier, Alicia, 135, 156, 157  
 Merisier, Sandra, 157  
 Merisier, Willy, 135, 136f, 156  
 metageography, 8–9, 11, 205  
*Miami Herald*, 106  
 Michel, Claudine, 277  
 Michigan: community challenges, 178–181; community-building in, 163–184; cultural organizing in, 173–174; Haitian immigrants in, 163–184; invited Haitians, 164–166; political organizing in, 176–178; refugees sent to, 167–170, 183n8; seeking opportunities in, 166–167; social organizing in, 173–174; transnational organizing in, 175–178  
 Mielants, Eric, 6  
 migrant deportation, 98, 185–204  
 migration: aftermath of, 272–273; community-building and, 163–184; forced return migration, 185–204; transnational migration, 34, 42, 52  
 migration flows, 5–8, 19–21  
 migration patterns, 18–22, 31  
 Milanes, Tato, 85  
 Miller, Daniel, 254  
 Millet, José, 86  
 Mintz, Sidney W., 84, 231–234, 236  
 Mitchell, Christopher, 186  
 Mitterand, François, 36–37  
*monte, el*, 74  
 Montréal: Haitians in, 185–190; youth delinquency in, 190–192, 195–196. *See also* Canada  
 Mooney, Margarita, 4, 6, 10, 113, 282  
 Morant Bay Rebellion, 27, 29, 31  
 Morawska, Ewa, 159  
 Moreau de Saint-Méry, Elie, 230  
 Morin, Françoise, 117, 118  
*Morning Journal*, 29  
*Mouvman Kreyòl*, 252–255, 262  
*Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicano-Haitianas* (MUDHA), 54–55, 62–67  
 music: diaspora and, 207–228; Evangelical music, 220–226; Rara music, 212–220; religion and, 210–213, 220–226

**N**

Namphy, Henri, 154  
 Nancoo-Russell, K., 100



- Nassau Tribune*, 100, 106  
 National Public Radio (NPR), xxi  
 Nelson, Diane M., 67  
 neo-African practices, 47–48  
 neocolonial experiment, 6–8  
 Nérestant, Micial M., 115, 130  
 networks: family networks, 34, 77, 80–85, 102–103, 158, 164;  
   global networks, 91–94;  
   Internet network, 247–264;  
   social networks, 51, 77, 80–81, 91–95, 107–108, 127, 140, 164, 170–172, 183n9; transnational networks, 21, 91–94, 103  
 Neuhaus, Richard John, 116  
*New York Times*, 26, 137  
 Newland, Kathleen, 167  
 Nicholls, David, 23, 29, 233  
 Noiriel, Gérard, 115  
*noirisme* movement, 232–233  
 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 52–55, 62–69, 79  
*Notebook #3*, 252  
 Nyers, Peter, 186
- O**  
 O'Brien, Margaret, 140  
 Olsen, Laurie, 237, 245  
 Olwig, Karen Fog, 35  
 oppression, onion of, 51–70  
*Oracle, The*, 27  
 O'Reilly, Attorney General, 23  
*orientales*, 74–75, 83  
 Ortnier, Sherry, 11, 229, 241, 254  
 Osborne, Francis J., 18  
 Owens-Hicks, Shirley, 152
- P**  
 Paasi, Anssi, 5, 8  
 Paez, José Antonio, 24  
*palenques*, 74, 88n3  
*palestino*, 74–75  
 Pamphile, Léon D., 20  
 parade float, 104  
 paradigm shift, 265–266  
 Parenton, Vernon J., 230, 231, 235  
 Parham, Angel Adams, 11, 247, 282  
 Paris: Haitian Catholic community in, 130–132; Haitian development in, 132–134; Haitian immigrants in, 113–134. *See also* France  
 Pasqua, Charles, 36  
 Pasqua laws, 36  
 Patrick, Deval, 138  
 Patterson, Tiffany R., 8  
 peasant food, and memories, 262–272, 278–279  
 Peet, Vincent, 100  
 Pentecostal churches, 37–44, 222–225  
 Pérez de la Riva, Juan, 72, 77  
 Pérez, Louis A., 74, 75  
 “peripheral migrants,” 93–94  
*peristile*, 85  
 Perkins, George, 141  
 Perreault, Marc, 191, 193  
 Perusek, Glenn, 18  
 Peterson, Leighton, 254  
 Pétion, Alexandre, 22, 23  
 Peutz, Nathalie, 186  
 Piché, Victor, 188  
*pichón*, 81, 89n7  
 Pierre, Solange, 59, 62  
 Pierre, Sonia, 62  
 Plantain Porridge, 269–271  
 Plummer, Brenda Gayle, 20, 21, 142  
 Pol Emil, Antonio, 62, 64, 66, 70  
*Polish Peasant in Europe and America, The*, 116  
 political exiles, 20–30, 247  
 political refugees, 75, 77, 161n11, 167, 195  
 population estimates, 4–5, 4t. *See also* census records  
 Porter, Andrew, 20  
 Portes, Alejandro, 139, 236, 241, 243  
 Portuondo, José Antonio, 76  
 Potvin, Maryse, 189–191, 198–200  
 Pratt, Anna, 186  
 Price, Richard, 168  
 Price-Mars, Jean, 233, 252–253  
 Private and Family Life Card, 119–123, 124, 121t, 123t, 126, 133  
 prostitution, 57–58  
 Proust, Marcel, 209, 211, 267–268, 272  
*Public Opinion*, 28  
 public sphere, 247–264  
 Puri, Shalini, 9, 17–18, 193
- Q**  
 Quijano, Anibal, xxiii, 6
- R**  
 race obsession, 233–236  
 racism: accusations of, 151; from Americans, 234, 245; in Bahamas, 98; in Boston, 135–139; in Canada, 189; in Dominican Republic, 60–64; ending, 219;

- history of, 21, 230, 234, 239;  
 youth and, 196–200, 217  
 Radhakrishnan, Rajagopalan, xxvii  
 raids, 97, 105–107, 110n13  
 Ramey, Dena R., 244  
 Ramírez, J. David, 244  
 Ramnarine, Tina K., 208  
 Ramsey, Kate, 275  
 Rara music, 212–220, 214, 227n2  
 Raveau, François, 117, 118  
*Recherche du Temps Perdu*, 267  
 recipes, 269–274, 278  
 Red, “Jacques Viau,” 61  
 Reid, Ira, 142, 165  
 Reilly, Thomas F., 137, 138, 139  
 REKA: as discussion list, 256–260;  
   Internet network, 247–264; as  
   online journal, 260–261  
 religion: Afro-Creole religion, 207,  
   212–216, 220–221; Afro-Hai-  
   tian religion, 215–217; Catho-  
   lic churches, 106, 114–115,  
   130–132, 145, 156; Christian  
   diaspora, 208–228; music and,  
   210–213, 220–226; Pentecostal  
   churches, 37–44, 222–225  
*Remembrance of Things Past*, 267  
 residence cards, 37–38  
 returning home, 273–274  
 Rey, Terry, 275, 277  
*Rezo Entènèt Kreyolis Aysisyen*  
   (REKA), 247–264. *See also*  
   Internet network; REKA  
 Richardson, Laurie, 233  
 Riché, Jean-Baptiste, 24  
 Richman, Karen, xxviii, 1, 7, 39, 42,  
   189  
 ritual space, 85  
 Rivera, Raquel Z., 219  
 Rivière-Hérard, Charles, 24, 26  
 Rivkind, Perry, 99  
 Robinson, Tosheena, 104  
 Rolle, Krystel, 100  
 Rolle, Norman, 100  
 Roos, Peter D., 238  
 Rouse, Roger, xxvii  
 Rumbaut, Ruben G., 167  
 Rushing, Byron, 152
- S**  
 Safran, William, 34, 188  
 Sagás, Ernesto, 60  
 St. Fleur, Marie, 135–139, 138, 145,  
   157–159  
 St. Jacques, Ermitte, xxii, 10, 91, 92,  
   98, 282  
 St. Vil, Jean, 261–262  
 Saint-Gérard, Yves, 230  
 Salnave, Sylvain, 29  
 Salomon, Lysius Félicité, 27  
 sanitation issues, 59  
 Santa Anna, Antonio López de, 24  
 Santiago de Cuba, 71, 74–79, 84–85  
 Sarduy, Pedro, 75  
 Saucedo, Silvia Giorguli, 139  
 Saunders, Gail, 95, 96, 98  
 Saunders, Mark Q., 75  
 Schiefflin, Bambi B., 232  
 Schneider, Mark, 248  
 Schneider, Steven, 140  
 Schnepel, E., 45  
 Schopp, Jeffrey, 105  
 Schuler, Sebastian, 220  
 Schuller, Marc, 265, 279  
 Scott, David, 86  
 Segal, Aaron, 232  
 Segura, Carlos, 55  
 Seraille, William, 20  
 Shannon, Paul, 99, 106  
 shantytown, 99  
 Sharpley-Whiting, T., 8  
 Sheffer, Gabriel, 225  
 Sheller, Mimi, 21, 23–24, 26–28, 72  
 Silié, Rubén, 55  
 Simon, Patrick, 129  
 Simpson, George Eaton, 231  
 Simpson, J. Montaque, 21  
 simultaneity, xxiv, 139  
 Slater, Don, 254  
 Slobin, Mark, 8  
 Smith, Matthew J., xxiv, 9, 17, 282  
 Smith, Michael P., 49, 92  
*So Spoke the Uncle*, 252  
 social class, 186, 230–238  
 social networks, 51, 77, 80–81,  
   91–95, 107–108, 127, 140,  
   164, 170–172, 183n9. *See also*  
   networks  
*Sosyete Koukouy*, 255–257, 262  
 Soulouque, Faustin, 9, 22–30  
*Spirit and the Law: Vodou and Power*  
   *in Haiti*, 275  
 Stanton-Salazar, Ricardo, 237  
 Stefanakis, Evangeline Harris, 244  
 Stepick, Alex, 17, 39, 187, 189, 191,  
   195, 203, 236–237, 241, 243,  
   275  
 Stepick, Carol Dutton, 187

stereotypes: counter-stereotypes and, 42–46; cultural intimacy and, 46–48; marginality and, 42–46

Stevenson, Mary Huff, 140, 141

Stubbs, Jean, 75

student status in France, 126t

Suárez-Orozco, Carola, 229, 237, 242–243

Suárez-Orozco, Marcelo M., 229, 237, 242, 243

subjectivity, 9, 34–49, 73

subordination, 6, 35, 53–54, 58–59, 62, 66

sugar estates, 51, 56–63, 69n7, 81

sugar industry, 51–67. *See also* *bateyes*

Sweeting, Pastor, 107

symbolic marginality, 42–46

Symonette, Mark, 97

*système de parrainage*, 170–171, 179

**T**

Tarr, Carrie, 42

Taylor, Peter J., 6

teacher attitudes, 243–245. *See also* classrooms

*Tele Diaspora*, 155

Tenth Department (*Dixième Département*), 1, 12n1, 17, 42, 91, 177–178

Théodore-Pharel, Marie K., 155

Theoharris, Jeanne F., 140

Thernstrom, Stephan, 140, 141

Thiery, Christopher, 232

Thomas, William Isaac, 116

Thompson, Robert Farris, 274

Thurel, Antoine, 135–136, 153–155

Todorova, Irina, 237, 243

trafficking, 58–59

transnational activism, 103–108, 175–178

transnational activities, 101–103, 107–108

transnational identities, 91, 192–196

transnational migration, 34, 42, 52. *See also* migration

transnational mobilization, 103–108

transnational networks, 21, 91–94, 103. *See also* networks

transnational organizations, 103–108, 175–178

transnational practices, 5–6, 91–110

transnational social fields, 49, 188–189

transnational space, 1, 34, 49, 191

transnationalism, xxvii, 1, 17, 52, 108, 202 n4

*Trente Glorieuses*, *Les*, 7

Trollope, Anthony, 25

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph, 7–8, 22–23, 44, 72, 233, 265–266

Turino, Thomas, 211, 214

Turner, Eugene, 146

**U**

Ulysse, Gina Athena, 11, 12, 265–266, 272, 278, 282

unemployment rates in France, 129t

*Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People*, 116

**V**

*Vagina Monologues*, 277

van der Geest, S., 187

Vanhee, Hein, 216

Vedrine, Emmanuel W., 252

Verna, Chantalle F., 10, 142, 163, 165, 283

Verrijp, Annemieke, 59

Viala, J., 243

Vigil, James D., 243

Vodou: memories and, 265–280; music and, 207–209, 212–216, 222; practice of, 33, 46–48, 84–86, 130, 151–152, 174; research on, 274–27

*Vodú*, 84–86, 90n12

**W**

Wainwright, Kiki, 257–258

Walters, William, 186

Waters, Mary C., 19, 139, 186, 242, 253

Watts, Michael J., 6

Weil, Patrick, 115, 118, 127

Weinstein, Brian, 232

Wenden, Catherine Withtol de, 115

White, Andrew Dickson, 29

Whyte, Susan Reynolds, 187

Wigen, Kären E., 8

Wilentz, Amy, 56, 233

Wilson, Samuel, 254

Wingfield, Roland, 230, 231, 235

Woldemikael, Tekle M., 236, 240

women concerns, 58–59, 64, 67

women's rights, 67, 277–278

Woods, Fred, 145

World Bank, the, xxviii  
Wright, Charles H., 182  
Wright, Philip, 18  
Wucker, Michele, 79

**Y**

youth: delinquency and, 115, 185–187,  
190–192, 195–196; discrimina-  
tion and, 191; elder perspectives  
of, 192–196; perspectives from,

185–201; racism and, 196–200,  
217

Yuen, Sandra D., 244

**Z**

Zéphir, Flore, 191, 232, 234, 236–237,  
240, 242–243, 245, 253

Zeuske, Michael, 74

Zilberg, Elena, 186, 194

Znaniecki, Florian, 116

