THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Complicity of Women in Child Slavery:

A Gender Analysis of Haiti and the *Restavèk* System

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the

University of Hull

by

Fiona de Hoog Cius, BA, MA

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Chapter 1

Introduction

'Pitit se richès malere'
'Children are the wealth of the poor'

*'A girl runs across the path of the oncoming motorbike, and strides
along the side of the road, a mango hanging from her mouth whose
flesh she has already mostly sucked out. She disappears behind us,
and we speed forward, Bob Marley blasting from the motorbike's
speakers. Further down the road, an old lady in a long pink dress with
puffed sleeves, her head wrapped in a grey scarf, is stuffing something
into the baskets hanging from the side of a donkey. We enter the
village where women are sitting under wooden structures, sleepily
watching over their piles of vegetables. Their stern faces gaze out
from their shaded spots within the market. Some of them chat to each
other, some sleep, heads resting on folded hands, bags of rice, beans.
We leave the village behind and overtake a parked taptap, where a
middle-aged woman is passing huge bunches of green plantains up to
a man stacking them on the roof of the truck. At her feet is a wide
bucket full of fish..'*[1] (de Hoog, 2016)

Child slavery is a global phenomenon, part of a worldwide network of
modern slavery. Different forms of it exist in many countries and the degrees of
harmful exploitation vary from culture to culture. In the Caribbean country of
Haiti, a system of child domestic slavery exists on a significant scale, affecting more
than one in ten children nationwide. Due to this, Haiti consistently ranks in the top
ten countries, in terms of prevalence of slavery, in the Walk Free Foundation
Global Slavery Index (2016). This practice, known as the *restavèk* system, is

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[1] This excerpt is taken from a blogpost I wrote to mark International Women's Day 2016. It is a
snapshot into a typical Haitian street scene which I recollected after a motorbike taxi ride through
the coastal town of Cayes Jacmel in the South-East of Haiti.

reputed for its unrelenting cruelty towards the victimised children. In a country where violence, stemming from a history of slavery and colonialism and a persistent level of extreme poverty, frames the everyday lives of the people, the presence of child slavery becomes a proverbial blind spot, a reflection of society's hardship and history.

Haiti's history forms a fascinating narrative, a tragic tale of slavery and immeasurable human suffering and a hair-raising story of hope and rebellion. Modern Haitian society is still reeling from this eventful history of conflict between white and black, between slavery and freedom. As a culture, it retains vestiges of its African roots, it continues to showcase its French colonial influence as a paradigm of civility and - particularly among the population living in the most extreme destitution - ideals of dignity and humanity are revered above all else.

My fascination with Haiti began with an interest in European colonialism and slavery. As a social anthropologist, I was particularly drawn to the human element of slavery and the dynamics of power and race. Because Haiti was the world's first black nation outside of Africa after the first successful slave revolt it stood out to me as a beacon of resilience and black power. The most interesting aspect of history, to me, is its consequence on modern society, and I was intrigued to discover what Haitian society looks like now, as a nation born out of slavery, displacement and human intervention. It was through this interest that I discovered that slavery is not merely an institution of the past, but rather, a growing modern global problem, of which the *restavèk* system in Haiti is a symptom. Throughout years of research and visits to Haiti, I began to look for the root causes of child domestic slavery and the factors which allow it to persist in modern society within a theoretical framework of global slavery studies.

Researching slavery for a different project, I came across an IOM (International Organization of Migration) document on human trafficking in the East African region that revealed that the majority of traffickers were women - up to 75 per cent in Burundi (IOM, 2008:56). Surprised by this statistic, because it contradicted my assumptions that women tended to be victims more than perpetrators, I began to consider the positioning of women in African and other post-colonial societies, and what factors would drive or facilitate women to become involved in trafficking activities. Because of my previous interest in the *restavèk* system of child slavery, I decided to turn the focus of these theoretical questions towards Haiti, to assess whether women are implicated in the trafficking and enslaving of children there. Admittedly, before embarking on this project, I did not realise the full extent of its significance in relation to the *restavèk* system and was surprised to find that women's implication in child slavery in Haiti is not merely an important factor, but is in fact the key finding in understanding the root causes and precise dynamics of the *restavèk* system. As this thesis reveals, I unearthed a complex web of local gender dynamics within a global system of patriarchy, which, in the context of a violent postcolonial society, has had a significant impact on children's safety. It emerged as a logical finding that the oppression of women and extreme levels of violence towards them and in the context of their lives of extreme poverty, that children, who are, like in most societies in the world, primarily the responsibility of women, would suffer the consequences. The effect of Haitian women's marginalisation on children can be viewed as part of the consequences of European colonialism and the ways it shaped gender in post-colonial societies, just as it can be said that African women 'remain to date the most marginalised, unrecognised and unreported of all subject populations in European colonial history' (Griffiths, 2003:1).

In order to assert the significance of this theory, a number of themes emerged as a primary focus for this research. Firstly, there are different groups of women who are involved in connected, but different ways. I decided to focus on the women who would have the most impact on the sustaining of the system, in terms of decision-making and actions, and categorised these as mothers, slaveholders and traffickers. In doing so, I do not set out to condemn, but rather to understand these women through a systematic gender analysis. My empirical findings suggest, as I mention above, that women are a crucial part of this practice. This is particularly significant in the fact that the slaveholders and traffickers of *restavèk* children are, for the largest part, women. In fact, as we will see in chapter seven, it is the very relationship between a female slaveholder and a child slave that defines the situation as that of *restavèk*. I therefore engaged in a gender analysis of Haitian society to understand the context in which women act within their roles as mothers, slaveholders or traffickers. I also extended my analysis to include men and their behaviours towards women and children in the context of their lives, focusing on the factors which render them socially disempowered - such as economic poverty, political turmoil and structural violence - to better understand why many systematically oppress women, and as a result contribute to the problem of child slavery.

This thesis is divided into three sections. The first section comprises of four chapters, providing a contextual basis for my research as well as a discussion of my methods. The second section contains the core of the thesis, in terms of thorough gender analysis, in the form of two chapters, one focusing on women, rural mothers in particular, and the other on men. The third section is made up of two

important chapters that focus on the slaveholders, as women in urban areas, and traffickers, that include significant contributions to this field of research.

Following on from this introduction, chapter two discusses my practical approach to this research and the methods I used to gather and analyse information as well as the challenges I faced throughout my period of fieldwork in Haiti.

Chapter three, entitled, '*The* restavèk *system, defined within the Haitian context and a global network of slavery'*, places the *restavèk* practice within a theoretical global discourse on slavery and children's rights by discussing it in terms of the international and domestic laws in place to safeguard children. In this chapter I discuss the particularities of the *restavèk* system and its known history, considering it in relation to similar practices in different geographical spaces with social historical links to Haiti. Furthermore, this chapter offers a definition of slavery and argues that the *restavèk* system is one of slavery according to its academic and legal definitions.

Chapter four, '*From Emancipated Republic to Neo-Colony: Haiti's enduring pursuit of freedom*', provides a historical backdrop of Haiti and offers an insight into the events that have led up to Haitian society's present reality. As a French slave colony, Haiti saw violence on a large scale and modern-day Haitians' ancestors responded to this through a bloody and successful revolution against the white, French plantation owners. These events positioned Haiti as a symbol of black power, but also directed the nation on a path to economic hardship and poverty for its people as the nation struggled to maintain its autonomy. This chapter looks in detail at the relevant historical factors that have created the current situation of poverty and susceptibility to catastrophes in the wake of

natural disasters. Here, I argue that Haiti's vulnerability as a state, and its continued extreme poverty is due to historical political factors rather than natural conditions. In this chapter, I set the scene for society's endemic systemic violence and provides the context for the *restavèk* system to exist and thrive.

Chapter five, '*Mothers: Rural family life and the push factors for child slavery*', is a gender analysis of women in Haiti focusing primarily on rural mothers, who are the most likely to send their children into the *restavèk* system. I discuss the rural context of Haitian poverty and the 'push' factors that contribute to the trafficking of children, looking particularly at the large number of children per family, rural areas' lack of crucial infrastructure and services, the lack of access to schools for children as well as women's lack of economic and social power in relation to gender based violence and household dynamics of control. I also discuss gendered roles and the responsibilities of women towards children and household activities and the consequences on children's welfare when women are unable to exercise power and autonomy over their lives. I argue in this chapter that the social, cultural and economic expectations placed on women, together with their lack of power in private and public spheres, render children - for which women are largely responsible - extremely vulnerable to being sent into the *restavèk* system. I suggest that the factors which drive children into slavery are largely constructed by the circumstances of rural Haitian people's lives.

Chapter six, '*Haitian Masculinities: Manifestations of power hiding disempowered realities*', is a gender analysis of Haitian men exploring concepts of masculinity, framed in a global context of patriarchy. I discuss how social structures in Haiti are composed of different power dynamics and how women are systematically and structurally placed in a submissive role in comparison to men, looking again at gender roles and how they are instilled in children. I provide an

analysis of masculinities from a specifically Haitian perspective and position this in relation to a discourse on gender and race. I suggest, however, that men in Haiti are, for their part, disempowered through wider socio-economic and political factors which render women vulnerable to men's attempts to assert their masculinity and demonstrate their limited power in a violent form. This, I argue, is a contributing factor to the *restavèk* system, as men oppress women on a wide, social scale, and largely fail to take responsibility for children which, as a result, exposes them to the dangers and vulnerability of slavery.

Chapter seven, '*Slaveholders: Providing context to understand women who enslave children*', looks at the women who have *restavèk* children in their homes and contextualises their lives in an urban environment, looking specifically at the 'pull' factors which create a demand for child domestic slaves. I provide an analysis of the infrastructural and social circumstances within which women live and enslave *restavèk* children. I also discuss, in relation to participants interviews, women's own views about their actions towards children in their care and consider the origins of the violence implicit within the *restavèk* situation. Here, I argue that it is precisely through the relationship between the female slaveholder and the *restavèk* child, and the dynamics of this relationship, such as control and violence, that we can consider the *restavèk* practice a form of modern slavery.

Chapter eight, '*Traffickers: Women bridging the gap between supply and demand*', provides a discussion on the women involved in the trafficking process in which children are transferred from their homes to the *restavèk* practice. I focus on a typical trafficker profile which, as I discovered though this research, takes the form of agricultural produce/market intermediaries, called '*Madam Sara*' women. These women are a crucial part of Haiti's informal economy and many also play a

significant role in the *restavèk* system by providing a child-trafficking service. This chapter looks at who these female traffickers are, the ways in which they assert power for their economic gain and the motivations for their involvement in the *restavèk* system as well as their own personal sense of responsibility over the children they traffic. I also discuss this group of women's position in relation to Haitian women in general and contextualise their actions within the same environment of oppression and sustained violence within which all women in Haiti live.

We will therefore see, through this thesis, my central arguments which are: that women play a vital part in the *restavèk* system both through their victimization and complicity; that all Haitian women are connected in a network of patriarchal structures of control and violence, and that their different roles within the *restavèk* system all stem from the same nexus of disempowerment; that men, for their part, subject violence onto women because of their own lack of power and socio-economic disempowerment. Contextually, two elements are of great importance. Firstly, Haiti's history and its consequences on modern society, and the country's continuing struggle to reach a level of economic and political stability, create an environment in which most Haitian people suffer the fate of extreme poverty with little hope of coming out of it. Secondly, the structural violence, and its banality, which accompany Haiti's colonial and post-colonial situation plays an important role in normalising men's violence towards women and women's violence towards children, contributing to the invisibility of *restavèk* children and their situations. The following chapters provide analyses of these themes, forming a detailed picture of the root causes and environmental factors of the *restavèk* system. Each chapter begins with a paragraph from my blog, to

provide a richer, more vivid picture of the Haitian context through additional ethnographic detail. Chapters three to nine begin with sections of a blog post titled 'The Road' that describes the life and journey of a road, beginning in an urban area and finishing in an isolated rural area.

Chapter 2

Methods

'Anpil ti patat fè chay.'
A lot of small potatoes make a load.

This chapter outlines the methods and methodological approaches used to collect the information applied as a basis for this thesis. It is divided into three main sections. In the first section, a summary of the fieldwork undertaken presents the research timeframe, the data collection activities and a catalogue of the primary data gathered. The second, lengthier, section goes into further detail to expound upon the methods used and the experience of gathering the aforementioned data. Nine subsections divulge the reasoning behind the choices of methods used; the gap in the literature; the rationale behind my research; a discussion of the selection of interview participants; the ethnographic data collection observations and experience; my own positioning as a researcher in the context of the time and location of my work; the techniques used to record the data I collected; the foreseeable challenges I expected to encounter and how I prepared for them; the unforeseeable challenges I encountered and how they affected me and my research; and finally, the unexpected positive outcomes and processes that arose during my fieldwork. The final section summarises the fieldwork experience and offers concluding remarks.

As the subject of my thesis explores the role of women in the *restavèk* system, and because the *Restavèk* system of child slavery is closely associated with poverty and culture, I focused my research on gaining a better understanding of

the context of Haiti and the lived experiences of people there. Basing my approach on a feminist methodological framework, and taking ethical considerations into account, I decided to conduct my research in two ways. Firstly, I would immerse myself in Haitian culture and gather ethnographic data through both observation and participation. Secondly, I would interview a number of key participants, as well as engage in ethnographic conversations with a wide range of individuals, to address specific questions more deeply. Considering the challenging environment of Haiti, questions arose as to how I would access participants for my research, and how I would safely and productively spend my time there. Having worked in Haiti previously, I benefitted from some awareness as to how challenging the environment would be. I also knew that I would need a certain cultural and linguistic fluency to achieve the desired results. This meant that before I could engage fully with the topic of my research, I would have to develop my communication skills by enhancing my local language skills, and paying close attention to cultural markers.

As well as the environmental challenges, my own positioning as a researcher would play a large part in my data collection. I would have to take into account not only that my observations and judgments would be affected by my own understanding and life-experiences, but that my gender, age and skin colour could affect the experiences I had and the information I would have access to. Section two will look into this in more detail, but first, the following section will map the timeframe and results of my period of fieldwork.

Summary of Fieldwork and Data

My period of fieldwork was undertaken in two phases. The first phase began in late October 2014. I stayed in Haiti for a period of five months until March

2015. In August 2015, I went back to Haiti for a duration of 12 months. During the first phase, October 2014 to March 2015, I was based in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. During the first three months, I stayed in a residential area called Delmas 33. I chose this location because it was in an urban, highly populated, area. I rented a room in a guesthouse that provided some security with a large wall and gate around the property and staff on-site 24 hours a day. The area itself, like much of Port-au-Prince, has a high level of crime. This accommodation was my base for my urban setting research, where I was able to access women from the 'slaveholder' and 'trafficker' categories for interviews and conduct ethnographic research of the various areas where *restavèk* children are generally found. I spent the following two months in a different part of Port-au-Prince, close to a suburb called Petionville. I rented a small room, in a shared complex of basic apartments. My neighbours were all Haitian families, and I was therefore exposed to local culture to a large degree. The house, with its intermittent electricity and lack of running water offered an insight into the lives of many Haitian people. There, I lived very close to a large market which gave me important access to women for interviews and I was able to observe this very female-centred environment. This was instrumental in my accessing the 'trafficker' category of women for interviews.

The second phase of my fieldwork, which began in late August 2015, for a further 12 months, took place in rural areas close to the southern coastal town of Jacmel. During the first research phase, I had interviewed and worked with the director of *Fondasyon Limyè Lavi* (FLL), a local organisation that works with rural communities to abolish the *restavèk* system in the Jacmel area. She subsequently offered me a volunteer position in the organisation. I began working with FLL in October, 2015. Through this, I would have access to some isolated rural communities which would be of great importance to my research as these are

areas from where *restavèk* children are usually sourced. I would therefore find women to interview for the 'mothers' category of my study. During this 12 month period, I lived in a rural area myself, in a typically Haitian palm-roofed house. In this community, I was surrounded by Haitian families in a very different setting from the urban households I had lived with previously in Port-au-Prince.

Interview participants were divided into six categories. The first three categories were the women who represented the core subjects of my thesis. These were mothers, traffickers and slaveholders of *restavèk* children. To gain a deeper contextual base, three other categories were selected to represent the wider gender and social dynamics in Haiti. One category was that of Haitian women, another of Haitian men and the final one was of 'experts', or people with knowledge in the field of gender, the *restavèk* system or the wider Haitian context. Most interviews were individual, however some were focus groups of three to five people. In total, 71 participants contributed to this research. As well as interviews, this research is informed by 18 months of ethnographic observations, conversations and participation. I maintained a detailed a field diary to keep track of my activities and to comment on observations throughout the experience. I also wrote a blog in which I described some ethnographic experiences and discussed some of my thoughts about them. This served as a useful supplement to complement my field notes.

During my stay in Haiti, I was also fortunate to be able to form friendships with some Haitian people who were very informative to my research. I kept notes on many conversations between me and my Haitian friends and acquaintances as well as conversations I heard between people. These interactions were essential to my comprehension of Haitian culture and norms and provided a rich contextual

background to my research. As friendships grew and I became more accepted into people's lives, and skin-colour boundaries, or perceived class differences, became less apparent or important, I gained access to Haitian culture on a deeper level.

Employing a feminist methodological and Gender and Development (GAD) framework was paramount to this research and formed a basis not only for the ways in which I would approach participants, but also the manner in which I would position myself in relation to my environment and the material I was researching. I would need to consider 'interlocking forms of oppression' and how that could 'disadvantage women throughout the research process' (Beetham & Demetraides, 2007: 202, 200) and ensure that my approach was inclusive and reflexive, in keeping with a Gender and Development (GAD) perspective. My approach would remain 'humanising and empowering' as I sought to contextualise the actions of men and women through their own life stories and situations as 'situated knowers' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:14-15). Engaging in ethnographic research provided a way to emphasise a reflexive approach focused on reality as a 'powerful antidote to abstract theoretical accounts of gender relations that rest anchored from the grit of human experience' (Nayak & Kehily, 2013:44).

Interview Participant Table

#	Research Category	Group (G) or Individual (I)	Pseudonym	Sex (M/F)	Location	Date
1	Traffickers	I	Louisiana	F	Port-au-Prince	15/07/2015
2	Traffickers	I	Monique	F	Port-au-Prince	15/07/2015
3	Traffickers	I	Charline	F	Port-au-Prince	18/08/2015
4	Traffickers	I	Rositta	F	Petionville	15/07/2015
5	Slaveholders	I	Lineda	F	Port-au-Prince	13/07/2015
6	Slaveholders	I	Piercine	F	Port-au-Prince	21/01/2015
7	Slaveholders	I	Julianne	F	Port-au-Prince	20/03/2015
8	Slaveholders	I	Judith	F	Delmas	27/07/2015
9	Slaveholders	I	Ketia	F	Petionville	15/07/2015

#			Name		Location	
10	Mothers	I	Somène	F	Port-au-Prince	18/08/2015
11	Mothers	I	Fonise	F	Port-au-Prince	22/07/2015
12	Mothers	I	Chantalle	F	Port-au-Prince	17/03/2015
13	Mothers	G	Christmas	F	Ma, Jacmel	14/04/2016
14	Mothers	G	Jolène	F	Ma, Jacmel	14/04/2016
15	Mothers	G	Darline	F	Ma, Jacmel	14/04/2016
16	Mothers	G	Molenita	F	Ma, Jacmel	14/04/2016
17	Mothers	I	Altamène	F	Ma, Jacmel	13/04/2016
18	Mothers	G	Fabiola	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
19	Mothers	G	Marieclaire	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
20	Mothers	G	Tania	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
21	Mothers	G	Mitot	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
22	Mothers	G	Georgine	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
23	Mothers	G	Christelle	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
24	Mothers	G	Solène	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
25	Mothers	G	Florine	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
26	Mothers	G	Chrismène	F	Wo Jefre	27/11/2014
27	Mothers	G	Jolène	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
28	Mothers	G	Celine	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
29	Mothers	G	Ismita	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
30	Mothers	G	Angeline	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
31	Mothers	G	Daphcar	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
32	Mothers	G	Jessina	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
33	Mothers	G	Naïka	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
34	Mothers	G	Sandra	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
35	Mothers	G	Laetitia	F	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014
36	Experts	I	Gina	F	Jacmel	22/02/2015
37	Experts	G	Lindor	M	Jacmel	10/11/2014
38	Experts	G	Saint-Louis	M	Jacmel	10/11/2014
39	Experts	G	Chaperon	F	Jacmel	10/11/2014
40	Experts	G	Zamor	M	Jacmel	10/11/2014
41	Experts	G	Junior	M	Jacmel	10/11/2014
42	Experts	G	Feki	M	Jacmel	10/11/2014
43	Experts	G	Samson	M	Jacmel	10/11/2014
44	Experts	I	Delouis	F	Port-au-Prince	24/02/2015
45	Experts	I	Sabine	F	Port-au-Prince	19/02/2015
46	Experts	I	Penny	F	Port-au-Prince	13/11/2014
47	Experts	I	Julien	M	Port-au-Prince	06/11/2014
48	Experts	I	Tristan	M	Port-au-Prince	05/11/2014
49	Men	I	Ville-France	M	Jacmel	17/02/2016
50	Men	I	Louiner	M	Jacmel	22/04/2016
51	Men	I	Christmas	M	Ma, Jacmel	15/04/2016
52	Men	I	Orelus	M	Port-au-Prince	29/01/2015
53	Men	G	Delange	M	Ma, Jacmel	14/04/2016
54	Men	G	Louisman	M	Ma, Jacmel	14/04/2016
55	Men	G	Patrice	M	Ma, Jacmel	14/04/2016

Additional ethnographic material and participants

#	Name	Gender	Location	Date(s)

56	Komantim*	Mixed	Ma, Jacmel	12/12/2014 and 17/11/2015
57	Cené	M	Port-au-Prince	Various dates (Nov 2014 – March 2015)
58	Waleme	M	Port-au-Prince	Various dates (Nov 2014 – March 2015)
59-62	Teachers (x3)	Mixed	Port-au-Prince	19/11/2014
63-68	Delange family	Mixed	Ma, Jacmel	16 – 19/11/2015
69	Erick	M	Port-au-Prince	05/02/2015
70	Street vendor	F	Port-au-Prince	21/01/2015
71	Madanm Exius	F	Port-de-Paix	21/02/2015

*Komantim: (*Komite Ankadreman* Timoun) child-protection committee set up by the Fondasyon Limyè Lavi organisation and now independent. Made up of approximately 30 members.

As the tables above show, this research is informed by 71 participants. There were eight focus group with a total of 32 participants and 23 individual interviews. Out of the 55 participants who took part in interviews, 49 were women and 15 were men. According to the categories of participants, there were four 'traffickers', five 'slaveholders', 26 'mothers', 13 'experts and seven representing 'men'. As well as the unstructured interviews, a number of ethnographic conversations provided important context for this thesis. Participants in these included three men, two women and two mixed groups. For reasons of ethics, risks and vulnerability, all names used throughout this thesis are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of all participants.

Fieldwork: Considerations, Issues and Events

Gap in the Literature

The subject area of this thesis sits at the intersection of several disciplines. Modern slavery studies, which is a relatively young academic field, and gender studies, as well as social anthropology of post-colonial, specifically French-

speaking societies, form a theoretical background to my research. Although these fields have been extensively documented academically, very few sources, if any, cover the overlap between them. This is without taking into account the vastly under-researched area of modern Haitian society. While the Haitian revolution, the American occupation and the Duvalier era have all been extensively documented by historians, modern Haitian society, particularly that of rural areas, remains largely untouched by academic study. While a small number of publications, addressing social issues such as poverty, health and violence, have informed this research on a contextual level, very few sources discuss the underlying causes of the *restavèk* system on a social and historical level, and far less so from a gender perspective. For this reason, it was important that I go to Haiti to carry out my own empirical research into the root causes of child domestic slavery there, to measure women's involvement and complicity in the *restavèk* system and to analyse the gender dynamics and social setting which facilitate it.

Establishing what to ask

Trying to find out about women's involvement in the *restavèk* system, and the reasons behind it, required a careful research strategy and ethical considerations. Firstly, I wanted to find out about the key positions women can play in the trafficking process. This meant focusing particularly on the mothers of *restavèk* children, the women who enslave them and those that traffic them – if it is indeed the case that women are the ones responsible for these processes. I therefore needed to establish whether women were involved in the process to the extent I had predicted. Ascertaining this would begin the process of examining these women's agency, power and motivations in the context of children and the *restavèk* system. In turn, this would lead to an analysis of the cultural context that

defines gender norms in Haiti, looking specifically at the factors that contribute to gender power dynamics. Therefore, the key questions I aimed to answer were:

1. To what extent are women involved in the trafficking and enslavement of children in the *restavèk* system?

2. What drives women's involvement in the *restavèk* system?

   - Is there profit to be made?

   - What are the intentions and motivations behind the actions?

3. What is the social, gendered context behind women's involvement in the *restavèk* system?

4. Based on the findings of the previous questions, is the gendered oppression of women in Haiti a major root cause of the exploitation of children and the *restavèk* system?

Investigating these questions would open up different themes. A gender analysis of these themes would facilitate a greater understanding of Haitian society and cultural history to provide a wider context for women's agency and choices. By adopting a Gender and Development (GAD) approach, wherein the socially constructed hierarchies and the relations between gendered beings are explored (Rai, 2002:72), I apply a gender analysis throughout this thesis to dissect the structures of Haitian society and culture, to consider people within those structures and their power, lives and meanings as gendered beings.

Choosing participant groups

Having established the type of information I was aiming to attain, the next step was to decide who my participants would be and how I would ethically incorporate them into this research. Firstly, in order to establish more context on the *restavèk* situation, I decided to interview experts in the field. My focus was

originally on female experts, women working in the field of child protection, as I wanted to incorporate this role into my study on women's involvement in the *restavèk* system. However, as my research developed, I found it useful to incorporate men in this group of participants as I found there to be a significant number of men working in this area, and they were able to offer valuable insight.

In order to establish the level of involvement of women in the *restavèk* system, I planned to speak directly to women who fall into the categories of 'mothers', 'traffickers' and 'slaveholders'. Speaking to them would provide an insight into, not only their involvement and possible complicity, but also some of their motivations, justifications and reasoning, as they perceive them, offering a chance for reflexivity and wider context. I expected that some women would be critical of their social positions while others would be resigned to, or accepting of them. I wanted to include both of these experiences in my research, however, I chose to pay particular attention to balancing the discourse of the more socially compliant women with the opinion of more critical women, experts, as well as the opinions of men. It is in seeking this more critical and balanced approach that I widened my participant criteria to include both men and women from an age range of approximately 20 to 70.[2]

I included men as some of my participants to offer some additional expertise, in the case of those with experience in the field of child protection, and to also provide an insight into the lives of men in Haiti and their perspectives on gender hierarchies and relationships with women and children. This ensured that I received more balanced information about gender relations and it also brought forth the gendered struggles of men, which, though originally not part of my

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[2] I did not ask the participants their ages and estimated their approximate age. This was because I did not want to create any tension cause by the fact that many Haitian people do not know their exact age, because many births were not recorded. This is particularly relevant for the older generation.

research plan, provided a crucial aspect of the context in which men and women behave. Another reason for including men as participants and contributors to this research was the fact that, as a white foreigner, men were generally more accessible to me. The reasons behind this form a large part of the subject of this thesis, as Haitian women and men are quite segregated in their lifestyles, and, as a result, men have more free time and more socially attributed communication skills as well as opportunities to talk to foreigners. This provides an example of how the research process itself can be reflective of gender inequalities (Beetham & Demetriades, 2007:200), and an opportunity to think through this research plan employing a feminist methodological framework.

Ethical considerations of vulnerability and risk of participants played a large part in my choosing whom I would include and how. I made a conscious decision not to seek children as participants in this research. Though the subject heavily concerns children, this thesis explores the underlying factors that contribute to the *restavèk* system in which children are victims. There exist a number of testimonies of the treatment of *restavèk* children from which I was able to gain a perspective on the levels of abuse inflicted without talking directly to victims. Speaking to victims of abuse, particularly vulnerable ones like children, requires a level of expertise and sensitivity which I am not professionally trained in. I am aware of the dangerous impact that discussing experiences of abuse can have on victims of modern slavery. Moreover, the particular cruelties experienced by children at the hands of adults is of less concern to this research as the consciousness of adults in this domain. Furthermore, for certain participant groups, such as those who are criminally implicated, I decided not to play the part of the interviewer but to send someone with whom many would feel more comfortable speaking to. This was done to protect participants by choosing not to

increase their visibility by being implicated with a foreigner, and also to protect the integrity of the research itself, as my presence would have affected the information given in the interviews. I look at this in further detail later where I discuss my positioning as a researcher.

Ethnographic research

This study is underpinned by 18 months of ethnographic research. As mentioned above, I recorded observations in a field diary and kept a reflexive blog online. I also documented many aspects of my field work with digital photographs. However, due to Haitian people's general sensitivity about being the subjects of photographs, particularly those taken by foreigners, in keeping with an ethical approach I did not take any portraits without permission.

During the 18 months I spent in Haiti, I observed many different aspects of Haitian society. Living in a typical Haitian home, surrounded by Haitian neighbours, I was able to witness everyday life and social dynamics. I noted sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings as I experienced them in the Haitian setting. A very important part of my ethnographic approach to this research was participatory observation. Moreover, in the time I spent in Haiti, I did more than merely observe, I took part in local life. Living with my Haitian partner, I was accepted into his family and spent time with them, not merely as a researcher, but as a member of the family. For a large part, my full immersion into Haitian culture was intentional to provide reflexivity in an authentic experience and a realistic view of the social setting, however, personal financial constraints meant that I had little choice but to live a basic life. This meant experiencing everyday life with little access to electricity, water, food and modern conveniences. It also meant travelling by public transport, *taptap* buses and motorbike taxis, which, though very

insightful in that they are part of Haitian life, can be dangerous – for instance, the driver of the moto-taxi I was once on fell asleep repeatedly during a journey of 20 kilometres, waking up every time just before we veered off the side of the road.

As I mentioned, I was able to become close to some Haitian people through my partner and his family. In this context, I often discussed the topic of my research with my Haitian friends, who would, I perceived, answer me honestly and unguardedly. This formed an important contextual base for my research. Another way I was able to participate and form trusting relationships with Haitians was through a volunteer job with the *Fondasyon Limyè Lavi* (FLL), a Jacmel-based NGO, run by Haitians, working with rural communities to prevent the *restavèk* system. Working two days a week at the FLL office allowed me to bond with my colleagues and to observe the more professional side to Haitian life. I was also able to discuss issues surrounding the *restavèk* system with them. Through FLL, I had the opportunity to visit a number of rural communities which would have otherwise been inaccessible to me. These communities are very isolated in the mountains. It would take approximately 3 hours of cross-country motor-biking to get to them. One community I visited repeatedly was the community of Ma, in the wider Jacmel area. Repeated visits there, accompanied by my Haitian partner, established trusting relationships with the members, and particularly, leaders, of the community. Not only was I able to interview community members, but their hospitality and openness, in terms of communication, meant I could stay for periods of a few days to observe and participate in their lives. This proved to be invaluable to my research, as I was able to gain crucial insight into the areas from which many *restavèk* children are trafficked. As Ma is part of FLL's 'Model Community' programme, all children who had been sent into the *restavèk* system were safely returned to their families. As a result, the people of the community

were aware of the *restavèk* system and its dangers and were very informative regarding the practice.

Positioning as a researcher

A particularly important aspect of my field research was my own positioning as the researcher. This was something I had to be extremely aware of, as it had the potential to influence many facets of the research. Many of the ways in which my own positioning and identity would influence the results of my research were largely inevitable. However, awareness of them and discussing them could limit their influence. In some instances, my positioning – gender, age, language, background, etc. – influenced the results of the research in a positive way, other times it created limits, boundaries and challenges. Though it is difficult to ascertain exactly how the research was impacted, due to the fact that it is impossible to be neutral, there are some aspects worth discussing. Firstly, there is the issue of my own background, education and experience impacting my observations and interpretations. Though it is impossible to measure the extent of this, it might be noted that certain elements of my person and background came into play during my presence in Haiti. An example of this is my childhood growing up in France, where I was part of a Congolese sub-culture through a friendship group. Haiti's post-colonial influences of France and Africa were tinged with familiarity for me as a result of this part of my background. While this had a positive impact in that it facilitated my transition to Haitian life, and helped me understand certain cultural aspects almost instinctively, it may have had a bearing on the way I perceived the country and how I interpreted new information. This ability and opportunity to participate, as part of a wider ethnographic approach, reflects the crucial element of the ethical standpoint of my research. As well as admitting the influence of my

person on my findings, it is important to locate the 'researcher in the frame of the research as an interested and subjective actor rather than a detached and impartial observer' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:15).

Aside from my own perceptions, my physical appearance was likely to have had an impact on my experiences in Haiti, the way I was approached by people and the information I was exposed to. Being a white woman in my early thirties, it was evident to me that this affected the ways I was being spoken to and treated, as I discuss further below. This is likely to be somewhat the case in most places one visits as a foreigner, but it became particularly apparent in what appeared to me as an openly segregated society based on sex, class and skin-colour. It might be said that my entire experience was affected by this, however, as I mentioned above, it was not necessarily solely a negative impact. As I was to discover in my social and historical research, class and skin colour are closely connected, with lighter skin typically signifying wealth and darker skin symbolically representing poverty. As a white foreigner, I was generally received with noticeable respect, which was discernable from how I was addressed in title and in language – French, the language of the upper class. When in public places like markets and public transport, there were frequent comments – said assuming I would not understand, in Kreyòl – questioning my presence among people, or commenting to one another on how I should not be squashed or leaned on for support, as is customarily done in crowded public transport. During one *taptap* bus journey, a comment was made suggesting that the driver should be careful not to crash because he was carrying a white person, suggesting, in a jovial manner, that my life was worth more than that of the other passengers. In fact, when using public transport, rarely did my presence ever go unmentioned.

Another aspect of being white in Haiti, as in many economically poor countries, is the attention one gets as a symbol of wealth. Beyond the familiar requests for money from strangers on the street, or the habitual over-charging for goods bought at the market, an implicit financial expectation or dynamic permeated many relationships and social transactions. This was something I needed to be consistently aware of because it impacted what some people chose to say to me and how. In some cases, people might have been seizing an opportunity for some financial assistance, but it was not always as straightforward as that. I found that some people would communicate the opposite message to me, in an effort to preserve their dignity, and this perhaps had an impact on the way they spoke to me in a different way. Whether it was to seek money or to purposefully demonstrate that they do not want your money, it was clear that wealth and poverty, whiteness and blackness – as it might be perceived – were silent but significant elements in many of my communications with Haitian people. As I mentioned previously, I chose to avoid contact with certain groups for reasons of protection and because of the ways some participants might react to me. I predicted that some of the participants would not feel relaxed enough in my presence to speak more openly. Therefore, I sought the assistance of a young Haitian man to help me conduct the interviews. I gave him training on interview techniques and discussed the topic at length with him. Having been a victim of the *restavèk* system in his youth, and with a strong sense of the gender issues in his country, he was capable of conducting informal interviews on my behalf. It was clear from the recordings that this was the right choice because not only did the participants appear disarmed and frank, they seemed willing to discuss the issues quite openly.

Aside from the ways in which my positioning would affect my research, taking into account my feminist methodology, I endeavoured to be aware of my impact on the environment and surroundings I found myself in. I intended to make as many efforts as possible to minimise my impact, being especially cautious to, at the very least, do no harm. As I mentioned earlier, for ethical reasons I did not speak to child victims of the *restavèk* system which could be potentially dangerous for the child's mental health. In order to mitigate unequal power dynamics, I was careful not to introduce money into my relationships with my Haitian friends and participants. However, as it is customary to provide food, if possible, and transport fees, I did compensate them for their time that way. However, when money changed hands, I ensured it was done between two Haitians – with the help of my previously mentioned interview assistant - rather than me giving them money directly so as not to affect the power dynamics between researcher and participant. In doing so, I tried to safeguard participants from feelings of humiliation or inequality.

Foreseeable challenges

Before I embarked on this period of fieldwork, I considered the potential challenges I would face in Haiti doing this research. I knew that there would be a number of barriers that I would have to overcome to gain access to the information I needed. To begin with, Haiti uses French as its administrative language but Kreyòl is the widely spoken language. I was fluent in French, but only spoke elementary Kreyòl before my arrival in October 2014. I knew I would therefore have to make it a priority to learn to speak Kreyòl as quickly as possible, not only to be able to communicate but also to embody my participatory ethnographic approach and feminist framework. Speaking the local language would help to

balance the power dynamics between researcher and participants. I started taking lessons shortly after I arrived and was proficient after two or three weeks and almost fluent after two months. This opened up a wide number of opportunities to speak to and listen to Haitian people, and to be better attuned with what was going on around me. It also meant that I was received differently by people who saw that I had made the effort to learn the language. On a number of occasions, I came across people who were shocked to hear a white person speak Kreyòl which is commonly perceived as the language of the 'lower class', black Haitians as opposed to the French of the lighter-skinned elite and bureaucratic class.

After learning the language, I needed to gain greater cultural fluency. Learning the language was a step towards being able to interpret the world around me. I carefully observed the society around me and engaged in conversation with Haitian people to enquire about what I saw. Because the *restavèk* system is deeply engrained as a cultural practice in Haiti, I considered it important to attempt to understand as much about Haitian culture, attitudes and everyday life as possible. Apart from reflective observation, which was constant during waking hours, I participated in as many things as possible. I often accompanied friends when they went to the market and helped to cook on occasion, to learn the arduous process of Haitian food preparation. I looked after friends' babies, sat and talked with men after their work in the fields, shelled peas, washed dishes, drove a motorcycle and went dancing in Haitian '*restoran dansan*', dancing restaurants – a fascinating insight into the Haitian courting process. My enthusiasm to participate as much as possible, and to ask questions helped me to understand certain cultural aspects quite thoroughly. This participatory approach was essential to my research because, not only did it provide me with a valuable insight into the wider cultural context of the *restavèk* system, it allowed me to behave in a way which would be

appreciated by local people, therefore providing me with better access to further information in line with ethical considerations.

Aside from the predictable challenges of attaining linguistic and cultural proficiency, a number of physical factors would be highly relevant during my fieldwork. Haiti, being one of the poorest countries in the world, lacks in safe, consistent and stable infrastructure. The United States Department of State regularly issues warnings against travelling to Haiti due to its lack of emergency medical facilities and unstable security environment. As well as the precarious safety conditions, many aspects of the lack of infrastructure mean that being in Haiti can be logistically challenging. Examples of this are the conditions of roads, which make it difficult to get around, the lack of electricity and water, which make living and working there problematic. For the first three months, in Port-au-Prince, I lived in a guesthouse that offered electricity and water almost all the time. However all my subsequent accommodation were not to the same standard. Electricity unpredictably came and went, and water, at times, had to be purchased and carried, or sourced from the river – which could be potentially harmful. The tropical heat, humidity and insects were consistent discomforts. In the rural setting of Jacmel, tarantulas, giant centipedes and scorpions were regular visitors in our house. Mosquitos and the risk of mosquito-transmitted diseases were also relevant health issues. Haiti is also known for being hit quite regularly by natural disasters. The region is within an earthquake zone – the first tremor since the devastating January 2010 earthquake was felt while I was there – and there are often hurricanes which cause high winds and risks of flooding.

In light of all these risks and challenges, I was faced with the task of organising my life and work there to perform the most thorough research possible while being as safe and comfortable as I could be. Balancing the two meant I would

have to lean towards either authenticity or safety. As I got to know the country better and understood the nature of the risks more, I was able to make compromises, as I deemed appropriate, throughout my time there. I lived what might be perceived as a fairly authentic, uncomfortable life for a long period of time – 15 months – in order to better understand the Haitian context. However, I did take some measures to ensure my safety, especially from street violence, by making decisions on an ad-hoc basis. I rarely went out unaccompanied, I listened to the radio for updates on street protests and avoided affected areas and I stayed away from areas known to be of higher risk.

I returned from my fieldwork period in Haiti relatively unscathed, despite two minor road accidents and regular sickness. In February 2016, I contracted the Zika virus. Financial constraints were an issue as, due to the high cost of living in Haiti, I had no choice to but live in basic accommodation for the period of my work. At times, this proved to be difficult as I could not access clean water and electricity, that would have made life a little easier and the entire task more manageable on a psychological level.

Unforeseen challenges

Perhaps the most significant challenges I faced were those that I had not predicted. As I mentioned above, I was ill quite often and this had an impact on my ability to do my research as well as on my mental health. What I could not have foreseen, however, was the psychological impact of being in Haiti. I began to suffer from chronic headaches on a daily basis and was subsequently diagnosed with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. It transpired that the environment I had so intentionally submerged myself in, coupled with the serious theme of my research, was having a significant impact on my mental health to the point that it

was debilitating me daily. As I came to discover, the violence and abuse typical to the *restavèk* system was contextualised by the Haitian environment. The topics of my thesis were not isolated to my research, as they do not exist in isolation from the rest of society. Rather, the lines between normal treatment and abuse, between violence and normality, were blurred to the point that I was witnessing severe violations of human rights and injustices on a regular basis. Getting to know Haitian people and coming to understand the level of poverty there, and what it looks like in reality had a profound effect on me. The large scale and depth of the poverty experienced in Haiti meant that there was no escape, or retreat from it. Determined to finish my research, I remained there as long as possible until another unpredictable factor meant that I had to leave for the sake of my safety.

A political crisis, that began in October 2014, ahead of presidential elections, escalated to a point that it was no longer safe to be in Haiti as a foreigner by July 2016. It began with almost daily protests in the streets of Port-au-Prince, which continued over the course of my presence there. As the electoral process developed, the political climate in the country degenerated and levels of violence were increasing. The elections failed, and a provisional government was put in place. However, as the provisional president refused to step down after his temporary term, the situation grew worse. There were numerous reports of foreigners being targeted and killed. At this point, it became clear that I was no longer safe and had to make arrangements to leave the country in late August, 2016.

Unexpected successes

Notwithstanding the fact that I encountered many challenges in my 18 months in Haiti, the overall experience was an overwhelmingly positive one. It

was, without doubt, this positivity and felt success that encouraged and strengthened me to continue my research despite the difficulties. There were certain conditions which made this work a success and for a large part, a real pleasure. For instance, I was pleasantly surprised at the ease in which I learned to speak Kreyòl. After only a few lessons, the language came very naturally to me and I was quickly able to engage people in conversation. This was very enjoyable and encouraging. I was also surprised at how I adapted so easily to living a basic life, in relation to my 'European' standards. Although it was difficult at times, for the most part, I was able to live in a 'Haitian way' with very few complaints. Many things that I thought might be challenges, like the absence of toilets and showers for example, were in fact quite manageable, as I embraced Haitian culture and did what the people around me did. However, I could not have lasted so long in Haiti without the help of those people. It was extremely humbling and encouraging to find that most Haitians I encountered were very open, kind and helpful towards me. There were always people around ready to help, often expecting nothing in return. For this reason, I found it easy to form friendships and to interact with people socially. This helped me in my everyday life and was also very useful for my research as I always had people I could talk to and ask about the things I was seeing around me.

Although Haiti is known for its poverty and devastation, I was in fact surrounded by natural beauty. The lack of development and infrastructure, though extremely inconvenient in many ways, means that most of rural Haiti is composed of untouched and extremely beautiful natural surroundings. With the often overwhelming difficulty of facing poverty and many social injustices, the possibility of spending time in nature became an important part of my life there. As well as finding solace in natural surroundings, I found that creative writing helped

me to process some of what I was thinking and feeling in this challenging environment. I started writing my blog as a form of writing therapy which not only helped my psychologically, it became a crucial part of my research as I documented many of my experiences in detail.

As I have laid out in this chapter, it is clear that the fieldwork I undertook in Haiti had its challenges and successes. The nature of the topic of the *restavèk* system and its illegal and abusive nature meant that it would not necessarily be an easy subject to research. That, together with the arduous nature of Haiti as one of the poorest countries in the world, set the scene for a challenging 18 months. However, this experience in the field was essential for the depth required to understand gender relations in Haitian society and culture, and to provide as through as possible a detailed gender analysis, as we will discover in sections two and three of this thesis.

Chapter 3

The *restavèk* system, defined within the
Haitian context and a global network of slavery

'Tout moun se moun.'
'All people are people.'

'There is a road. It leads up to a mountain. It is dry rocks and dust and the history of thousands of feet and hundreds of years. It leads into a brown river, and out the other side. It stretches through fields of green plantations and wraps around pink painted homes. Men with machetes, women with mules follow it. They turn and offer bright, toothless smiles. The passengers on this road are companions. They greet one another warmly, social graces fading into the path as they walk away from each other, whispering good wishes. The road hears it all. It hears the tired footsteps of the daily passage of men walking to their fields. It feels the heavy encumbrance of women walking to the markets and the light feet of children walking to school. Its white dust is lifted by a passing motorbike. The driver expertly navigates the rocks and cracks of this tired road. He charges ahead, delivering greetings to his companions, who stand and turn to watch him pass. He leaves them in a cloud of dust, and they resume their journeys.' (de Hoog, 2016a)

Child domestic slavery is not phenomenon isolated to the Haitian context. Though undoubtedly with particular cultural and environmental roots, it is also part of a global system of human exploitation that stretches through time and space. As such, its existence must be considered within particular historical and geographical contexts in a global structure of contemporary slavery. Though every form of modern slavery may have its particularities and various causes – as we will

see throughout this thesis – it is important to first consider each system of slavery in relation to its historical and global connections. The Haitian *restavèk* system thrives in Haiti due to certain historical and modern-day conditions, namely, its relevant and persistent history; extreme poverty; a lack of governmental response to its existence; and its positioning within a society marked by systemic violence. This chapter, therefore, contextualizes the *restavèk* system in time and space, placing it within a global discourse on slavery and children's rights. As subsequent chapters will provide a more thorough focus on the gendered aspect of the *restavèk* system, particularly in terms of complicity, gender is not overtly discussed here. However, certain specific elements regarding gender are pointed to throughout this chapter in order to illustrate its importance in the contextual background of the *restavèk* system.

I discuss the presence of child exploitation in Haiti and the particularities of the system of child domestic work which exists there. I explore its causes and possible origins, making reference to similar practices in other geographical areas elsewhere in the world, paying particular attention to countries with historical links to Haiti in terms of human trafficking within the context of the transatlantic slave trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I focus on the positioning of the practice as it exists in Haiti within the wider context of child labour, child domestic work and child domestic slavery worldwide. In order to do so, I briefly outline the definitions of terms I use throughout this thesis, relating to children, child labour, slavery and human, or child, trafficking and I clarify the criteria which must be met for each term to be employed, denoting that such distinctions are both important and complex.

Having described the system of child domestic slavery in Haiti, I turn to a consideration of the responses to its existence at both national and international

levels. In this section I identify the reasons behind the practice and evaluate the efforts to combat it within the legal frameworks. Some of the causes themselves are located within Haiti's historical context and its complex socio-economic reality, as will be seen in chapter four of this thesis, the practice is contextualised within Haiti's political, social and economic history as it is placed in the setting of a developing, or under-developed, country.

From a contextual point of view, the status of women in Haiti is of particular importance due to the high levels of gender-based violence which occur there. This relates to the *restavèk* system in two ways. Firstly, it is important for the way in which women and girls are viewed by Haitian males and the sexual abuse which *restavèk* girls encounter. Secondly, in terms of our understanding of women as complicit in the trafficking of children, whether as mothers, traffickers, or slave-holders, it is crucial to position these women within the context of violence within which they exist. The origins of the Haitian model of child labour and child slavery, like most forms of modern slavery worldwide, are rooted in a complex interplay of historical, cultural and socio-economic factors. Here I explore the contemporary context of child slavery through an ethnographic approach and through a gender and development analysis.

Explaining '*restavèk*'

The word '*restavèk*', sometimes spelled '*restavek*' or '*restavec*', is a Haitian *Kreyòl* noun which describes, in its most simplistic form, a child who is living in a home which is not that of his or her parents. Haitian *Kreyòl*[3] is a francophone language, and the term stems from the French 'rester avec' which can be translated

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[3] French and Haitian *Kreyòl* are both official languages in Haiti. Though French is the administrative language, the majority of the Haitian people speak *Kreyòl,* especially among the less educated, economically poorer class.

into English as 'to stay with'. Though the term can be used to describe children who have been taken in by family members and treated adequately, or fostering situations which do not include any abuse or neglect, the word '*restavèk*' is generally used and understood as a derogatory term for child slaves in Haiti (Cooper et al., 2012; Pierre et al., 2009; Kolbe & Hutson, 2006; Suárez, 2005; McCalla, 2002; Sommerfelt , 2002).

One of the first mentions of this practice within literature is in Melville Herskovits' 1937 ethnography of Haiti, 'Life in a Haitian Valley', in which he describes a 'widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption' of so-called '*ti moun qui 'reté à caille 'oun* - small folk who stay at your house' (Herskovits, 1937:103). He notes that children of peasants are 'given' to friends living in towns, and that, though they are often 'clothed poorly', they are not fed much differently to the children belonging to the household. He does however mention 'tales of abuse' concerning the practice, coming from Port-au-Prince in particular (Herskovits, 1937:104). In the 1970s, Haitian scholar and businessman, Maurice Sixto, released a number of audio recordings in *Kreyòl* which criticised inequalities in Haitian society through a humoristic approach. One of these was '*Ti Sentaniz*', the story of a *restavèk* girl living in the home of a teacher who was greatly concerned with the preservation of human rights, but nevertheless, blind to the injustice going on in his own home through the abuse of his *restavèk* child (Sixto, date unknown). This may have been the first nationally widespread public critique of the *restavèk* system, and many Haitians I have come across are aware of this story, understanding it is a reflection on a practice which is still observed today.

The number of children engaged in the *restavèk* system is thought, by the National Coalition for Haitian Rights (NCHR) to be approximately one in ten minors in Haiti (McCalla, 2002). The UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary

Forms of Slavery, Gulnara Shahinian, after her mission to Haiti in 2009, estimated the number of *restavèk* children in Haiti to be between 150,000 and 500,000 (Shahinian, 2009). However, this report admitted that the actual number is impossible to assert. Shahinian also acknowledged that many NGOs were using the figure of 300,000 in their own reports, and this has been the most commonly quoted figure for the number of *restavèk* children in Haiti for nearly two decades. The Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), performed 1,458 household surveys across Haiti in 2009, and found that there were approximately 225,000 child domestic slaves, or *restavèk* children, in the country. Of these 225,000 *restavèk* children, 44 per cent of them were found in the overpopulated urban area of 'Cité Soleil'[4] in the wider Port-au-Prince area (Pierre et al., 2009:6). A previous study performed by the FAFO research foundation in 2002 found that the number of *restavèk* children was closest to 173,000, which is 8.2 per cent of the child population (Sommerfelt, 2002). However, an even earlier report stated that there were approximately 250,000 child domestic workers in Haiti (Bellamy, 1997), and this figure, published in UNICEF's 'State of the World's Children 1997' is often quoted in the media and NGO reports as the existing number of *restavèk* children in Haiti today despite further, more methodologically robust estimates being made.

Restavèk children range between the ages of 5 and 17 years (Sommerfelt, 2002:35; Pierre et al., 2009:26), some being as young as four years old (USDOL, 2012:1), with the average age being 12.3 years (Pierre et al., 2009:26). It could be

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[4] 'Cité Soleil' is considered to be Haiti's most dangerous and impoverished populated area. Because many studies have been done within this area, many of the secondary sources used within this thesis cite statistics or anecdotes from this area. Therefore, it will be mentioned throughout. Though 'Cité Soleil' is particularly poor and violent, it is only marginally more so than many areas throughout Haiti and the studies performed there can be used to represent much of economically poor areas in urban Haiti.

the case that some *restavèk* victims are over 17 years old, however, as they are no longer considered minor, they are not classified as victims of child slavery or child trafficking. Whether there are considerable numbers of *restavèk* victims over the age of 18 is difficult to assess as reports measuring the scale of the practice tend to focus on children under the age of 18, and make no mention of adults. The majority of *restavèk* children have been estimated to be girls, with findings of 59 per cent (Sommerfelt, 2002:39) and 75 per cent (IPSOFA survey in McCalla, 2002:15) of children surveyed being female.

Though not affecting all children in this system, the reality for many is that they end up in a situation which has been deemed to be analogous to slavery, as will be seen in further detail later in this chapter. Slavery being the term used for a situation in which a person exercises complete control over another, and through violence, or the threat of violence, forces that person to perform activities of economic value, with no remuneration beyond basic subsistence (Bales, 2005:9). The definition of slavery in relation to the *restavèk* practice in particular will be explored further in this chapter.

Anecdotal accounts as well as random sample surveys, suggest that there does exist a typically common story which describes the lives of the victims of this system. In many cases, children are taken from their families in rural areas, where families tend to be large and where, as we will see in chapter five, poverty is more accentuated than in the cities. These children are transported to urban areas, very often Port-au-Prince, which is the country's largest conurbation (Cooper et al., 2012:16). There, they are transferred[5] to families which are generally located in a poorer area of the city known as a shanty-town, where basic facilities, such as

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[5] Chapter 6 which looks at traffickers will look into more detail at the transaction of transferring a child to a slaveholder and what payment, if any, are made.

access to potable water and reliable electricity, are largely non existent. Once in the city, *restavèk* children may be trafficked again from one household to another, as some findings suggest the largest form of recruitment takes place within urban areas (Pierre et al., 2009:19).

The lack of infrastructure in Haiti is a significant factor in the employment of children in this practice. The conditions in which people are living in the poor and overpopulated areas of the city are extremely challenging. Many houses are little more than shacks. Government supplied electricity is intermittent and clean water is scarce (Pierre et al., 2009:24). Because of the challenging living conditions, the day to day running of a household requires a lot of labour, and that is one of the reasons that *restavèk* children are required and employed (Cooper et al., 2012:4). They are usually the ones who make the regular trips to the local water supply several times a day; they are generally in charge of keeping the house clean, and washing clothes by hand due to the lack of plumbing and electricity that washing machines require; they usually cook for the family, and wash the dishes afterwards; and they often help with the childcare of the family's biological children (Sommerfelt, 2002:45-50). It is important to point out that the typical tasks that a *restavèk* child is forced to do, as listed above, are those which are commonly and socially understood as women's work in Haiti, hence why girls are preferred. They are chores associated with the home and caring for children, which are, as we will see at this in more detail in chapters five and seven, women's social domains and responsibilities.

Typically, *restavèk* children suffer sexual abuse, are regularly punished through beating and are often systematically spoken to in a derogatory manner (Cooper et al., 2012:40; Kolbe & Hutson, 2006:868). They are often deprived of sleep as they may only be allowed to sleep on the floor. Many are also allowed less

food and clothing than the other members of the household, and they are often forced to eat separately from the family (Pierre et al., 2009:15,25; Cooper et al., 2012:30). They are mostly prevented from going to school, or if they are allowed to attend, it is on such a rare basis that they cannot keep up and are unable to progress with their studies (Sommerfelt, 2002:34). One report describes the restavèk child's workload in this way:

> 'She is there to perform all the work demanded by the employers. In addition to domestic chores that include cleaning the house, the courtyard, the outbuildings and the sidewalk, the domestic is charged with fetching and transporting the water necessary for the needs of the household. She is often sent to the market, to the neighborhood [sic] grocery store or elsewhere depending on the needs of the homeowner and all others, for the child domestic is expected to be of service to the entire household and sometimes even to the neighbors [sic]. In addition, she can be asked to watch the children, care for them, take them to school, do the laundry, fetch charcoal, light the stoves, cook, clean dishes and kitchen utensils, take out the trash, clean up human and animal waste, and otherwise do a whole series of tasks that are not asked of the overseer's children, whether girls or boys.' (McCalla, 2002:12)

Restavèk history and global context

Originally, this practice may have stemmed from situations in which disadvantaged children were given opportunities they would not otherwise be

able to access from their home. It might be traced back to Africa, where much of Haitian culture has its roots, as this is where most Haitian people's ancestors came from, transported to Haiti as part of European colonialism during the slave trade (Herskovits, 1937:15-30). In many parts of Africa, particularly West Africa, there exist similar practices to the *restavèk* system, often called 'child placement', 'fostering' and sometimes understood through local names like 'Vidomégon' in Benin (Dottridge, 2002; Alber, 2004; Anti Slavery International, 2011). Economically poor families often send their children to live with wealthier relatives, where they are given the opportunity to go to school or to access vocational training. They are also fed and given a place to sleep, in exchange for which, in many cases, they will perform domestic chores (Brown, 2011; Morelli & Verhoef, 2007; Dottridge, 2005).

In many parts of Africa, children are 'fostered', or 'placed', taken in by relatives or strangers, and the conditions within which they live and work vary greatly depending on different factors such as, but not solely reliant on, levels of monetary wealth of the host family, as well as whether or not the children are related to their host families (Morelli & Verhoef, 2007; Dottridge, 2002; Dottridge, 2005). Though it is clear that some children in fostering situations experience hardship, as they are discriminated against by the members of their host families, some children are treated fairly and do, indeed, benefit in some ways from the system. Generalisations regarding the treatment of child domestic workers are thus inappropriate. Nonetheless, children living away from their parents in fostering arrangements are more prone to malnutrition, are less likely to attend school and are more inclined to be taking part in economic activities than their peers who live at home with their parents (Morelli & Verhoef, 2007).

There have been four models identified in the fostering of children and orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. Fostering arrangements seem to fall into the following categories: care within an existing family structure; care through neighbour and community networks; care through organised collectives, be they through the government, the private sector or non-governmental agencies; and institutional care, which has been found to be a least preferred option as the care of children is considered a social responsibility preferably taken on by a family or community network (Brown, 2011:158). In turn, these fostering arrangements can be divided into different categories based on the reasons behind the placement of the child, whether it be: kinship fostering; crisis fostering; apprentice fostering; domestic fostering and educational fostering (Kielland & Tovo, 2006:23). In the African context, an estimated 14 per cent of children live away from their parents (Kielland & Tovo, 2006:24).

As mentioned earlier, many Haitians trace their roots back to Africa, and particularly the region of Dahomey, which is now occupied by the state of Benin (Herskovits, 1937; Mbanaso Njemanze & Njemanze, 2011). As aforementioned, in Benin there exists a similar system of child placement, locally known as '*Vidomégon'* (Anti Slavery International, 2011; Douris & Kabeya, 2009). In this system, in the same manner as the *restavèk* system, children are sent to live with relatives or acquaintances to exchange domestic labour for subsistence care and education. After a visit to Benin, United Nations Special Rapporteur Najat Maalla M'jid commented: '[t]he phenomenon of 'vidomégon' children, which was traditionally a practice of foster placement has been diverted for the purpose of exploitation and profits' (Maalla M'jid cited in UNOG, 2013). Indeed, in the African context, the practice of 'child placement' offered a way for children to access education that would otherwise not be available to them and a large part of

Africa's current government officials, teachers and professionals have benefitted from this system (Kielland & Tovo, 2006). The original ideology behind the *restavèk* system in Haiti is believed to have begun in the same way, as a mutual exchange of services between families (McCalla, 2002:13; Sommerfelt, 2002:21-22). Though there have been no proven links between Benin and Haiti's child domestic labour systems, I would argue that it is likely that a historical connection exists in a similar way as connections are often made tracing *Vodou* –Haiti's spiritual belief system - roots back to Africa (Herskovits, 1937; Mbanaso Njemanze & Njemanze, 2011:155).

It is important to emphasise the fact that child domestic slavery is a worldwide phenomenon (Blagbrough, 2012). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated in 2012 that there were 17.2 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 years old engaged in domestic work in the world (ILO, 2012:1). The conditions within which they work vary greatly, but the ILO estimates that 3.7 million of these children are employed in hazardous domestic employment which can be categorised as child labour which violates ILO Convention N.182 concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO, 2012:2). Haiti's *restavèk* system exists within this global network of child labour, and though the conditions under which Haitian children's work varies, the work of *restavèk* children often falls into the category of the 'Worst Forms of Child Labour'. This chapter discusses the defining factors which categorise the *restavèk* system as one of child slavery, but there does not exist the space, nor the necessity at this stage, to further compare Haitian forms of child labour and child slavery to others which exist elsewhere, though it is necessary to understand that it is not particular to Haiti.

Defining the *restavèk* system as slavery

The definition of slavery, in the context of contemporary human rights, is a matter of some debate among law-makers and academics. Though various Conventions and Protocols have tackled the issue, the basis of many of these definitions is the 1926 United Nations Slavery Convention that states that 'Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised' (United Nations, 1926), and this framework is the current legal definition in international law. For the purpose of this thesis, I will be using the 1926 Slavery Convention definition within the context of the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery (2012), and I will demonstrate how the *restavèk* system can be defined as slavery according to these guidelines.

The right of ownership mentioned in the 1926 Slavery Convention pertains to the concept of possession and the associated treatment of private property. Historically, when slavery was a legal institution, before the various abolition laws throughout the world, slaves were the private property of their masters, and were treated as so. Slave-owners held legally protected rights over their property, and slaves themselves had no rights over their persons. Before the legal abolition of slavery, there was a distinct boundary between slaves and free persons, and once a slave was liberated, his rights were evident, and it was against the law to exercise 'powers attaching to the right of ownership' against them. Presently, slavery is illegal in international law, and the right of ownership can no longer be legally protected when it relates to the possession of a human being. However, slavery is persistent, and continues to exist, in an illegal form, throughout the world. At this present time, slaveholders no longer have legal backing to their upholding of the

practice. However, the 1926 Convention stipulates that the powers attached to the right of ownership need not be legally recognised, but only *exercised* to render the relationship between the two people implicated as a case of slavery.

This is the basis of the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery, which use the 'powers attached to the right of ownership' as the basic premise, and the first guideline, for the definition of slavery. Where the exercising of these powers takes place, and a person is being treated as though he or she were the property, under the ownership of another, a status which no longer benefits from any legal protection under international law, then it is established that the relationship between the person who is perceived as 'property' and his or her perceived 'owner' is one of slavery. The second guideline assesses these 'powers' to be understood as 'constitutional control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty, with the intent of exploitation through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person' (Bellagio-Harvard, 2012). The third guideline, expresses the importance of 'possession' as foundational to slavery, being the pivotal aspect which will 'determine, in law, a case of slavery' (Bellagio-Harvard, 2012). Guideline four of the Bellagio-Harvard framework lays out six examples where the presence of slavery is evident, given the established occurrence of the element of control discussed above. These are, (a) 'Buying, selling, transferring a person', (b) 'Using a person', (c) 'Managing the use of a person', (d) 'Profiting from the use of a person', (e) 'Transferring a person to an heir or successor', and (f) 'Disposal, mistreatment, neglect of a person' (Bellagio-Harvard, 2012). I will now demonstrate how the *restavèk* system can be understood as a system of slavery, according to these guidelines.

Firstly, the elements of control and possession are present in the typical treatment of *restavèk* children, evidenced by the way in which they are deprived of any agency or choice in their everyday lives as well as in their perceptions of the future. Given that *restavèk* children are denied the right to live freely, the *restavèk* system can be defined as slavery because it falls into the following categories:

(a) 'Buying, selling, transferring a person'; as we will see in chapter eight, my empirical findings show that *restavèk* children are given by their parents, and transferred again, usually involving a financial or 'in kind' transaction to their slaveholders. In this way, a clear process of trafficking is involved in the enslavement process of these children, and a middle-person is often implicated. It must be noted that the middle-person implicated in this transaction is locally known as a 'Madam Sara', or 'Dames Sara' (Cooper et al., 2012:27), which suggests a significant female presence in this role. My findings show that money is not always exchanged for the acquisition of the child, but a case of 'transferring' is always involved. In light of this, it becomes evident that the child is being treated and controlled like a possession, having no choice in the matter.

(b) 'Using a person'; the labour of the *restavèk* child is used, and it is at that point that he or she becomes a victim of slavery. The Bellagio-Harvard guidelines specify the use of a person to be 'the derived benefit from the services or labour of that person. In such cases, a person might be used by working for little or no pay, utilised for sexual gratification, or used by providing a service'. In the case of the *restavèk* child, these criteria can all be included to denote their situation as slavery, as they are forced to provide domestic services, they are unpaid and many are sexually exploited.

(c) 'Managing the use of a person'; because *restavèk* children are usually 'employed' within a small home, it is unusual for them to be managed indirectly

by anyone other than their slaveholders. However, as the individual of the lowest value in the household, in the eyes of the members of the host family, *restavèk* children are mistreated and usually given orders by the entire family, including children older and younger than them. Further evidence might prove the management of the use of *restavèk* children outside of household management, in the loaning of their services to others, though this is still unclear at this point, and undoubtedly varies from case to case.

(d) 'Profiting from the use of a person'; there is no evidence that the use of a *restavèk* child leads to monetary, or equivalent, profit for the person in control. A profit may be made by the party in charge of the trafficking process in which the child is transferred and sold. The labour of the child domestic worker does not generate monetary worth as his or her tasks are limited to work within the household, however the work performed is of economic value and therefore generates a form of profit from the services rendered. Further evidence might prove the expended use of the *restavèk* child, and the mortgaging of their labour for use in a monetary profit-making scenario.[6]

(e) 'Transferring a person to an heir or successor'; there is no evidence of any formalised, or socially-implicated system in which the *restavèk* child would keep the *restavèk* status after the death of his or her slaveholder. However there exists no evidence to the contrary which would suggest that the child is free in the event of the death of his or her slaveholder. As a vulnerable person, it is likely that the child will either be kept on in the household if possible, transferred to another household. He or she might take the opportunity to escape or might become homeless.

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[6] An example of this is a *restavèk* girl I came across in Port-au-Prince who was forming dough into balls to fry in order to make doughnuts which would later be sold.

(f) 'Disposal, mistreatment, neglect of a person'; *restavèk* children are extremely vulnerable to mistreatment and abuse, as their guardians are often not concerned with their physical and emotional health or welfare. The Bellagio-Harvard guidelines, in relation to mistreatment, state that 'such disregard may lead to the physical or psychological exhaustion of a person, and ultimately to his or her destruction; accordingly the act of bringing about such exhaustion will be an act of slavery' (Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Parameters of Slavery, 2012). Mistreatment is integral to the *restavèk* practice. Often verbally and physically abused and deprived of sleep, it is probable that *restavèk* children spend their time, as child domestic workers, psychologically and physically exhausted.

'Evidence of such mistreatment or neglect may include sustained physical and psychological abuse, whether calculated or indiscriminate; or the imposition of physical demands that severely curtail the capacity of the human body to sustain itself or function effectively' (Bellagio-Harvard, 2012). Violence is used as a means of control and punishment, and *restavèk* children are subjected to physical and often, sexual abuse, on a regular basis (Cooper et al., 2012:33-34). They are severely neglected as they are forced to continue working through sickness and injury. They are exhausted from lack of sleep and adequate nutrition, as they are rarely allowed to eat as much as the other members of the household, and often survive on the left-overs of their host-families' meals (Pierre et al., 2009:15, 25; Cooper et al., 2012:30-31). As a result restavèk children are physically weak. They are however, forced to carry out work that is extremely physically demanding and can be dangerous for their health and physical development (USDOL, 2009:305). In addition, the psychological neglect which the *restavèk* child is subjected to can also be significantly damaging. They are deprived of affection and support, and are

prevented from taking part in activities which would be of benefit to them and their emotional development, like going to school or spending time playing and socialising with peers (Cooper et al., 2012:31-33).

Therefore, according to the criteria set out in the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery, the *restavèk* system, in its worst form, that which is the subject of this thesis, falls into the category of slavery as defined by the 1926 Slavery Convention. There do exist cases within the *restavèk* system, in light of its simple definition, which vary and do not warrant to be called 'slavery'. However, as I attest through my research, these are exceptions to the majority.

The *restavèk* system can also be placed within the international framework of child labour discourse which is marginally different from the above definition of slavery in that it takes the rights of the child into account. Where children are concerned, certain factors like agency and danger come into play to differentiate work performed by a consenting adult from that of a child, who is more vulnerable to danger and long-term consequences of hazardous activities because of their developmental age (ILO, 2011). The International Labour Organization (ILO), sets forth the standards of child labour, which can be considered as becoming practices of slavery, in Convention N.182 concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999. Article 3 of Convention N.182, which was ratified by Haiti in 2007, stipulates that the 'Worst Forms of Child Labour' comprise of four categories. These are:

> '(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;

(d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.'

(ILO, 1999)

Similarly to criterion (f) ('Disposal, mistreatment, neglect of a person') in the Bellagio-Harvard Guideline number four, the mistreatment and neglect of a child is considered to be an infringement of the child's rights. With regards to Convention N.182, the *restavèk* child can be considered to fall in the category of the 'Worst Forms of Child Labour' through sections (a) and (d) of Article 3, namely:

(a) 'all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict'; the *restavèk* system involves the trafficking of children, often for profit, as we will see in chapter six of this thesis. The trafficking process is then followed by 'forced or compulsory labour' in the domestic realm.

(d) 'work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children'*;* this section might cover the entirety of the abuse inflicted on the *restavèk* child. As mentioned above, the child in question may be suffering from sleep deprivation and a lack of adequate nutrition and be engaging in physically demanding activities in a dangerous environment. In addition to the demands of the labour itself, *restavèk* children are typically subjected to violence in many aspects of their everyday lives through the

physical and emotional abuse mentioned earlier in this chapter. They may be victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, verbal and emotional abuse, as well as neglect, both in terms of bodily and psychological needs.

Sexual abuse within the *restavèk* practice must be considered in terms of its context within Haitian society and culture. There exists a high prevalence of sexual abuse against women and girls in Haiti, particularly in densely populated areas, such as the slums of Port-au-Prince, and in areas which are controlled illegitimately by armed gangs, many of which are situated in the latter (Faedi Duramy, 2014). The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) found, in 2011, that out of 400 children rescued from trafficking within internal displacement camps in Haiti, 50 per cent of them had been victims of sexual abuse (IOM, 2011:9). A 2006 study found that every year, one in every 40 girls under the age of 18 are sexually assaulted in the wider Port-au-Prince region (Kolbe & Hutson, 2006:872). The study also stated that restavèk children accounted for 36.2 per cent of all victims of sexual assault, stating that their 'second-class status seems to make them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation' (Kolbe &Hutson, 2006:872). The report goes on to mention that 'it is likely that the *Restavèks* [...] are often viewed as property and any violation of these children by others represents an attack on the household's assets', so it is probable that the sexual abuse of the *restavèk* child is carried out only by members of the household (Kolbe &Hutson, 2006:871). *Restavèk* girls are sometimes called '*la pou sa*' which means 'there for that', in reference to their use as sexual outlets (McCalla, 2002:15).

Rape is endemic in Haiti, and has been used for decades to control and oppress women[7] (Nolan, 2011, Stromberg & Douglas, 1998; Kolbe & Huston,

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[7] During my period of fieldwork in Haiti, there was a political and social crisis which brought many people out in the streets in protests against the government and electoral processes. During one protest, which extended into the night, I heard on the radio that men were forcibly entering homes

2006:864). Cases are mostly unreported due to there being little reliable law-enforcement, and few legal repercussions for the perpetrators, making it an extremely difficult crime to measure. The displacement of hundreds of thousands of people since the earthquake in 2010 has led to increased vulnerability of women and children, and more identified cases of rape (Nolan, 2011; IOM, 2011:9). As we will see in chapter five, rape has also been used in a political context, to oppress supporters of the ousted president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, since the 1991 coup (Stromberg & Douglas, 1998; Faedi Duramy, 2014). It is important to see rape, in the context of oppression outside of the realm of sexual exploitation, but also as a weapon against women, demonstrating Brownmiller's (1975) assertion, '[f]rom prehistoric times to the present, […] rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more and nothing less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear' (Bownmiller, 1975:15). Reported cases of rape have shown a high level of violence, where women are not only sexually abused, but tortured and profoundly traumatised or even killed as a result (Faedi Duramy, 2014). It is important to consider this high level of sexual violence to better understand the social and cultural positioning of women within Haitian society. It is within this context that the *restavèk* system exists, and though it is difficult to assess the levels of sexual abuse inflicted onto *restavèk* girls, it might be assumed that the societal norm of sexual violence in the Haitian context means that it is also inherent in the *restavèk* practice. Rape has only been criminalised since 2005 in Haiti, and there is little access to medical services, making it difficult for victims to acquire the medical reports necessary to make a conviction. A lack of

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and raping women, and forcing, at gunpoint, family members to have sex with one another. Upon discussion of this with Haitian people, I found out that this was a regular occurrence during times of unrest.

police training also contributes to the effective impunity of perpetrators (IOM, 2011:9).

Child rights and protection in law, international and domestic

As I have outlined, the conditions of the *restavèk* system violate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to which Haiti is signatory. Other international mechanisms are in place, namely the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions N.182 on the 'Worst Forms of Child Labour' and Convention N.138 'Minimum age Convention' which sets the minimum age for work at 15 years of age (USDOL, 2009:306). Haiti is also signatory to the ILO's Convention N.29 on 'Forced Labour' and Convention N.105 on the 'Abolition of Forced Labour'. In addition to the ILO Conventions, Haiti is also signatory to the United Nations 2000 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime', known as the 'Palermo Protocol' (Cooper et al., 2012:7). Having signed up to these international conventions, Haiti has an obligation to enforce the stipulations within them, and to report annually on the efforts made to keep them in place.

The Haitian Labour Code sets the minimum age for work in industrial, agricultural, or commercial enterprises at 15, but this does not include a minimum age for domestic work (US DOL, 2012:2). The Ministry of Social Affairs' Institute of Social Welfare and Research (IBESR) is responsible for investigating instances of violation of child labour laws, but the government has blamed a lack of resources and a shortage of staff for the IBESR's low number of investigations (USDOL, 2009:306). In 2003, the government put forward an 'Act on the Prohibition and Elimination of All Forms of Abuse, Violence, Ill Treatment, or Inhuman Treatment

Against Children', prohibiting servitude, forced or compulsory labour, and the use of children in criminal activities or armed conflict (USDOL, 2012:2). However, despite a large number of victims being identified each year, there have never been any prosecutions made against perpetrators of human trafficking. There has been a telephone hotline in operation since 2012, run by the IBESR, but this continues to provide low numbers of identified victims (USTIP, 2014:196). The government set up the Haitian National Police's Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM) with the responsibility of investigating crimes against minors. The BPM, which employs over 50 investigators and over 40 agents, is the country's leading force against the exploitation of children, yet they admit that they do not have the resources they need to combat child trafficking effectively (USDOL, 2012:2). It is also noteworthy that children's rights in Haiti are violated from birth through the registration of their birth certificates and the information they include. A Haitian birth certificate distinguishes whether a child is legitimate, natural or illegitimate in accordance to the situation of their parents as either married, unmarried or if the child was born out of 'adulterous or incestuous' circumstances (Code Civil d'Haiti, 1931). This ultimately has an effect on what people are entitled to as either legitimate, natural or illegitimate children (such as in inheritance and immigration laws, for instance), and is a status that follows each Haitian's bureaucratic trail for their entire lives.[8]

In June, 2014, the Haitian government enacted its first specific anti-trafficking legislation under decree No. CL/2014-0010 which defines trafficking in persons as the:

> 'recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons, by
> means of threat or through the use of force or other forms of

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[8] While witnessing the signing of a marriage certificate in Haiti, I saw that one of the criteria the registrar asked of the couple, after he had asked for their names and ages, and before he took the names of their parents, was whether they were legitimate, natural of illegitimate.

coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of authority or by a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation.' (Free the Slaves, 2014)

This legislation also outlaws many forms of trafficking in persons which include forced labour or servitude, prostitution of others or pimping, pornography or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced marriage or marriage for exploitation, forced begging, collecting of organs or tissue and adoption for the purpose of exploitation. It also states that the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child or the hosting of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in the first definition. Under this law, an anti-trafficking task-force was to be formed and special measures put in place to safeguard children and provide protection for victims of human trafficking. If convicted, perpetrators of trafficking offences would face imprisonment of seven to 15 years and a fine of 200,000 to 1.5 million gourdes[9] (Le Moniteur, 2014). In passing this law, the Haitian government addresses the issue of slavery within its borders, however, it does not explicitly discuss the *restavèk* system and continues to contribute to its invisibility within society by failing to explicitly acknowledge its existence. This law might include many of the aspects of child domestic slavery, but as most Haitians are aware of it under the name of '*restavèk*', the government's failure to employ the term means many people are likely to continue to be unaware of its illegality. We will see how this can have an effect on women's knowledge of the law in chapter seven.

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[9] This amount is equivalent to approximately USD $3,000 to $22,000.

It remains to be seen how effectively this law will be implemented and whether or not the government will support it with a nationwide awareness-spreading campaign. Other steps have been taken, like schooling programs to include more children into primary schools, but the root causes of the *restavèk* system need to be addressed in order to make substantial change. These causes, as well as being somewhat accepted as a cultural norm, include deeply entrenched poverty. As will be seen in chapter four, there are historic reasons for the scale of Haiti's poverty, and I argue that, due to this, it is not only Haiti's responsibility to tackle the effects of poverty on Haiti's children.

Considering the scale of the problem, the government would need to take drastic action to make an impact on the existence of child domestic slavery in Haiti. Though some steps have been taken, like the establishing of a specific unit to investigate issues of child abuse, these do not correspond to the level needed to make a change on a national level. However, as the next chapter explains in more detail, the government of Haiti is not only limited in terms of financial resources, but it does not benefit from the autonomy necessary to prioritise children's rights. Though Haiti has been technically independent since 1804, it has been subjected to over two centuries of foreign influence and domination (Dubois, 2012). The present environment is no different as the United Nations has been in control of the state of Haiti since 2004, and the United States continues to yield a significant influence on the Haitian government.[10]

As a nation in crisis, Haiti was forced to be aided by international agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose financial

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[10] As we will see in the next chapter, after a political crisis and the exile of President Aristide, the United Nations began the Mission to Stabilize Haiti (MINUSTAH) which was mandated to reform the Haitian police force, to support governmental institutions and to restore law and order (UN, 2012). However, as we will discuss later, the United Nations seized control and limited governmental autonomy.

assistance comes with numerous restrictions and influence (de Wind and Kinley, 1994). Added to this is the conglomerate of international NGOs, whose presence has multiplied since the earthquake (Edmonds, 2012:2), and have reinforced Haiti's dependency on aid (Schwartz, 2008:79-106). This culmination of factors means that the government of Haiti's power and autonomy are compromised by foreign presence and influence, an extent to which is difficult to assess, though it appears to be very significant.

Assumptions concerning rights and responsibilities

Protecting children from harm is a universal moral imperative, which has been epitomised in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child since 1985. Globally accepted and, at least, nominally implemented, the Convention has been ratified by 193 countries worldwide, and demands that governments put in place protective measures to ensure that the formulated children's rights are being observed. The Convention, comprised of 54 articles, sets forth basic protective ideals for children under which they are entitled to safety, life, family, identity, health, education, leisure and protection from harm, violence, danger, sexual abuse and unfair treatment on behalf of adults and the state (UNICEF, 1989). These ideals came into force in international law in the 1990s, but concepts of child protection have existed in human societies, arguably, for as long as people have parented children. Protecting children is assumed to be an instinctive trait which we attribute to adults, especially parents, and mothers in particular. With this assumption in mind, it is often shocking to encounter events in which adults have intentionally subjected harm onto children, especially when women are those responsible.

As we will see throughout this thesis, the care of children in most societies falls predominantly into those sets of gendered social responsibilities perceived as female roles. Momsen (2010) argues that, in most parts of the world, women have three roles; reproduction, production and community management (Momsen, 2010). Reproduction denotes both the biological and social aspects of child birthing, the nurturing of infants and household maintenance as well as responsibilities around the 'health, education, and socialisation of children' (Momsen, 2010:46). It is important to incorporate the responsibilities attributed through gender in any discussion surrounding child protection and parenthood, as well as to understand the gender roles established in the preservation of children's rights in the sphere of the community or society, challenging our assumption when these rights are not respected.

As mentioned above, the protection of children is often considered to be an instinctive trait within humans. This is due to the fact that this behaviour is found universally, despite differing variables, throughout time, space and cultures (Bowlby 1969:39). Bowlby (1969), in his historic exploration of attachment and loss, describes the intrinsic significance of a child's attachment to his mother, and to a mother's protective behaviour over her child. Though the term 'instinct' may be in need of a teleological explanation which goes beyond the empirical study of common behaviour, observational accounts suggest that there is an intrinsic mechanism of human connection through which mothers are compelled to protect their children. Bowlby states:

> 'For no other behavioural consequences, perhaps, are
> standards of appraisal in man more clear-cut from the start,
> or more environmentally stable. So stable indeed are they as
> a rule that for babies to love mothers and mothers to love

babies is taken for granted as intrinsic to human nature. As a result, whenever during the development of some individual these standards become markedly different from the norm, as occasionally they do, all are disposed to judge the condition as pathological' (Bowlby, 1969:242)

This judgement that the behaviour that diverges from the expectations of social responsibilities, attributed through normative gender roles, is of a pathological nature provides the basis for the questions posed in this thesis. A number of assumptions are made with regards to gendered roles when it comes to the care of children, and I question whether our assumptions are well-founded, whether the behaviour of women who harm children is indeed to be considered more 'pathological' than the actions of their male counterparts. More specifically, I believe that assumptions are often made in relation to the gender of those responsible for crimes of human trafficking, and I am placing those assumptions within the global gender discourse, to firstly test them on a local level, and secondly, to identify their teleological validity. As Faedi Duramy states, 'The traditional view of women's peacefulness not only fails to provide a fair representation of reality but also ignores the incentives, conditions and decision-making processes that motivate women to become active agents of aggression' (Faedi Duramy, 2014:59).

In the case of Haiti, which ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995, the relevance of normative gendered social roles in the care of children is particularly exemplary in light of the existence of child slavery on a mass scale. I argue that it is important to analyse the apparent contradiction created through

our understanding of women as child protectors, and the seemingly high involvement of female agency within the decisions behind the trafficking and enslaving of children in Haiti. It is useful to contextualise women's behaviours within these social conditions. Some women have been found to turn into perpetrators of violence as a result of the oppression against them, and they can become involved in violent activities in an effort to protect their children, as a participant in Faedi Duramy's study, *Gender and Violence in Haiti* (2014), stated: 'When women are so desperate they just remember to be their own children's mothers. They would do anything for them' (Anonymous participant cited in Faedi Duramy, 2014:71). As women have been victimised in Haiti, the context within which they live is one which can and does affect their agency within the restricted choices they are able to make in their lives and the lives of those they are responsible for (Faedi Duramy, 2014:61). Women as perpetrators of violence has also been linked to prior victimhood as recipients of sexual abuse and violence (Faedi Duramy, 2014:60). This is an aspect of the agency of women implicated in the *restavèk* system which must be taken into account. This research attempts to identify patterns within which women who have been victims of violence have assumed a role as perpetrators of violence.

In order to understand the scale and implication of female agency in the trafficking of children in Haiti, it must be first understood that many women in Haiti are living in a context of high levels of violence, sexual violence and poverty. The *restavèk* system exists within this context and violence is thus implicit in the practice. Women are victimised by the existence of the *restavèk* system, as they are simultaneously implicated in it by being compelled to send their children into it. Issues of gendered experiences of poverty and development arise because of the choices women are sometimes forced to make. Women can also be perpetrators in

the *restavèk* system as they organise the trafficking of children and take *restavèk* children into their homes, challenging the often biologically essentialised assumptions made of women in which they are expected to care for the welfare of children.

Living with violence

Haiti has had a turbulent history of political and natural disasters in which the rule of law has been compromised, and civil protection has become virtually non-existent (Nolan, 2011). 'In whatever situation - whether it's a cyclone or a coup d'état - out of all these disasters the first people to feel backlash is women' (Sandy Francois cited in Nolan, 2011). As women have been pushed out to the margins of society and to the outer limits of safety in the context of survival, not only in an environment of poverty, but also within a context of gender based violence being part of everyday life, we must not analyse their actions as independent of the world in which they live.

The 7.0M earthquake of January 12th, 2010, had a number catastrophic effects on Haiti. Aside from the extremely large death toll of approximately 230,000 (Huffington Post, 2010), it displaced a further 1.3 million people, leaving many to take up an existence of basic survival in tent camps. Within many of these camps, a lack of safety and security left women and girls even more vulnerable to violence and sexual abuse (Haiti Equality Collective, 2010:1). It can be argued that women suffered disproportionally in the aftermath of the earthquake due to their social position in which they are not only vulnerable to violence themselves, but also responsible for the care of children and the elderly (Haiti Equality Collective, 2010:2). In October, 2016, a hurricane devastated much of southern Haiti and has displaced a still unknown number of people (BBC, 2016). Though, at this point it is

still impossible to measure the scale of the damage of hurricane Matthew, it has undoubtedly had a major effect on the population, and, as the above quote suggests, on women in particular.

The environment of systemic violence that strongly defines Haitian society plays a large part in both the *restavèk* system and the oppression of women and girls. As this thesis argues, it is the oppression of women within this violent context that directly contributes to the perpetuation of the exploitation of children. Chapters five, six and seven will divulge further detail as to how this violence is manifested and felt in the everyday lives of women. Here, it is important to point out the nature and roots of the violence which is at the core of this thesis. Throughout several chapters, I make reference to 'symbolic', 'structural' and post-colonial violence, drawing on the works of Bourdieu (2001), Farmer (2004) and Fanon (1963), arguing that Haitian society, like many post-colonial societies, is permeated with a form of 'gentle' or invisible violence that is rooted in patriarchy and colonialism. This heavily affects the lives of Haitians in general, but women and children in particular and forms a crucial element in our understanding of the existence of the *restavèk* system as it dwells at the intersection between culture, poverty and history.

In this chapter, I defined the *restavèk* system by providing a detailed typical scenario of the *restavèk* situation and examples of what treatment and conditions are typical to it. I also provided a historical background to it and a comparison to other regions where similar practices exist, making historical links. Key terms, 'slavery' and 'child labour' were discussed and defined and I provided an evaluation of the *restavèk* systems in terms of it being a form of slavery and an example of the 'Worst Forms of Child Labour' according to the criteria set forth by

the Bellagio-Harvard guidelines and the International Labour Organisation. I also gave a breakdown of the Haitian government's response to the existence of slavery within its borders by discussing the mechanisms and laws in place on an international and domestic level. This demonstrated an existing framework to tackle the issue of the *restavèk* system but a lack of implementation and resources. I then discussed children's rights in terms of how responsibilities are viewed towards children and assumptions that women tend to act favourably towards children. I discussed how this is important with regards to the *restavèk* system because of the high involvement of women within the practice, as we will see in subsequent chapters. I suggested that one of the key factors in the *restavèk* system and in women's involvement within it is the existence of systemic violence in Haitian society that is rooted in post-colonialism and patriarchy.

The following chapter provides an overview of the social, political and economic history of Haiti. Setting the context for the *restavèk* practice in modern Haiti, this chapter suggests that Haiti continues to struggle to be an independent nation, and does so in a setting of violence and political unrest. This, in my opinion, is of great significance as Haiti will persist in containing human rights abuses as long as it cannot operate its own autonomy and values.

Chapter 4

From Emancipated Republic to Neo-Colony:
Haiti's Enduring Pursuit of Freedom

'*Grangou se mizè, vant plen se traka*'
'Hunger is misery, a full stomach is trouble'

'*The road skirts the sea. It travels to places where almost nobody is. People pass through but do not stop where the road cuts through a green grass pasture that plunges into the sparkling turquoise sea. It dips into a clear, flowing stream. A naked boy is standing in the water, splashing, washing his little brown body. Next to him, on the grass verge, colourful clothing items are laid out in the sun. The road pauses here and listens to the trickling stream, the giggle of the child, the sing-song conversation of the women perched on rocks in the stream and the squelching of their hands as they rub soap through fabric.*' (de Hoog, 2016a)

The nation of Haiti has deep roots in an ideology of freedom and sovereignty. Marking the birth of his country, on the 1st of January 1804, Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines announced: 'In the end we must live independent or die' ('The Haitian Declaration of Independence', 1804). Spoken as the Haitian people, emancipated slaves, revelled in victory against their oppressors, his speech reflected their strength and will, their volition to remain free, whatever the cost. Over 200 years later, Dessalines' words still ring in the ether, unfulfilled, a symbol of what Haiti could have been and what Haitians still continue to fight for. Despite the victory declared in 1804, Haiti's independence was never quite realised. As

dominance over the Caribbean nation shifted between foreign powers, the people of Haiti continued to pursue notions of freedom, sovereignty and independence.

Ranking 140th out of 142 countries in the Legatum Prosperity Index (2015), and 163rd out of 188 countries in the 2015 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (2015), Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world, and by far the poorest in the Americas. It shares a colonial history similar to its Caribbean neighbours, but Haiti stands out for all the wrong reasons. Two centuries ago, its break from colonial dominance sent ripples of shock across the world, inspiring slaves who dreamt of freedom, terrifying plantation owners with the realisation of their vulnerability. But it was this very act and display of strength that sealed its fate. Brazilian diplomat Ricardo Seitenfus suggested so in his criticism of the NGOs that dominate Haiti today. 'Haiti's original sin, in the international theatre, was its liberation.' he said, 'Haitians committed the unacceptable in 1804' (Seitenfus cited in Dubois, 2012:368). Haiti's present, its poverty, its underdevelopment, lack of infrastructure, governmental sovereignty and the suffering of its people, cannot be assessed outside the context of its history. The international media, with compelling stories, graphic photographs and video *reportages*, show Haiti's people struggle with natural disasters, especially hurricanes and earthquakes. The destruction caused by such uncontrollable events, as well as that caused by containable disease - like the current cholera epidemic which began in 2010 - briefly makes its way into international headlines, attracting the goodwill of people overseas, but rarely addresses the larger structural framework which has allowed such destitution to exist in Haiti.

Why is it that disasters in Haiti cause so much more devastation than in its neighbouring countries? The answer is not straightforward. The nation's poverty, the lack of a stable infrastructure and good governance, are factors, but this point

raises further questions. It also neglects the fact that relief efforts, directed by foreign governments and organisations that are supported by generous public and state funding, failed to provide a proportionate and effective response to the immense humanitarian crisis caused by the earthquake on the 12th of January, 2010 and the devastating consequences of hurricane Matthew in October, 2016.[11]

The crowded conditions in Port-au-Prince's hillside shantytowns, together with the lack of sanitation and clean water leave the population unprotected from the effects of nature's whims. But there is a paramount question behind all the statistics which rank Haiti as the poorest country in the Western hemisphere (World Bank, 2016); what has caused Haiti to be so poor compared to its regional neighbours? The answer to this lies inextricably in the events of the last two centuries, from the point when the slaves of the French colony of Saint Domingue rose against their captors and took back their freedom. Their new independent republic was called Haiti, after the native Taino name for the island *Ayiti*, 'land of mountains' (Dubois, 2012:18; James, 1963:298). Their goals were sovereignty and freedom, causes for which they had proved to be willing to die for. However, looking back on Haiti's 200 year history, it is clear that, not only would their defeated oppressors seek revenge, they would do so in a way to ensure Haiti's permanent dependency on foreign powers. Perceived as a weak nation, Haiti became the pawn of more powerful nations, like the United States, to use in their scramble for control of the region. Despite all their efforts towards sovereignty, and their survival through extreme poverty, famine, and disaster after disaster, Haitians today live an arduous existence under the control, again, of foreign

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[11] Haiti is also reputed for suffering from widespread deforestation, with the unsubstantiated claim that there only exists a 2 per cent forest cover. However, Haiti's reputation as a poor country with substantial environmental destruction is tied up in a narrative of race and the 'third world', where myths were propagated in order to secure funding for NGOs. Further research found that Haiti's forest cover is closer to 30 per cent, which is higher than that of Ireland and the U.K. (O'Connor, 2016).

powers. This is what Podur (2012) has referred to, using the title of his book, as 'Haiti's new dictatorship', and it implicates powerful sovereign states as well as international institutions and organisations in exacerbating Haiti's impoverished condition as well as allowing, and at times causing, violence against its population.

It is in this setting, an environment governed by foreign powers in which poverty is widespread, violence is commonplace and the state's capacity to perform basic functions is restricted, that the *restavèk* system of child domestic slavery exists and thrives. Underdevelopment in Haiti is one of the main factors which both pushes and pulls children into slavery. As we will see in subsequent chapters, extreme poverty within households, and the limited access to schools, mean many parents face consequential decisions regarding the care of their children, and some are driven to placing a child into the guardianship of another. The lack of infrastructure, particularly that which affects urban households like the absence of running water and reliable electricity, means that the everyday maintenance of a household involves performing many manual tasks, like collecting water from a public fountain for instance. This creates the necessity for a labourer to perform household tasks, a demand which reaches out to rural families with more children than they can provide for. Though not necessarily the sole causes of the existence of the *restavèk* system, poverty and the lack of stable government are contributing factors to the exploitation of children in Haiti. Understanding the layered history of Haiti and the reasons behind its current social and economic conditions is crucial to the positioning of the *restavèk* practice within the modern Haitian context, and to the attribution of responsibility towards victims of child domestic slavery.

Revolution

Haiti and neighbouring Dominican Republic share the island of what was once called Hispaniola, where Christopher Columbus landed on his first crossing from Europe to the Americas in 1492. After the indigenous people of the island died off from disease, violence and slavery, the Spanish repopulated Hispaniola with African slaves and put them to work on plantations. France won control of the western half of the island in 1697, during the naval battles between European powers, and called the colony Saint-Domingue. With crops of sugar, coffee, tobacco, cocoa and cotton, Saint-Domingue was the most wealth producing colony in the world (Podur, 2012:9-10). In 1791, the year of the uprising that led to the founding of Haiti, there were approximately 500,000 slaves in French owned Saint-Domingue, outnumbering the colonists nearly twenty to one. The high rate of mortality meant that a constant influx of fresh slaves had to be imported from Africa to replace those that did not survive the harsh conditions. It is important to mention that because the majority of the colony's slaves were new arrivals from Africa, and that most had not been born slaves, this led to a higher level of rebellion (Dubois, 2004:40). It might also explain the strong resilience of African influences and customs within Haitian culture. The *Vodou* religion is an example of this, but it might also apply to the existence and persistence of child domestic slavery as similar practices might be found to exist in parts of Africa where slaves had been transported from. Dubois, (2004) states that approximately half of the imported African slaves died within a few years (Dubois, 2004:40). Of the half a million, some 330,000 slaves were new to the continent, having been born and raised in Africa and kidnapped, transported to the Caribbean and forced to work (Dubois, 2012:21). The atrocities committed against the hundreds of thousands of

slaves in Saint-Domingue fuelled their anger and led to a violent rebellion which would be the first successful slave revolt in history. Haiti gained its independence in 1804, and became the first black republic (Dubois, 2004; James, 1963). Dubois emphasises the impact of the Haitian revolution and its ripples throughout the entire world. 'It was a central part of the destruction of slavery in the Americas,' he wrote, 'and therefore a crucial moment in the history of democracy, one that laid the foundation for the continuing struggles for human rights everywhere' (Dubois, 2004:7).

Once free, Haitians needed to reorganise their society to maintain their newfound liberty and sovereignty. Former slaves, however, resented the plantation system though it seemed to Toussaint Louverture, their revolutionary leader, that it was the most viable way to move forward (Dubois, 2012:31). However, before he could instate any of his plans for governing Haiti, Louverture was overthrown and captured by the French who locked him up in a prison in the French Jura where he died of pneumonia in 1803 (James, 1963:294).

Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the nation's new self-proclaimed emperor, chose to rename the land after its native name, '*Ayiti*', as a symbol of rejection of European imperialism. Haiti was to signify defiance, victory, and a 'new political community, meant to guarantee eternal freedom of its scarred constituency' (Dubois, 2004:299). Dessalines, in a display of assertiveness, ripped the white section out of the French flag, leaving the blue and red to represent Haiti. He ordered the massacre of all the whites remaining on Haitian territory, sparing a few who had rejected slavery (James, 1938:295-6). He included a law stating that 'no white man', except for the few who had been naturalised, could ever be 'master or landowner' nor could he 'acquire any property.' He declared that all Haitians, regardless of their colour, would be known as 'Blacks,' (Dubois & Garigus,

2006:192-193) making blackness a symbol of allegiance to Haiti's sovereignty and freedom, rather than one of skin colour or race (Dubois, 2012:43).

A New Haiti

Though news of the slave revolution and victory had disseminated throughout the world, white colonising nations were defiant in accepting Haiti's independence. A surge of fear spread among white slave-owners in the Americas. It had taken the overtly bloody slave upsurge for plantation owners to recognise their vulnerability as a minority against their slaves. European empires saw the existence of Haiti as shameful and illegal, since it had been founded by slaves, who had no right to ownership. Some discussed the need to 'protect white supremacy and colonial order' by committing genocide against the Haitian people, erasing them from history (Dubois, 2012:77). In the meantime, European abolitionists, William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson assisted the new Haitian ruler, King Henry Christophe in communicating with European powers, and in creating a governmental infrastructure that would aid them in maintaining their independence. However, France continued to deny Haiti's sovereignty until 1825, when King Charles X of France demanded that Haiti pay an indemnity of 150 million francs - which would later be reduced to 60 million - to compensate former colonists for their loss of property. In return, France would recognise Haiti's independence. With French warships poised off the island's shores, Haiti, now under President Jean-Pierre Boyer, assented to the indemnity. In order to pay it, however, - in instalments, as agreed - they would need to borrow money from French banks, and eventually from other foreign states, beginning a cycle of external debt that would last into the present day (Dubois, 2012:97-105).

Convinced that Haiti could repay the indemnity to France, President Boyer established a new rural code to obtain control over the country's agricultural efforts. Rural residents were highly restricted by this code, and their labour was to be exploited and at times, forced. The rural population was resistant to the laws and protected themselves by acquiring their own plots of land, securing their autonomy through a system of community called '*Lakou*' - *Kreyòl* for 'courtyard.' Practically speaking, this system involved a structure of houses sharing a courtyard which housed an extended family, and it represented an autonomous egalitarian system which was to 'guarantee each person equal access to dignity and individual freedom' (Dubois, 2012:107). This structure spread to the towns and cities of Haiti, and it remains today a prominent social structure within modern society (Merilus, 2015), and could explain the tendency to share food, epitomised in the Haitian proverb, '*Manje kwit pa gen mèt*' - 'cooked food has no owner'.

U.S. Occupation

One nation that continued to resist acknowledging Haiti's independence was the United States. Ironically, they made use of Haiti, as the only non-colonised territory in the Caribbean, to establish a foothold for trade in the region (Schmidt, 1971:29). The United States was at one time Haiti's biggest trading partner, as Haiti provided one-third of all the coffee consumed in the U.S (Dubois, 2012:138). It was not until 1862, nearly forty years after the agreed indemnity to France that the United States recognised Haiti's sovereignty (Schmidt, 1971:30). The United States began showing increasing interest in the port of Mole-Saint-Nicolas in the north of Haiti, as they searched for a naval base in the Caribbean (Schmidt, 1971:30). With Frederick Douglass as American minister to Haiti, and a

strategically placed naval ship, poised for intimidation off the Haitian coast, the United States attempted to procure control of the harbour. Douglass, however was criticised for being too sensitive to the 'Haitian perspective' (Dubois, 2012:190) as he was unwilling to employ the intimidation tactics required by his superiors in the United States. Haiti stood firm against America at this point, and refused to cede the port.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, Haitian society became increasingly polarised. There existed a significant divide between the black, mostly rural population and the lighter-skinned elites who had risen to power. Tensions between the two factions intensified, and contributed to an environment of revolt against the government (Rod, 1985:20). Between the years of 1888 and 1915, there were eleven presidents in Haiti, all of which were overthrown before serving an entire seven year term in office. Seven ruled between 1911 and 1915 (Schmidt, 1971:42). This instability gave the United States a pretext to intervene and stage an occupation that would last two decades. In July 1915, the American soldiers disembarked in Haiti, and armed with rifles, took control of the island.

The United States' presence had a significant impact on Haiti's external image. Coming from racially segregated America, the U.S. marines brought to Haiti their racist approach to black people (Dubois, 2012:225-226). They shocked the rich, lighter-skinned, elite by treating them in the same manner as the rest of the darker-skinned population, ignoring the existing social hierarchies. U.S. Secretary of state, Robert Lansing, stated in a letter: 'that the African race are devoid of any capacity for political organization and lack of genius for government. Unquestionably there is in them an inherent tendency to revert to savagery and to cast aside the shackles of civilization which are irksome to their physical nature' (Dubois, 2012:214). The United States governed over Haiti with intimidation and

violence, and put in place a president who they knew would not interfere with their rule. While exercising complete control over Haiti's finances, the U.S. attempted to reform Haiti's agricultural sector, reintroducing large-scale production. American standards and systems were imposed on Haitian labourers who had no choice but to work for the meagre wages offered (Schmidt, 1971:158-160). Rural Haiti was severely affected. Companies benefitting Americans and rich Haitians, such as HASCO (Haitian American Sugar Company), were permitted to evict peasants from their land and to re-hire them as labourers. The wages were low and the conditions deplorable. Meanwhile, the U.S. marines spent much effort combating rural factions, known as the *Cacos* rebels, who were rising up throughout the country to protest against the occupation. With the intention of violently suppressing the opposition, the U.S. began a road-building project for better access to rural areas. A law from the 1864 rural code allowed the government to conscript men for public works projects. The occupation forces made use of this law to force Haitian men and boys to work for no pay, thus introducing forced labour back to Haiti (Dubois, 2012:239). On top of this, the U.S. occupation forces also began a persecution campaign against practitioners of *Vodou*, a belief system which the majority of Haiti adhered to. Practicing *Vodou* was made illegal, and the U.S. justified the discrimination by tarnishing the religion and giving it a negative reputation that lives on in the popular understanding of *Vodou* today (Dubois, 2012:273).

The oppressive approach to the governance of Haiti on behalf of the U.S. marines led to a mass migration of Haitians for the first time in its history. Tens of thousands immigrated to Cuba in search of better working conditions. Approximately 10,000 went to neighbouring Dominican Republic each year, where they experienced discrimination, violence and harsh working conditions (Dubois,

2012:273-274). Though there had been some resistance to the occupation by the *Cacos*, most uprisings were brutally quashed by U.S powers. However, in 1929, students began a surge of revolts among the Haitian elite, which attracted worldwide attention (Schmidt, 1971:189-205). The uprising spread throughout Haiti and led to the eventual end of the U.S. occupation in 1934.

The Duvalier Regime

By the 1950s, when François Duvalier came to power, Haiti was a racially divided nation. The vast majority, 90 per cent of the people, were black Haitians living and working in the countryside. Social status was again tied to skin colour, the lighter being a signifier of higher social standing. The rich elite of Port-au-Prince who were the educated, governing class, exercised power over the country, even when under governance of a black president. Race was thus the defining element in Haiti's caste system, as one saying goes, 'a poor mulatto is a Negro; a rich Negro is a mulatto' (Diederich and Burt, 1969:27).

François Duvalier, also known as Papa Doc because he had been a doctor, became president of Haiti in 1957. His popularity was among the rural class, as he professed *Négritude*, pride in blackness, and aimed to create a black elite. He was well educated on Haiti's history, and spoke enthusiastically about its African culture. He practiced *Vodou*, and aware of his people's religious fear, he formed a governing structure embedded with *Vodou* symbolism. At this point, aid from the United States, the United Nations and the World Health Organisation had been pouring into Haiti, as previous president Paul Magloire had tried to strengthen links with America and to promote Haiti as a tourist destination (Dubois, 2012:319). Duvalier capitalised on the Haitian-American relationship, saying as he came into power that he hoped Haiti would become 'the spoiled child' of the

United States (Diederich and Burt, 1969:100). 'Communism has established centres of infection...' he stated, 'No area in the world is as vital to American security as the Caribbean...We need a massive injection of money to reset the country on its feet, and this injection can come only from our great, capable friend and neighbor the United States' (Duvalier cited in Abbott, 1988:101). America viewed Duvalier's extreme authoritarian approach as an advantage, which was in line with their anti-Communist stance, a valuable asset in the wake of the Cuban Revolution (Dubois, 2012:335). As a result, Haiti began welcoming a growing number of foreign aid organisations that then came to play an important role in the economy and politics of the state (Dubois, 2012:352).

　　　　With U.S. financial as well as military assistance, Duvalier began a repressive dictatorship, amending the law so that he could serve as president for life. Determined not to get overthrown, like so many Haitian rulers before him, he set up his own personal army of 'National Security Volunteers', known more notoriously as the '*Tonton Makout*'. This force grew to be twice the size of the Haitian army, and eventually absorbed two-thirds of the government budget (Dubois, 2012:328). The *Tonton Makouts* inspired great fear among the Haitian people, particularly those openly opposed to the Duvalier regime. Kidnappings and murders became commonplace as democratic voices were silenced with the full force of the military-enforced government. Women were common targets for the *Tonton Makout* army as many were subjected to terror, kidnapping, rape and intimidation, victimised not just for their own social positioning and actions but also those of their relatives (Charles, 1995:140). During Papa Doc's 14-year rule, approximately 50,000 people were killed, and countless more were exiled (Ridgeway, 1994:47, 51). The regime had also squandered $10 million from the national budget, to finance Duvalier's lavish lifestyle (Podur, 2012:16).

François Duvalier's regime epitomised a 'black nationalist ideology with a radical rhetoric (Rod, 1985:28). His image came to be inseparable from that of the country he represented. In the beginning of his term, he stated: 'As President I have no enemies and can have none. There are only the enemies of the nation. And these the nation must judge' (Diederich and Burt, 1969:100). When Papa Doc died in 1971, he was succeeded by his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier, nicknamed 'Baby Doc'. He carried on with the same repressive approach as his father, but slowly shifted the internal political power from the *noiriste*, black elite, back to the lighter-skinned '*mulattoes*'. Having temporarily cut off aid financing under the Kennedy administration due to François Duvalier's terrible human rights record, the United States began again contributing an increasing amount of money to Haiti. By the early 1980s, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) was sending $100 million a year to Haiti (de Wind and Kinley, 1994). Aid, however, was not restored because of any improvements in the government's human rights records, but rather to solidify American-Haitian relations. Much of the received funding was embezzled by Baby Doc and his family (Rod, 1985:28). Ironically, the economy was being largely subsidised by remittances sent from exiled Haitians overseas. In the 1980s remittances made up one-third of the Haitian economy, with about 80 per cent of Haiti's professionals living abroad (Dubois, 2012:353).

During Baby Doc's rule, Haiti's relationship with the United States intensified. Attracted by Haiti's low-cost labour, American corporations established themselves in the Caribbean nation, installing factories for the production of goods for the U.S. market (Dubois, 2012:350). Haiti was also attracting private voluntary organisations, religious and secular groups, enticed by its 'paganism and poverty' (cited in Dubois, 2012:351). This was the beginning of what is now described today as the 'Republic of NGOs,' referring to the very high

number of foreign organisations operating within Haiti's borders (Kristoff & Panarelli, 2010). In 1985, anger had started to build regarding the violence of Jean-Claude Duvalier's regime, and an incident in which three Haitian students were killed led to his expulsion from the presidency and the country in 1986. The American embassy arranged for his safe exile to France, where he had access to a Swiss bank account filled with money looted over decades from the Haitian treasury (Dubois, 2012:357-358).

The Neo-Liberal Plan

> 'Since 1981, the United States has followed a policy, until the last year or so when we started rethinking it, that we rich countries that produce a lot of food should sell it to poor countries and relieve them of the burden of producing their own food, so, thank goodness, they can leap directly into the industrial era. It has not worked. It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked. It was a mistake. It was a mistake that I was a party to. I am not pointing the finger at anybody. I did that. I have to live every day with the consequences of the lost capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people, because of what I did. Nobody else.' (Bill Clinton, March 2010, cited in Farmer, 2011:150)

During the 1980s, the United States supported structural adjustment programs (SAPs) through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, with a view to open the market in Haiti to foreign investment and to promote free trade. Among these SAPs were plans to reduce tariffs and import restrictions, decrease government expenditures on health and education, and

restrain wages. The U.S. imposed neo-liberal policies resulted in Haiti losing control of its public industries. Haitian state funded institutions, like its main flour mill and cement factory, were delivered into the hands of private corporations who in turn shut them down, ceasing the production of these important staple products. As a result, Haiti began importing more and more materials and food from the United States to satisfy the needs of its people. A tragic example of this is that of the American subsidies on exported rice that occurred during the presidency of Bill Clinton in the U.S. (Ives, 2012). Haitian farmers, who had been producing food for national consumption up until the 1970s could no longer compete with the subsidised rice from the United States. Out of work farmers migrated to the cities in search of employment. Since the time of the Papa Doc Duvalier regime, and increasingly during Baby Doc's time in office, American corporations had been incited to set up factories in Haiti where the cost of labour was extremely low. In the 1980s, Haiti became the world's largest producer of baseballs (McGowan, 1997).

The population, already among the poorest in the western hemisphere, plunged deeper into poverty. In conceiving an 'export-led' development strategy for Haiti, the World Bank identified Haiti's main 'comparative advantage' as its 'hard-working, low-cost labour force' which could serve in the assembly industry (de Wind & Kinley, 1994:124). With an anticipated mass migration expected to flow into Port-au-Prince, the assembly industry would provide work to Haitians whose earnings would be spent on imported foodstuffs that was no longer being produced within Haiti (de Wind & Kinley, 1994). In short, Haitians would work for U.S. private companies for low wages which they would spend on U.S. imported products which undercut local agricultural products.

'*Lavalas*' – the Flood

Tired of decades of corruption under the Duvalier regime, and of U.S. imposed policies and influence which undermined and undercut their economy and sovereignty, the Haitian people began to mobilise. The popular movement named the 'Flood', *Lavalas,[12]* in *Kreyòl*, had overthrown Jean-Claude Duvalier and continued thereafter to try to regain power over their country, a key aim being to establish national democracy. After Baby Doc's ousting in 1986, the United States established the National Governing Council (CNG) of Haiti who would work alongside the Haitian armed forces (FADH) to preside over Haiti. Supported by U.S. military aid, the FADH's main objective was to quell the *Lavalas* movement. This led to many murders at the hands of the armed forces. In the period between 1986 and the presidential elections in 1988, more people were killed by the FADH than had been killed by Jean-Claude Duvalier in the previous 15 years (Podur, 2012:17). Though most of the candidates had been 'purchased' by the United States government, Haiti's presidential elections, in 1988, saw the popular choice for the Haitian people come into force. Against all expectations, a parish priest from the slums of Port-au-Prince, member of the *Lavalas* movement, came into power in 1991. His name was Jean-Bertrand Aristide (Dubois, 2012:363).

Aristide announced that his election, the people's democratic success, signified Haiti's 'second independence'. Just as they had overthrown colonial forces in 1804, the Haitian people were seizing their elective power to overthrow the neo-colonialism under which they were being ruled by U.S. proxy. Aristide wanted to dismantle the army, to raise the minimum wage - which was the lowest in the western hemisphere at $5 a day - and to build 'national sufficiency' (Ives, 2010). He held the United States responsible for Haiti's economic problems, and the

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[12] Also known as '*Fanmi Lavalas',* 'The flood family'.

United States government, in turn, hated him for it (Wilentz, 1989:112). Seven months after his inauguration, Haiti's democratically elected president was overthrown in a military coup, and exiled to Washington. In the aftermath of the coup, the U.S. government, consolidated by the mainstream media, began a smear campaign against Aristide. A *Washington Post* editorial stated: 'The president is a hero to the desperate people who live in the slums of Port-au-Prince ... He has organized them into an instrument of real terror ... He has left the country deeply polarized between his followers and the substantial members of people who have reason to fear them' (Ives, 1994:88).

Violence did break out in Haiti, but not at the hands of the *Lavalas* supporters, who were for the most part, protesting peacefully. Over the next three years, an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 people were killed by the Haitian armed forces, 100,000 fled into exile overseas, and 300,000 hid in internal exile (Podur, 2012:19). Meanwhile in Washington, Aristide was negotiating his reinstatement in Haiti with the U.S. government who refused to allow his return unless he agreed to share power with a U.S. appointed prime minister. Aristide resisted for a long time, but eventually agreed to the U.S. Conditions, as his only ticket home. He returned to Haiti in 1994, with only one year left of his term. During his time in office, Aristide succeeded in dismantling the FADH, and putting programs in place that would benefit the health and education of the Haitian people. The minimum wage was increased, land was returned to rural families, taxes were collected from the wealthy, schools were built and the price of food was lowered (Podur, 2012:21-22).

In 1996, Aristide was succeeded by president René Préval, a fellow member of the *Fanmi Lavalas*, political party. In 2000, local and legislative elections took place in which *Fanmi Lavalas,* despite efforts from the anti-*Lavalas* coalition to

discredit the elections, received a majority of votes. Later that year, Aristide won 92 per cent of the votes to which 50 per cent of the adult population participated. In response to this, the European Community cut all aid to Haiti, and the United States began an aid embargo. The Inter-American Development Bank was pressured into cancelling loans to Haiti that were intended to provide drinking water, literacy programmes and health services (Podur, 2012:25). Aristide's return to power was marred by rumours of human rights violations on behalf of his party. The Haitian army, now disbanded as a governmental force, were operating out of the Dominican Republic where they had access to weapons. There still existed the social problems and violence caused by the continued polarisation and inequality in Haitian society, and the U.S. embargo on Haiti meant that the Haitian police had no equipment to respond with to the regular outbreaks of violence.

In 2004, Aristide was ousted from government in another coup, which had been several years in the making. In 2003, diplomats from the Americas and France met in Canada to discuss a regime change in Haiti. The Canadian initiative, the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) provided the banner under which strong countries could intervene in weaker ones. The media had been spinning stories regarding the violence in Haiti, and Aristide's reputation as a pacifist politician was challenged, particularly overseas. Some NGOs, like the National Coalition for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch, also misrepresented the situation in Haiti, claiming Aristide's government to be repressive while ignoring the violence caused by anti-Aristide groups (Podur, 2012:42, 44, 51). Aristide was kidnapped by the American military in 2004, and transported by plane to the Central African Republic. There was almost no international opposition to the coup. Only South Africa, Venezuela and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) condemned it. With Haitian paramilitaries in control, violence broke out as *Lavalas* supporters

protested the coup. The violence on the streets of Port-au-Prince led to the instatement of MINUSTAH, the United Nations Stabilising Mission to Haiti.

The Mission to Stabilise Haiti

Mounting violence between the Haitian police, the paramilitaries and armed gangs of Port-au-Prince's shantytowns - strongholds for *Lavalas* supporters - not only provided just cause, in the eyes of the international community, for the coup against Aristide, it also presented the opportunity to install a 'peacekeeping' army, ceding full control of the country back to the United States. MINUSTAH – the United Nations Mission to Stabilize Haiti - arrived in Haiti in 2004 and continues to be a forceful presence today, in 2017. Between 2004 and 2006, news of violent clashes emerged from Haiti as the paramilitaries continued to suppress *Lavalas* supporters, focusing on *Cité Soleil,* Haiti's largest slum, situated in Port-au-Prince. Member of the *Lavalas* community were trapped between armed groups who were supported by the U.N., the U.S. and Canada. First there were the paramilitaries, composed of the former dictatorship's army, as well as the military forces that had been in power during the 1991 coup government. Then there was the Haitian National Police composed of U.S and Canadian trained forces, and of defected *Lavalas* members. There had originally been some *Lavalas* supporters in the police force, but many of these were killed by the paramilitaries. Then there were the armed gangs, controlled by members of the Haitian elite, who benefitted from financing, impunity and police protection. Their assignment was to stamp out *Lavalas* community networks (Podur, 2012:82-83). MINUSTAH's role in Haiti was to support the coup regime and to disarm gangs, which was contradictory because many gangs were operating on behalf of the coup regime.

During this time, most *Lavalas* leaders were either killed or in hiding. Those attempting to flee were denied refuge outside of Haiti. The people of Haiti, predominantly in support of Aristide's fallen government, staged peaceful protests across the city of Port-au-Prince. These events turned into violent clashes with the police who regularly opened fire on the unarmed crowds. The Haitian National Police and MINUSTAH performed regular raids in 'problematic' neighbourhoods to murder or apprehend *Lavalas* group leaders, often killing and arresting civilians as well. The neighbourhood of *Cité Soleil* drew particular attention from MINUSTAH forces. U.N. troops were regularly sent in to 'pacify' the area by killing gang members. In reality, MINUSTAH forces opened fire, sometimes with tanks, in this densely populated area, and killed Haitians indiscriminately (Podur, 2012:129). The continued violence in Port-au-Prince's slum neighbourhoods justified MINUSTAH's presence, convincing the outside world of the need for peacekeeping forces, ignoring the fact that MINUSTAH was responsible for much of the violence. If the violence lessened, it was proof of MINUSTAH's success, furthermore giving legitimacy to their presence in Haiti.

From the time of their positioning in Haiti, the United Nations became the main source of international aid and relief, and emitted an image of success for the benefit of the outside world. MINUSTAH's troops came from all over the world. Many Haitians viewed their presence as a daily insult, undermining their independence. Scandals over sexual abuse and rape committed by U.N. troops further aggravated the people's intolerance of them (Katz, 2013:225). Their reputation worsened even more dramatically, this time attracting worldwide attention, when it was discovered that a cholera epidemic which had broken out after the earthquake in 2010, was traced back to a U.N. encampment. The U.N. battalion responsible had come from Nepal where a cholera epidemic was present.

The U.N. compound was situated upstream on the Artibonite River. It emerged that the Nepalese U.N. base's sewage was dumped into pits outside their camp - in a populated area - and as those pits overflowed, the river was infected with human waste (Katz, 2013:119-129). As most Haitians, particularly after the earthquake, had no access to clean drinking water, the disease spread rapidly, killing more than 8,000 people (The Guardian, 2013).

There was much international confusion surrounding the coup government, Jean-Bertrand Aristide's legitimacy and the MINUSTAH occupation, which worked alongside the presidency of Gérard Latortue. Haiti was ranking first on Transparency International's Corruption Index (2006), during Latortue's rule and the U.N. Occupation. The U.S. Department of State themselves released an assessment of the coup government, identifying a number of human rights abuses. These included 'arbitrary killings' on behalf of the police, use of 'excessive - sometimes deadly - force in making arrests or controlling demonstrations,' 'widespread corruption' in the government, 'child abuse' and 'trafficking of children' (Podur, 2012:118). A 2006 survey for *The Lancet* journal, attempting to uncover the source of the violence, and analysing claims that *Lavalas* was to blame for it, found that 'a vast majority of the atrocities that weren't committed by criminals [...] were from groups affiliated in some fashion with anti-*Lavalas* movements' (Podur, 2012:124).

Elections

In 2006, attempts to foil elections to keep *Fanmi Lavalas* candidate, René Préval, out of the running, failed. There was widespread tampering of ballots, and the United Nations allowed for less than half of the normal number of polling stations to be opened (Podur, 2012). However, the overwhelming support of the

Haitian people for Préval led him to win the election despite the attempts of fraud. Préval came into office in 2006, but was immediately restricted by the outside influences that still wielded the majority of the power in Haiti. The country's finances were reliant on international donors, and the United Nations were still in charge of security. In 2010, *Wikileaks* began publishing cables from U.S. embassies. The cables revealed Washington's deliberate strategies to keep Aristide out of power in Haiti. These included the close supervision of the Haitian police force and the U.N. troops, as well as an apparent fixation on the rebellious neighbourhoods of *Cité Soleil* and *Bel Air* in Port-au-Prince, where most of the MINUSTAH violence had occurred (Haiti Liberté*, 2011*).

Earthquake

On the 12th of January, 2010, Haiti was struck by an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale. An estimated 250,000 to 300,000 lives were lost, that is, approximately one in every 15 Haitian people. It left one and a half million people, nearly 15 per cent of the population, homeless (Podur, 2012:138). The earthquake in Haiti was a catastrophic disaster. The Haitian people were victims not just of the shifting of tectonic plates, but also of the poverty which contributed to make this one of the worst natural disasters to occur in the western hemisphere. The loss of life was concentrated in the cities, particularly in Port-au-Prince, which was only 25 kilometres away from the epicentre of the quake. Due to the U.S. imposed neo-liberal economic policies of the 1980s and 1990s, which destroyed the Haitian agricultural industry and led to mass-migration from rural areas, the city was overpopulated. Lacking the enforcement of building codes, the houses in the shantytowns were dangerously built, and packed in on top of each other. In

comparison with other earthquakes that have rated higher on the Richter scale, Haiti's 2010 disaster caused a disproportionate amount of death and destruction.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the United States government took command of the relief effort. Préval ceded control of the Port-au-Prince airport to the U.S. military which prioritised American flights over other relief responders, turning away planes carrying food and medical supplies (Podur, 2012:139). The international community's emergency response to the earthquake, which was performed under the supervision of the United States forces, came under heavy criticism. As well as the American troops and doctors, countless foreign NGOs and medical volunteers arrived in Haiti to help with the relief work. One physician, observing the American approach to emergency medical assistance remarked in *Le Monde* newspaper:

> 'Amputation is an act of rescue to save a life when a limb is crushed or in sepsis. The Americans have made it almost routine, without trying to imagine an alternative, proud of the slaughter that lets them rack up impressive numbers of patients… I've seen simple fractures treated with amputation when they could have been fixed. I've seen the result of guillotine amputations, where the limb is cut by a cigar cutter. The risk of infection is huge because the bone is exposed, and the procedure was done without scheduling a second surgery to fasten a stump that could serve to fix a prosthesis.' (cited in Podur, 2012:139).

Republic of NGOs

> 'Since the earthquake, Haiti has become a crossroads. For International NGOs, Haiti has been transformed into a place of

forced passage. I would say even worse: of professional formation. The age of the aid workers arriving since the earthquake is very low; they land in Haiti without any experience. And Haiti, I can tell you, is not a place for amateurs. There exists a devilish correlation between the strength of the NGOs and the weakness of the Haitian state. Some NGOs exist solely because of Haiti's misfortune.' (Ricardo Seitenfus, former Organization of American States Representative to Haiti cited in *Le Temps,* 2010)

Even before the earthquake of 2010, due to the privatisation of Haiti's institutions, 80 per cent of basic services, such as medical care, schools and access to drinking water, were provided by foreign NGOs (Edmonds 2012:2). Accountable only to their donors, NGOs operate aid distribution projects which are not only uncoordinated and untrustworthy, they often deliberately cause more harm than good to the Haitian people, to ensure the survival of their business. Anthropologist, Timothy Schwartz (2008), in his book *Travesty in Haiti*, uncovers the reality of many large-scale NGOs, such as CARE International, who have operated in Haiti since 1954. Schwartz reveals how CARE has systematically withheld the distribution of food aid in rural areas until the time was appropriate to flood the market with subsidised USAID food, which could be sold at a lower price than local agricultural food, undercutting Haitian farmers, and contributing to an accentuated cycle of poverty and reliance on food aid (Schwartz, 2008:79-106). The many ways in which the Haitian people's capabilities have been undermined, and the systemic way in which NGOs continue to do so point to the unfolding of a larger plan within the 'business of poverty', in which Haiti is not the client, but the product. After the earthquake, thousands of foreign aid workers flooded into the country, many of

whom were earning high wages, by any standards, to be there. Had the government employed Haitians to clear the rubble, $400 million could have gone directly into the hands of the poor. (Schwartz cited in Podur, 2012:144). On top of the rise in food prices, residents in Port-au-Prince have had to contend with the inflation of property rental costs. Foreign NGOs, taking up a high number of houses in the city, particularly in the upmarket neighbourhood of Pétionville, have pushed poor Haitians further out into the suburbs, the slums, where rents are lower (Katz, 2010).

Neo-Duvalierism

With president Préval's term coming to a close in late 2010, elections were planned with the usual politics of exclusion of the *Fanmi Lavalas* party. Among other barriers faced by voters on election day, fewer than 1,000 polling stations were set up nationwide (Podur, 2012:147). Through the elimination of ballots, the *Lavalas* supported candidate was successfully excluded which left two right-wing candidates in the running. Michel Martelly became president in 2011. His politics have been described as *Neo-Duvalierist,* as he has been known to speak 'nostalgically' of the Duvalier era (Podur 2012:149). Kim Ives, editor of the Haitian Weekly *Haiti Liberté,* has recognised Duvalierist strategies in Martelly's approach which are designed to continue to enrich the elite as well as maintaining close relations with Washington to sustain the international control of Haiti (Podur, 2012:152).

'There was Toussaint, the former slave, incredibly grand and powerful and incomparably the greatest man in San Domingo. There was no need to be ashamed of being black. The revolution had

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awakened them, had given them the possibility of achievement, confidence and pride. That psychological weakness, that feeling of inferiority with which the imperialists poison colonial people everywhere, these were gone.' (James, 1963:244)

Haiti is a nation born out of revolt and revulsion towards white colonialism. In light of the victory of the slaves of Saint-Domingue, some 200 years ago, it is a particular irony that Haiti has never been given the opportunity to govern itself autonomously. Faced with repression, the Haitian people have repeatedly demonstrated strength and resilience, through a powerful sense of community. However they can also be identified as victims, targets of racist politics that have dominated their land since colonial times. Haiti sits among African countries in the lowest rankings related to prosperity and development, and is the only country in the Americas to do so. It shares a history of slavery and colonisation with most of its surrounding states, and yet today, it stands alone as the poorest country in the hemisphere.

History, which is still unravelling in the present day, shows that Haitians have been intentionally disenfranchised repeatedly over the course of the last 200 years. Powerful nations like the United States and France have never ceded power over Haiti, and have imposed upon it, economic and political policies which would undermine it at every turn. The Haitian people have proved their ability to organise themselves. They did so prior to 1804 as they united against French colonial powers, defeating Napoleon's armies. They also came together in supporting the *Lavalas* campaign of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, whose intention it was to rebuild Haiti's national self-sufficiency, and to forever expel the foreign powers which destroyed Haiti's economy. In the immediate aftermath of

the earthquake, when the government was brought to its knees with almost all its official buildings in rubble, it was the Haitian people who led the initial relief effort. They have been portrayed to the outside world as a violent people, interested in the 'dark arts' of *Vodou*, but the reality, as witnessed by many impartial journalists and observers, is that many Haitians exemplify peaceful solidarity.

The earthquake of 2010 caused death and destruction on a massive scale in a matter of minutes. However, as Kim Ives has pointed out, in an interview with *Democracy Now* in 2010, Haiti was the victim of a much larger, even more destructive earthquake, over 20 years before, whose epicentre was in Washington D.C. After the destructive dictatorships of the Duvaliers, which the United States government had supported, it was the neo-liberal economic policies imposed on Haiti which rendered it even more vulnerable (Ives, 2010). The reasons behind the United States' vested interest in Haiti is not clear. Ives suggests it could be its geo-political positioning in the Caribbean region, with its close proximity to Cuba, or it could be that it has since before its foundation been the most 'upstart' nation, as shown in 1804 and 1991 (Ives, 2010). Regardless of the reasons, The United States and the United Nations do not seem to be loosening their grip on the small Caribbean nation. Haiti is also somewhat of a case-study for the effects of NGO presence in an impoverished region. Haiti relies heavily on aid for the survival of its people. Yet aid, delivered as it is by many foreign NGOs, undermines local people's capabilities, and undercuts the people's efforts to become self-sufficient. More than divulging misguided efforts stemming from 'White Man's Burden', this points to corruption within the aid industry on a mass scale.

In examining the reasons behind Haiti's poverty, we gain a better understanding of the steps required to help Haiti. It is clear from the centuries of foreign meddling in Haitian affairs that the logical step forward for Haiti is to leave

it to govern itself. The international involvement in Haiti has made it clear that there is no intention to aid it to develop in a sustainable way, and only the poor majority and their democratically elected representatives have this goal in mind. The modern consequences of poverty and post-colonial violence, as well as the lack of basic facilities, contribute significantly to the presence of child domestic slavery in Haiti. With this in mind, the development of Haiti, and its opportunity for self-sufficiency are crucial to the permanent eradication of slavery.

Chapter 5

Mothers:
Rural Family Life and the Push Factors for Child Slavery

'Manman pa janm mode pitit li jouk nan zo'
'A mother never bites her child to the bone'

'Then the road goes into the trees. They have dark green, luscious leaves. Light green mangoes hang like earrings. The earth turns red and soft. The road, now a straight line shooting through the green, like a red strike, follows a broken line of modest houses and ornate tombs. One tomb sits on the edge of the road. It is painted bright blue and pink. Behind it sits a homemade of stones and clay. A woman sits on its step watching a child playing. The child's hair is thick and black. It stands on ends like it is reaching out to touch the trees, like rays of sunlight. The red earth of the road turns to maroon mud. The mud contours a bright orange puddle. The puddle is the width of the road, and a path has been etched out around it. Green strands of grass and stems of plants have been squashed down into the red mud by passers-by's bare feet.' (de Hoog, 2016a)

As was saw in chapter three, *restavèk* children found working in the towns and cities of Haiti typically originate from rural areas. Children's vulnerability to being sent into the *restavèk* system is borne out of the circumstantial causes of their rural habitats. As my empirical research shows, the conditions in which most rural Haitians live produce the factors that render children vulnerable to being trafficked into domestic slavery. I refer to these as 'push' factors because they are what drive children to leave their communities. Some of these factors, namely the poverty of rural families, the high number of children and the lack of access to

schools in rural areas, contribute directly to the decisions made by parents to send children into the *restavèk* system. Others, as listed below, make up the context of women's lives, through which they indirectly but substantially increase children's vulnerability.

This chapter therefore provides an overview of each of push factor, direct and indirect, which contributes to the vulnerability of children, looking specifically at the lives of women in rural areas. In turn, these are: the lack of basic infrastructure in rural areas; the large number of children per family; religious and spiritual belief systems; sexual violence against women; the shortage of accessible and affordable schools for children; cultural elements; household dynamics of control; particularities of male/female relationships; the poverty of rural families and perceptions of the city; maternal feelings of attachment to children; and, as I argue, women's privation of power over their lives and that of their children, through gendered social norms and hierarchies.

As we will see, poverty in rural areas is widespread, affecting the vast majority of the rural population. There is a lack of formal employment and economic opportunities outside of subsistence farming. This fact, combined with the large average number of children per family, means that rural Haitians' few resources are spread thinly (Verner, 2008). We will look into how the average number of children per family, or per woman, is instigated by several factors. There is a cultural aspect, as well as a lack of formal education among certain women, and some lack of awareness with regards to sex. Furthermore, a situation arises in which women attempt to secure financial security through their children and their fathers. Rural areas, for the most part, are severely lacking in basic infrastructure, such as roads, water and electricity. Moreover, people in rural areas have little access to social services like hospitals and schools. This shortage of

schools, as well as resource poor families' inability to pay school fees, mean that many children are not in education. Moreover, as I discuss in greater detail in the next three chapters, gendered roles and positioning within Haiti's social hierarchy, are polarised. For the most part, women are placed under the authority of men. Women's roles revolve around the home and children, as they are, through common understanding, responsible for the household. This high level of responsibility over the, often many, members of their households is paradoxically co-existent with women's lack of power in the public sphere. As my empirical research shows, mothers are often unable to care adequately for their children, and forced, through their circumstances, to make difficult decisions, such as sending a child into the *restavèk* system. This chapter looks in detail at the circumstances of rural Haitians' lives and the factors which drive children into the *restavèk* system. Special attention is paid to the social, cultural and economic expectations placed on women.

This chapter is informed by a empirical research in the form of informal interviews, ethnographic conversations, observations and participation. As was mentioned in Chapter two, I interviewed mothers individually as well as in groups. The individual interviews quoted in this chapter were conducted with a number of different women who were either mothers or experts in the field of child protection. Ethnographic conversations include both men and women. Apart from one group interview conducted with a mixed group of *Fondasyon Limyè Lavi* (FLL) staff, other group interviews included women in rural communities in the south of Haiti. Groups referenced within this chapter are cited as 'Group 1', 'Group 2', 'Group 3' and 'Group 4'. The first two groups were consecutive interviews carried out in November, 2014, with rural women in the community of *Wo Jefre,* in Southern Haiti. The last two groups feature female participants from the

community of *Ma,* also in Southern Haiti, in December, 2014. Beneficiaries of the *Fondasyon Limyè Lavi's* Model Community Programme, members of the community of *Ma's* 'Child Protection Committee' - '*KOMANTIM & MITYÈL*' - also took part in a group presentation for my benefit. Qualitative data and ethnographic material were approached from a feminist methodological perspective and framed within a Gender and Development (GAD) theoretical background, as outlined in chapter one.

Rural (lack of) infrastructure

The majority of Haitians, approximately 60 per cent of the total population, live in rural areas (Verner, 2008:6). Haiti's high level of poverty and lack of development are particularly evident outside of the cities. Paved roads only make up 20 per cent of all official roads in Haiti (Now Institute: 2012:256). There are few paved roads in the countryside, and most rural communities are inaccessible by car. Some are accessible by motorbike, one of the most common modes of transport in Haiti, particularly in rural areas, where the public bus service, known as *Taptap*, or *Kamyonèt,* do not operate. Three out of four Haitians' primary mode of transportation is walking (Now Institute, 2012:261), and this appears to be both because of the inaccessibility of rural areas, as well as a lack of financial means to pay for public transportation. Having visited rural areas in the North, South and South East of Haiti, it became apparent to me that many areas are only accessible on foot. After one occasion of walking in rural areas in the North of the country, I noted in my blog:

> *'After 5 hours, exhausted from the effort, I turned to Maxo and asked*
>
> *how long it would take him to do this journey if I wasn't there*
>
> *slowing him down. 'An hour, an hour and a half', he said. [...] But he*

said it's not just him, everyone from around there, who walk the path every day, are so skilled at negotiating the terrain in their bare feet that nothing will slow them down. I was amazed and annoyed at how unreal this all seemed. I'd been walking briskly, not even stopping to rest or enjoy the view. I realized for the first time that I can't do anything another person can do, and that Haitians from these kinds of areas have the most incredible strength and perseverance. The rain started to pour down, and the steep path turned into muddy streams. Girls with giant buckets on their head overtook us as I struggled to stay upright, and grabbed on to trees and bushes for balance.' (de Hoog, 2015b)

The topography of Haiti is mostly mountainous, with 63 per cent of the land at a slope of 20 per cent or greater (FAO, 2001). This combined with the lack of roads makes access to rural communities extremely difficult. Despite the isolated nature of much of rural Haiti, these areas are highly populated. It is difficult to measure the exact population prevalence in today's rural Haiti and there is a lack of official data concerning this. However, it was evident, through numerous visits to different parts of the country, that there are many active communities in even the seemingly most isolated locations.

'One of my favourite things about rural Haiti is that you can be walking for hours, up and down rocky paths, you can be miles and miles away from the nearest town, the nearest electrical outlet, the nearest water source, and you see, all over, the shimmering roofs of little houses, the colourfully painted walls, peeking through the trees.. You look across at the mountain opposite and see a figure

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> *walking with a mule in tow, in what seems like the middle of*
>
> *nowhere.'* – Field Diary, March 29th, 2015

Where vehicles cannot access, there are often well trodden paths etched into the land by hundreds of years of foot traffic. Indeed, as I noted during my travels by motorbike and on foot throughout rural Haiti, little seems to have changed or developed in these areas since H.H. Prichard's account of travelling through rural Haiti on horseback in 1899. Prichard (1900) describes crossing through a river many times on his way from Jacmel to Port-au-Prince. Though there is now a road connecting these two towns, I have also been on numerous journeys that involved crossing through rivers either on a motorbike, or on foot. In these circumstances, I noted the surprising amount of activity on the road with people mostly on foot. The isolated nature of these areas does not deter people from travelling long distances on foot on a regular basis. As noted in my blog post:

> *'Every so often, hours from his parents' house, Maxo would cross a*
>
> *family member, or neighbour, as the people from the surrounding*
>
> *areas used the long path on a daily basis, going up and down to the*
>
> *market in the town far, far away, far below.'* (de Hoog, 2015b)

Conversations with people from rural areas illuminated the fact that they travel these distances often and think little of it. Many women, sometimes accompanied by children, do so a couple of times a week or more, carrying heavy loads of produce to sell at the markets in the surrounding villages and town. One conversation with a young man from rural Haiti, described one of his trips to the market when he was a child, with his heavily pregnant mother:

'He said his mother was nine months pregnant and they had just been at the market, selling yams. It had been a slow day, and they had to return home with almost as much produce as they had come with. This is the same journey that took me around 7 hours to complete. As they were walking home, it was getting dark and it started to rain. His mother had a large tub on her head filled with yams, and as it poured with rain, the tub also filled with water. The path was muddy and slippery, and at one point, his mother fell. The little boy looked at his pregnant mother lying there, not moving and thought she was dead. He tried to revive her. After a while, she moved and got up again, gathered the fallen yams she could find in the dark, and placed the tub back on her head. They walked the rest of the journey home, and she gave birth the very next day.' – Field diary, February 21st, 2015*

Rather than being organised by villages, rural Haiti is divided into communities. There is rarely a clear central hub, or 'mainstreet' for a community, with shops and services. Instead houses are scattered throughout the countryside, some are close together, some are kilometres apart (Gardella, 2006:15). Churches and schools form meeting places for members of rural communities, and often, people will travel long distances on foot to reach these, and to be part of community meetings. This has been evident as I have attended a number of meetings with the beneficiaries of the *Fondasyon Limè lavi*'s[13] Model Community Programme throughout southern Haiti. Through conversations with some of the

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[13] The *Fondasyon Limyè Lavi,* a Haitian NGO, allowed me to work alongside their activities and visit a number of their beneficiary communities in rural Haiti.

attendees, I found out that many had walked for several hours to get there, and many had to leave early to get home before it got dark.

Most economic activity takes place in the towns and cities. What produce can be carried on foot, or with the help of an animal, is taken to the markets. For some rural communities, the physical effort of carrying produce to the market, combined with the often low retail value of the produce, where many other market women are selling the same produce in the same season, means that the journey is not always economically viable. In an extremely isolated zone in Northern Haiti, a woman told me that she no longer carries her yams to the market twice a week. It takes three hours to walk there, and when she gets there, there are many vendors with the same produce. Many of the other vendors will not have had to come so far, and because the market is flooded with yams, they are sold cheaply (Madanm Exius, 21/2/2015). In this particular community in northern Haiti, there is little else to eat other than yams, bananas, breadfruits and sweet potatoes, which all share similar dietary benefits, and lack a complete range of important nutritional elements. A failure to earn economically from the local produce means people cannot buy other types of food easily and it is therefore difficult to maintain a balanced diet.

The most isolated communities habitually lack electricity which isolates the rural population further. Only fifteen per cent of rural households have electricity (MSPP, 2013:11), and this will depend on the area's level of isolation. Radio, the primary source of information for 84 per cent of Haitians (Info as Aid, 2012:18), and mobile phones are the mediums used the most to communicate in Haiti, and both need electricity to function. As I witnessed, people in rural areas will travel long distances to access electricity to charge their phones.

While it is possible to survive without electricity, water is a basic and vital necessity. The majority of rural households, 51 per cent, only have access to unimproved sources, like natural streams in the mountains, or rivers in the lower-lying areas (MSPP, 2013:13). These streams are shared between communities and it is not possible for people to know if they are safe to drink (Groups 1&2, 27/11/2014). Haiti still sees the occasional cholera outbreak after the epidemic of 2010, mentioned in chapter four, which has continued periodically. As with most necessities in these isolated rural areas, people often need to walk long distances to collect water. Long journeys on foot to collect water can absorb a significant amount of a woman's daily calorific intake, which also has a direct impact on the nutritional level of her children (Momsen 2010:74).

The lack of stable infrastructure in rural areas and the consequential hardship of women's lives contributes to the vulnerability of children to being sent into the *restavèk* system. The isolation caused by the lack of roads and transport, coupled with the absence of electricity and safe drinking water form the background of adversity within which rural parents bring up their children.

Many children, many mouths to feed

The average number of children per family in Haiti is high in relation to the Latin America and Caribbean region (World Bank, 2014)[14]. On average, extremely poor households have approximately twice as many children as non-poor households (Verner, 2008:8). In the rural areas I visited, and among my interview participants, the average number of children per household was between five and six children, though official figures state that the fertility rate, nationally, has dropped from 6.3

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[14] The fertility rate for Haiti, according to the World Bank in 2014 is 3.0 children per woman compared to a regional average of 2.1. It is, however, lower than the average for UN classified 'least developed countries' which stands at 4.2.

children per woman in 1960, to 4.7 in 2000 (Verner, 2008:9). In 2012, the fertility rate was placed at 3.5 children per woman, that is 4.4 in rural areas and 2.5 in urban areas. Looking at the same figures, in terms of individual prosperity on a national level, the average number of children per woman goes from 5.7 for the poorest households, to 1.9 in the wealthiest households (MSPP, 2013:69). We will look at the reasons for this in the following pages.

The level of birth registration is estimated to be 80 per cent, nationally, though not all of these will have been given birth certificates[15]. There is also a difference in the number of birth registrations between urban and rural areas, with the former registering 85 per cent, and the latter, 77 per cent of new born children (MSPP, 2013:330). In rural areas, most births take place at home, without the presence of a qualified midwife. Access to medical care is very low for critically ill, and pregnant women (Groups 1&2, 27/11/2014). There are only an estimated 25 physicians per 100,000 people in Haiti, and 90 per cent of these are based in the capital, Port-au-Prince (Jadotte, 2012:19). Haiti has the lowest health indicators in the Caribbean region, including life expectancy, infant mortality, adult mortality, maternal mortality, prevalence of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria (WHO, 2015), and many of these are exacerbated in rural areas where medical facilities are lacking. The Haitian environment is thus reminiscent of the context of 'everyday violence' discussed by Scheper-Hughes (1992):

> 'The dialectic between birth and death, survival and loss, remains a powerful one in the lives of most people living in the peripheries of the modern industrialized world, either as marginalized rural workers or as urban shantytown dwellers. In these contexts disease epidemics, food shortages, contaminated water, and inadequate

[15] Without birth certificates, Haitians cannot access many official rights such as voting, marriage or legal representation.

medical care interact with patterns of high fertility and sometimes prejudicial forms of infant care to consign millions of children to an early grave.' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992:273)

Health was one of the major issues which women brought up in rural areas as their biggest challenge (Groups 1&2, 27/11/2014; Groups 3&4 12/12/2014). With Haiti's annual health expenditure at only 6 per cent of the global average in 2011, it does not provide sufficient coverage for the rural population (Now Institute, 2014:460). The isolated nature of many rural areas makes it very difficult to access emergency medical services when needed. This leads to many deaths which could have been avoided if a hospital had been reached. It also means that pregnant women have very little access to medical care during pregnancy and birth, leading to high mortality rates, as discussed earlier. It also affects children's health, particularly in terms of malnutrition. In 2005, approximately 9 per cent of children under five were suffering from acute malnutrition (WHO, 2010:11). Nationally, approximately 9 per cent of children die before their fifth birthday (MSPP, 2013:8). During all my interviews in rural areas, women stated that there was no hospital or clinic in or near their community. They told me that the nearest medical facility was in the town, and the only way to get there was by motorbike (Groups 1&2, 27/11/2014; Groups 3&4, 12/12/2014). The cost of a motorbike ride, on top of the cost of medical treatment is often too much for people to afford. This means they either would not go, or have to borrow money from neighbours or a loan shark, putting them in dangerous debt (KOMANTIM & MITYÈL, 17/11/2015).

However, as can be noted from the statistics above, despite the high risks, women in rural areas continue to have large numbers of children. This can be explained through a number of reasons. Firstly, a lack of sexual education means

that many people do not fully understand their bodies in terms of sexual reproduction. One director of a NGO stated that some people do not recognise the link between sexual intercourse and pregnancy (Penny, 13/11/2014). I have also attested to similar misperceptions during ethnographic conversations with Haitian women and men. This is due to a lack of education and access to any health related information disseminated through the media. Nearly a quarter of women nationally, on average 24 per cent, have no access to any media whatsoever. There also exists a disparity between rural and urban areas, where 35 per cent in the former and 13 per cent in the latter have practically no access to media (MSPP, 2013:39). Accurate information can be difficult to come by, especially in disconnected rural areas, which means that incorrect information is passed around through word of mouth, or as it is sometimes called in Haiti, '*Radyo 32',* 'Radio 32', making reference to the mouth with its 32 teeth (Cené, various dates). To provide some examples of some widely held inaccurate beliefs, I have been told that: *it is impossible to get pregnant or transfer disease if you have sex in the ocean*; *Having sex with a girl while she is menstruating should be avoided because this is when she can become pregnant; drinking a salty beer can cause a miscarriage/abortion* (Saint-Louis, various dates)*; pregnancy can last anything from several months to several years* (Penny, 13/11/2014*).* As well as a lack of complete knowledge of biological facts, varying levels of formal education can have an effect on women's reproductive decision-making. Generally, increased access to education leads to later marriage, which in turn affects fertility, in that women have children later on in their lives. This also has an effect on the health and well-being of children and may influence whether or not they, themselves, will have access to education (Momsen, 2010:50-51). Contraception is not always available, particularly in rural areas. Moreover, ethnographic conversations with some Haitian women informed

me that many choose not to take the contraceptive pill because of how it makes them feel (Fonise, 22/07/2015).

In addition to the above stated reasons for the high birth rate in Haiti, there also exists a strong cultural and environmental elements to women having children. Joekes (1994) points out that 'parenthood is viewed as the fulfilment of the individual's gender destiny,' and that for women it is 'crucial to their social status' (Joekes, 1994:13). High birth rates are also often linked to high infant mortality (Gimenez, 1977). The precarity of everyday life in Haiti means that some children die because of illness, or accidents. While the region of Latin America has had one of the highest population growths in the world, Haiti's population growth has been reflected as marginally lower, not because of a lower birth rate, but a much higher death and infant mortality rate (Gimenez, 1977:36). Children are also considered a source of labour for farmers with agricultural and domestic work to do. They are also a form of security in old-age, where it is hoped, and often expected, that they will provide for their parents once they reach adulthood. This is of particular significance in Haiti because there is a substantial lack of governmental social support for elderly people in the form of old-age pensions (Jadotte, 2012:10; Verner, 2008:33).

This is reflective of how fertility levels in developing, or underdeveloped, countries are affected by children's '*future* and *current* contributions', which from a mother's perspective can implicate a possibility to attain help in the areas of socially understood 'women's work' or a '*future* contribution' through education and eventual economic gains (Joekes, 1994:15). Benería and Sen (1997), talk about fertility as 'reproductive freedom', and the 'right to bear or not to bear children', pointing to the potential of children as labourers. They attest that '[p]ronatalist tendencies in rural areas may have a clear economic basis' (Benería and Sen,

1997:50). Furthermore, there can also exist a desire for children, regardless of whether they are chosen 'rationally' or not. As Gimenez points out:

> 'Under conditions of extreme poverty, children do not substantially add to household expenditures; on the other hand, they can become the main source of meaning and satisfaction left to the very poor.' (Gimenez, 1997:16)

This opinion is echoed by Antrobus (1995), who states:

> 'The majority of the poor are women. While many of them have large families, they are not poor *because* they have many children. In fact, the reverse is true. They have many children because they are poor, which means they have very limited options in terms of education, training and employment, and see children as a source of wealth, perhaps the only source of affirmation.' (Antrobus, 1995:56)

In a country where, as I have witnessed, people take a lot of pleasure out of children and parenting, the above rationale seems to strongly apply in Haiti. Conversations with Haitian people, and their generally keen interest in children, point to a general pleasure and satisfaction, as well as hardship, in being parents. A well-known Haitian saying states: '*Timoun se richès malere*', 'children are the wealth of the poor', and this can be understood in terms of the rationale laid out above. For Haitian people, having children is important in terms of future contributions and everyday joy. However, it is the high number of children in rural areas, together with all the other contextual factors discussed in this chapter, that contributes to children's vulnerability to being sent into the *restavèk* system as many parents have more children than they can financially cope with.

A world more real than what can be seen: Belief systems and religions

Religion and beliefs are an important aspect of Haitian culture and society. The majority, 80 per cent, of Haitians subscribe to Roman Catholicism, and 16 per cent to Protestant Christianity. *Vodou*, meaning 'invisible life force', or 'spirit' in the West African Fon language (Djaloki, 2008), is Haiti's traditional belief system. It traces its roots back to Africa and is practiced by about half of Haitians (CIA, 2015). Since *Vodou* combines traditional African traditions with Catholic symbolism, many people practice Catholicism and *Vodou* alongside each other (Haas, 2011). *Vodou* is a generally misunderstood belief system both outside and within Haiti, due to a long process in which it's reputation has been tarnished, particularly since the U.S. military occupation of Haiti, from 1915 -1934 (Djaloki, 2008; Haas, 2011). Christian churches tend to discourage the practice of *Vodou*. Many Haitian people, convinced by a religious leader, are adverse to the *Vodou* religion, but there are few Haitians who do not believe it to be real (Delanges, 16-19/11/2015). Through conversations with people in urban and rural areas, I discovered that most Haitians live in fear of the power of *Vodou*, as it can rest in the hands of people with ill intentions.

An example of this is the *Vodou* concept of the *Lougarou*, a person who steals people's souls, especially those of children and the weak. For this reason many people avoid going out at night, and lock their doors.[16] For many Haitians, these fears are as significant as any other threat to life. Many even associate accidents and illnesses to *Vodou*.[17] *Vodou* is thus more than a religion to the Haitian people. It is a way of seeing the world, where two different worlds actually exist,

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[16] Based on evening time conversation with the Delange family in Ma.
[17] One afternoon in December, as I travelled from Port-au-Prince to Jacmel by bus, I saw the aftermath of 4 different road accidents, including dead bodies on the road. When I arrived in Jacmel and spoke to different people about the accidents there, they all said, independently of each other, that December has the most accidents because *Vodou Lwas* (spirits) kill people who have not paid their debts by the end of the year.

one visible and one invisible, which constantly interact (Djaloki, 2008; Haas, 2011). Its importance in Haitian society, and even politics, cannot be overstated. It is also a belief system in which male and female involvement are equally important. There are *Vodou* priests, known as '*Ougan'*, and priestesses, known as '*Manbo'* (Wall & Clerici, 2015). The many *'Lwa'*, or 'spirits', are an assortment of male and female characters, and it is they who choose who they will attach themselves to, indiscriminate of gender, apart from *'Erzulie'*, a female *Lwa*, known to attach herself to men and not allow them to have relationships with human women (Hurston, 1981:123).[18]

When people are ill, rather than going to a hospital, clinic or certified doctor, most people in rural Haiti visit an *Ougan* or *Manbo, Vodou* priests and priestesses. There are *Ougans* and *Manbos* all over Haiti, in almost each community. Their peristyles – a place of *Vodou* worship, usually the home of a *Ougan* or *Manbo* - are marked with a flag outside.[19] These prescribe treatment using their own medicine made mostly of herbs and other natural ingredients. Women might also seek contraceptive remedies, made from herbs (Chantalle, 17/03/2015). *Ougans* and *Manbos* also facilitate, for a fee, a contract with a *Vodou Lwa*, a spirit. It is believed that the *Lwa* will accompany a person and will provide something for them in exchange for something else, a sacrifice of sorts. At times, when a person dies either for no explainable reason, or through illness or accident, it is believed they were either the subject of a *Vodou* curse (made through a contract with a *Lwa*), or that they themselves had made a contract with a *Lwa* but

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[18] Based on ethnographic conversations with several Haitian people, including a man in the Jacmel market, running a stall for *Vodou* items.
[19] Travel through different Haitian towns, villages and rural areas, having been informed that the flag signifies the house of a *Vodou* healer.

had not held up their end of the bargain (Cené, various dates).[20] An increase in road accidents in December is often explained by the popular belief that the end of the year is when *Lwas* make people pay their unsettled debts by killing them (and whoever else might have the misfortune of sharing a vehicle with them). After one journey from Port-au-Prince to Jacmel in December 2014, in which I witnessed several accidents in one evening, I wrote the following:

> *'When we finally got to the Limye Lavi offices (my accommodation), I was told there are always lots of accidents in December. 'Why?' I ask. 'The Devil' Charlemagne says. Loads of people at the end of the year put curses on people, a vodou tradition, for good luck in the new year. And people who have made deals with Vodou gods, to gain things, money, cars, and who haven't paid their end of the bargain will surely find a violent death, apparently. Many have to offer the lives of others to pay for what they have gained, and often, others get caught in the crossfire.'* (de Hoog, 2014)

However, the Christian religion is also apparent in everyday dealings with Haitian people. Conversations with Haitians often turn to a profession of faith, and the word '*Bondye',* 'God', is mentioned regularly. Rarely is the word 'tomorrow' not accompanied by 'God willing', to the point where the phrase almost sounds like one word: '*demen si dye vle'.*

> *'On Sundays, churches are overflowing with people dressed in their 'Sunday-best'. Little girls have white ribbons in their hair and shiny patent shoes. The pastors energetically profess into their microphones – the tone sounds angry to me – and mutters of 'Amen'*

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[20] Based on ethnographic conversations with a rural Haitian in Port-au-Prince, whose mother is a *Manbo, Vodou* priestess in her rural community.

can be heard throughout the crowd. The power of the pastor, as he

stands up on his alter, is visible. It feels like this man could say

anything, and people would be compelled to agree. Church leaders

might be some of the most influential people in Haiti.' - Field diary,

November 23rd, 2014

Paragraphs from the Christian Bible are often used as justifications to support the subordination of women. Men are considered to be physically stronger and more able to work in physically demanding jobs. It is also implied that men are often considered to be more intelligent and better equipped to make important decisions (Erick, 5/02/2015). Up until 1979, married women were considered minors in the eyes of the Haitian law (Charles, 1995:138).[21] Though the law now recognises men and women as equal before the law, vestiges of this can still be perceived in behaviours and attitudes. The use of teachings of Christianity - being a religion imposed upon and adopted by the Haitian people through the colonisation process - in establishing and sustaining gendered structures of power demonstrates the ways in which European colonisation affected the position of women in Haitian society. As Griffiths (2011) suggests, in her study of gender in pre-colonial Africa, women in African societies may have 'exercised far more power, influence and equality than was generally ascribed to them in Western scholarship' (Griffiths, 2011:130). She points to French anthropologist, Paulme, whose research in French and Belgian Africa found that:

'the idea of African women being wholly under the authority of

men, legally dependent upon male relatives, with no possessions

and no sexual freedom outside of marriage to a polygynous male,

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[21] This reflects the French legal code of the beginning of the twentieth century which was imposed upon territories occupied by France which 'reduced' African women to 'the status of minors' in the French civil code (Griffiths, 2011:145). Though Haiti was not occupied by France at the time, many of its laws reflect similar principles.

was "a fondly entertained masculine ideal that does not tally

with the realities of everyday life."' (Griffiths and Paulme cited in

Griffiths, 2011:130)

Within *Vodou*-practicing Haitian families, whose traditions and customs are strongly linked to their pre-colonial African ancestry, it can be argued that the gendered structures of power between men and women differ to those within Christian families. One participant, Ville-France, detailed the dynamics of power between his *Vodou*-practicing parents stating that his mother had a large amount of freedom due to the fact that she was 'chosen' by a *Lwa – Vodou* spirit: '*She would often be commanded by the Lwa to do certain things, go places, buy things, and my father would just have to accept that and sometimes serve her, because that's what the Lwa wanted*' (Ville-France, 17/02/2016). The fact that Ville-France's mother was 'chosen' by a *Lwa,* granting her a certain level of power, demonstrates the ways in which the *Vodou* belief system affords more equality to women in relation to men than the religions and social institutions brought to the Haitian people through European colonialism.

The emergence of Christianity – not including Catholicism whose symbolism and concepts can be found within *Vodou,* as Haitian *Vodou* was greatly influenced by Catholic imagery – creates not only a conflict between belief systems, but also a division in the people. As *Vodou* is greatly tied up with Haitian history and identity, with 'poverty' and 'blackness', and modern cultural influences have led to many feelings of shame and oppression for these synonyms, Christianity, in the minds of many people, has offered an alternative that reflects purity, cleanliness and dignity. Within this is also the hierarchical subordination of women. This conflict exists within the concept of post-colonial, structural violence, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Sexual violence, symbolic violence

It can also be said that women lack full control over their bodies, and are often involved in sexual activity which they either consent to but do not choose, or it is forced upon them. This is reflective of women's positioning in Haitian society, their duties as a woman or wife, as well as other motivations for their own safety. As single mother, Chantalle says, about women's ability to say 'no' to sex:

> '*Interviewer: So is it common that [a woman] will have that power, to say 'no' if she doesn't want to have sex?*
>
> *Chantalle: She doesn't have that power.*
>
> *Interviewer: Ok*
>
> *Chantalle: Do you know why she doesn't have power? Because if she says 'no', her household won't be looked after, and the man will be angry. He will go outside [somewhere else] so he can do it [have sex].*' (Chantalle, 17/03/2015)

The above quote is also suggestive of the theme of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly violence against women and girls (VAWG), as it exists within an underlying framework of 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 2001:1-2) and 'structural violence' (Farmer, 2004:307). The fact that, in the quote above, Chantalle talks about giving consent does not minimise the existence of violence because of the wider contextual factors – namely poverty and powerlessness – present. As Millet (2005) points out:

> 'We are not accustomed to associate patriarchy with force. So perfect is its system of socialization, so complete the general assent to its values, so long and so universally has it prevailed in human society, that it scarcely seems to require violent implementation.' (Millet, 2005:47)

This form of 'gentle violence', as Bourdieu (2001) describes, exists and manifests itself within the same framework and 'unbroken continuum' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:78-79) as a more outward and discernable physical gender-based violence. This spectrum, or 'continuum' of gender-based violence, as it is found in Haiti, is part of a global patriarchal system that affects women throughout the world to different degrees whose economic and/or social status can either have, or not have effect on the degree of violence to which they are exposed (True, 2012). In the case of women in Haiti, there are certainly parallels with Sen's (1997) statement about landless Indian women:

> 'But why do poor, labouring women submit to this control? Responsibility for children under conditions of acute poverty makes women willing to submit to male sexual control in return for some economic resources, however meagre.' (Sen, 1997:147)

There is a high level of sexual and domestic violence against women in Haiti (Justensen & Verner, 2007; Amnesty International, 2008; Nolan, 2011; Renton, 2007). Though it is impossible to set forth exact figures relating to the prevalence of sexual crimes against women, because of vast under-reporting, conservative estimates place the percentage of abused women and girls at 46 (Justensen & Verner, 2007:4). In a survey of the wider Port-au-Prince region between 2004 and 2005, it was found that 35,000 women had been reported as being sexually assaulted (Kolbe & Hutson, 2006:868). Though this figure only represents *reported* crimes within the urban Port-au-Prince region, it is largely indicative of the large scale of sexual violence throughout the country. Moreover, sexual violence has been performed against women on a political level after the destabilisation of the state in the wake of the 1991 and 2004 military coups against President Jean-

Bertrand Aristide (Charles, 1995; Joachin & Gardiner, 2007). According to a report by Amnesty International (2008), 'widespread reports of armed men raping women started under the military regime' of 1991 to 1994, and was subsequently continued as 'common practice among criminal groups'. Throughout the country, rape was being used as a weapon to instil fear among supporters of the democratically elected ousted president (Amnesty International, 2008:5). This is reflective of theories in which men are thought to benefit from power over women through rape and the threat of rape. As Brownmiller argues, 'rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear' (Brownmiller, 1975:15).

On the domestic level, violence, including sexual violence is widespread in Haitian households, with an estimated one in three women being victims (Beyond Borders, 2014; Joachin & Gardiner, 2007). Many figures highlight the elevated level of gender-based violence in urban areas, but rural areas are also significantly affected. Rape is in fact one of the dangers most feared by rural women (Group 4, 12/12/2014). Alcohol consumption in rural areas can also lead to increased levels of violence in the home, particularly directed at women and children (Madanm Exius, 21/02/2015). Violence is a common feature of many relationships, in rural as well as urban areas. Chantalle, referring to a hypothetical couple, states:

> *'In public, they may get on well, but as soon as they get home, if the*
> *girl speaks out of turn, she'll get slapped. But when they go outside,*
> *she won't say anything. It hasn't happened in my life so far. [...]*
> *When I'm in a relationship with someone, I say 'no slaps allowed, no*
> *beating allowed'* (Chantalle, 17/03/2015)

High levels of gender-based violence in Haiti contribute directly to the disempowerment of women, and as a result, the neglect of women's priorities. As

women are primarily responsible for children and their welfare, women's victimisation has the consequence of putting children at risk by failing to protect them. Sexual violence in Haiti does not only contribute to children being sent into the *restavèk* system through the oppression of women, but it is also part of the context of sexual violence in which the *restavèk* system exists, with the majority, between 59 and 75 per cent *restavèk* children being girls (Somerfelt ed., 2002:39; McCalla 2002:15), as we saw in chapter three.

Education: Haitian's school system alienating the poor majority

In the case of the women in rural areas in Haiti, many, especially those over a certain age, have had little access to formal education. Most of the women interviewed for this research in rural Haiti were unable to write their names. This reflects the national estimate that in rural areas, 47 per cent of women aged 40 to 44, and 57 per cent of women aged 45 to 49 are unable to read (MSPP, 2013:37). At 53 per cent, literacy levels in Haiti are the lowest in the Caribbean which has a shared average literacy level with Latin America of 90 per cent (Library of Congress, 2006:11).

In 2013, 13 per cent of women and 17 per cent of men aged between 15 to 19 had not been attending school, compared to 57 per cent of women and 70 per cent of men aged between 45 to 49 years, on average nationally (MSPP,2013:37; N'Zengou-Tayo, 1998:120). These statistics vary significantly from urban to rural locations and from rich to poor economic situations. Government spending on education is one of the lowest in the world, at around two per cent of the GDP (Wolff, 2008:3). The government-run public education system is therefore vastly insufficient to provide access to schooling for the majority of the population. As a result, many schools are privately funded, and are attended by approximately 80

per cent of school-goers, making it the second highest proportion of private school enrolment in the world (Wolff, 2008:1). All schools, apart from a small fraction run through non-governmental organisations are either fee-paying, or incur registration fees and costs of books, supplies and uniforms.

During the short rule of President Aristide in 1991, public school fees were abolished. However, with no alternative government funding, the quality of the school system deteriorated drastically thereafter (Salmi, 1998:9). It is not unheard of for teachers to go several months without receiving any pay (Teachers[22], 19/11/2014; KOMANTIM, 17/11/2015). Determinants like distance to schools and high fees significantly lower the attendance rate for schools in rural areas (Demombynes et al., 2010:2-3). On any given weekday morning in rural Haiti, one can witness countless children in various uniforms, walking to school.

> *'If you count on your finger how many [schools in my area] there are, you'll find two or three. Sometimes children walk kilometres, they leave home at 5am and arrive at school around 9am. All this, just so they can go to school.'* (Monique, 15/07/2015)

Sometimes the walk is several hours long. Resource poor families will send their children to a state school, if there is one in the area, which can be many miles away. A less popular choice is to send children to a private school, which might be nearer, but the cost is often too high for many parents with little or no income (Groups 1&2, 27/11/2014). As most rural families tend to be poor, combined with the fact they tend to have a large number of children, many parents choose not to

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[22] On a visit to an orphanage in Port-au-Prince, I met a group of teachers who worked there (most orphanages include a school for the children), and they told me that they had received no pay in several months

send their children to school, or to send one or two, if they can. Admittedly, this is less of a choice, and more of an economic reality which deprives them of options.

Some rural families do not recognise the benefits of sending their children to school, having not been schooled themselves as children. One participant, who had been in the *restavèk* system as well as in hazardous child labour on his parents' rural farm, explained that his father had refused to send him to school because he needed him to work on the farm. The boy ran away from home at 14, determined to go to school, and he ended up in the *restavèk* system in his aunt's home. He explained that his father later regretted the decision as he came to understand the value of literacy. This man, now 29, is still trying to finish school but a life of poverty continues to prevent him from doing so (Céné, various dates).

Often illiterate, parents in rural areas depend on their children's labour to work in their fields or homes. Child labour, some of which would categorically be defined as 'hazardous' under the International Labour Organisation's Convention N.182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO, 2011:3-4), is extremely common in Haiti, especially in the most economically disadvantaged families, and particularly in rural areas.[23] As most *restavèk* children originate in rural areas, where child labour is common, and can at times be enforced with violence at the hands of their parents (Céné, various dates), it must be noted that there can exist a sliding scale of mistreatment of children. Based on my findings, I suggest that the abuse, physical and psychological, which children are likely to endure as *restavèks*, might sometimes only be marginally worse than what some face at home with their parents.

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[23] Observations in a community in North of Haiti, where children were seen working with machetes in their hands. Conversations with local people divulged that up to a certain age, boys and girls do the same work, and then girls remain working in the home and boys are expected to do more manual work, like working in the fields.

It might be said too, in some cases, that the treatment of *restavèk* children can be an improvement on their home life. However this is the exception rather than the norm. According to a number of participants, most *restavèk* children, faced with the choice to stay or to return to their parents, would choose the latter, even if it means returning to a situation of hunger and, in some cases, abuse. This might be reflective of a cultural attitude to children and the ways in which love and care are manifested in parent to child relationships. Some parents might neglect, or even mistreat their children, but still feel love towards them, and work hard to provide for them. This love and care, despite the hardship, can bring a level of security and comfort to the child which they would habitually not experience as a *restavèk* in someone else's home, as we will see further. As I noted in my field diary:

> *'Children are usually the main topic of conversation when you speak*
>
> *to Haitians. How many do you have? When will you have one? These*
>
> *are the first questions you get asked, all day, every day. And I can see,*
>
> *just by talking to people and witnessing their hard work in whatever*
>
> *form it takes, that they are doing it all to provide for their children, for*
>
> *that is the first thing they mention.. their kids need to eat, need to go*
>
> *to school...'* – Field diary, September 30th, 2015

Though many parents do not consider education valuable enough to endure the cost and consequential sacrifices of sending their children to school, this is not reflective of the majority. Education is generally highly valued in Haiti. I have heard the words, '*voye timoun lekol*' - 'send my children to school' - too many times to count, usually as a reasoning to ask me to help them financially. The fact that some parents send their children away as *restavèks,* in the hope that this will

ensure schooling for them, might be a reflection of these values. Many poor families consider the education of their children to be of significant importance, and place the funding of their schooling as a high priority. However, the average cost of schooling at around 13 per cent of per capita income, based on the national average - to which most rural households fall far below – makes it extremely challenging or impossible for parents to send their children to school (Salmi, 1998:8). However, for families living on little to no income, education represents a level of security for the future. When children are sent to school, it is in the hope that this will increase their chances to get a job in the future. They, in turn, will be expected to support their families with their income.

Education in Haiti is also linked with the class system, and is very much representative of a perception of 'civilisation' exemplified and sought after by the wealthy elite. This view of civilisation is tied to the French language, and strict rules and customs – deemed to be European, or more specifically French in origin. It has been argued that the education system, as it is in Haiti today, is alienating for ordinary Haitians, because it forces them to be, or to replicate, an image which is not representative of them (Djaloki, 2004). The consequence is that many people feel ashamed and unworthy because of their Haitian-African roots, language and beliefs, and their poverty. French is the language of the Haitian administration and the wealthy elite, which represents success and wealth in Haiti and it is therefore appealing to the disenfranchised *Kreyòl* speaking population.[24] The vast majority, nine out of 10 Haitians, speak only *Kreyòl* (Haggerty, 1989). Despite this fact, all

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[24] It took a long time to identify this in people, but their views of language, class and skin colour strongly affect how they feel about themselves and other people. As a white person, those who can, will try to speak to you in French because they see you as part of a higher class. In speaking French, they are showing their level of education and separating themselves from the uneducated masses. When you speak Kreyòl to Haitians, they take a lot of pleasure in it because you are showing respect and acknowledgment for their language and culture, something they are not used to from the 'lighter-skinned', or '*blan*' class of wealthy elite.

subjects are taught in French. Children are taught to read and memorise words whose meanings they do not understand.[25] Assisted by the American NGO, Beyond Borders, one school on the island of Lagonav has developed a *Kreyòl* curriculum, teaching all subjects in the children's native language. This has meant that the children at this school have been able to understand their subjects and to begin to learn to critically analyse. This school has seen its pupils reach results higher than the national average (Bracken, 2014).

Aside from the language dynamics, Haitian schools are also very strict. There are rules of dress, appearance, conduct and punctuality which, if not adhered to, can lead to capital punishment or dismissal from school. Children can be sent home for having the wrong hairstyle or the wrong length socks, and disciplining is often done by beating students with a belt or ruler (Saint-Louis, various dates; Céné, various dates). As I witnessed throughout my time in Haiti, schools are regularly closed due to instability, especially in Port-au-Prince, where there are recurrent protests in the streets, many of which are violent. These factors make it very difficult for children to rely on school for routine and consistency. The Haitian educational system has also been criticised for its lack of quality (Salmi, 1998; Wolff, 2008). Approximately 79 per cent of primary school teachers have had no formal training, 10 per cent of which only had a lower secondary education themselves (Wolff, 2008:6). A government credential for quality is given in the form of a license, but only affects 17 per cent of schools in urban areas, and 3 per cent in rural areas (Demombynes et al. 2010:5).

The lack of access to schools in rural areas is a push factor that contributes directly to children being placed into the *restavèk* system as parents choose to

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[25] On several occasions, I have witnessed children doing homework, or revising their lessons, as they often do so on public squares where there are solar paneled lights. When I approach them and speak to them, in *Kreyòl*, I see that they are reading out loud the words in their books, but they cannot explain what the words say.

send their children somewhere they believe they will gain an education. As parents often highly prioritise education for their children and its investment in the future, they are often prepared to accept the risks connected to sending their children away in order for them to have access to schooling.

Divisions, men and women with separate lives and goals

In rural Haiti, the main economic activity is small-scale subsistence farming, and the sale of those agricultural goods either at nearby market towns, or to intermediaries who buy produce and transport it to sell to market-women in the towns (Schwartz, 2015; Stam, 2013). I noted that in rural areas, land, mostly owned or leased, by local farmers, is cultivated for various products like carrots, potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes, plantains, mangoes, millet, sugar cane and coffee, to name a few. As mentioned earlier, it is sometimes difficult, or not worthwhile, to transport large quantities of produce from isolated areas to village or town markets. In such areas, almost all of what is produced is eaten locally or fed to animals.[26]

The division of agricultural labour is usually distributed equally between men and women in terms of time spent working in the fields. Although many men and women are both involved in agricultural labour, there are certain normative gender divisions of labour which are mostly attributed to women and vice versa. Men usually work the land and plant seeds while women harvest (Gardella, 2006:16-17), and are in charge of any marketing activity associated with the produce (N'Zengo-Tayou, 1998:123).[27] The gendered division of labour is a recurring theme in this thesis, and indeed, signicative of patriarchal gender roles throughout the developing world. Chen (1995), in a study of India and Bangladesh,

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[26] Based on ethnographic conversations and participation.
[27] Based on ethnographic observations and conversations with people in rural areas.

points to similarly divided roles for men and women as 'one of the prominent elements of this basic patriarchal system' (Chen, 1995:38). As gendered divisions of labour tend to disfavour women, the labour roles attributed to them are usually less profitable, associated with less 'prestige', or requiring fewer skills than those attributed to men (Basu & Thomas, 2009; Rohini, 1991; Sen, 1995). This is not only true of the labour itself but also the tools used to work, and the global trend of labour mechanisation, where men are usually put in charge of machines, which 'embod[y] a much greater amount of capital' (Rohini, 1991:262). In my time in rural Haiti in January 2015 and during several visits throughout 2015 and 2016, I saw many men walking around with machetes and other tools and animals, and women could be seen in rows in the fields, collecting beans.

> *'Women were working in the steep mountain-side fields, harvesting green-peas. I looked down at the vegetable gardens clinging on the vertical slopes and thought about how hard it would be to work there, to not fall and tumble down a thousand feet into the ravine below.'*
> (de Hoog, 2015)

Farming methods are extremely labour intensive, having changed very little in the past two hundred years. There are very few tools available to farmers, and virtually no machinery (Smith, 2001). The major difference I witnessed between the work of men and that of women lies in women's additional responsibilities in the home. A woman's workload includes not only agricultural labour and marketing activities, but also household maintenance and child care (N'Zengo-Tayou, 1998:123). The home is considered her space (Schwartz, 2015), and family, her sphere, to the point where the Kreyòl expression is used, *'fanm se magi',* meaning literally, 'women are stock' referring to the salty cubes which are so important in Haitian cooking, that melt into everything, holding the whole dish, or

the entire household in this case, together. Another way of putting it is in the famous phrase, ''*fanm se poto mitan',* 'women are the central pillar'. This refers to their important role in family life as well as in society as a whole (Tèt Ansanm, 2009). She is responsible for the upkeep and care of the house, and for the care of children and elderly people, if there are any. This means that women have the task of cooking, cleaning, and childcare in addition to the agricultural labour performed daily (Gardella, 2006:17). Moreover, an estimated 90 per cent are involved in a form of commercial activity, spending 'most of their day at the market, which they reach on foot or by donkey' (N'Zengo-Tayou, 1998:124).

Placing this within the wider context of gender and development discourse, rural women's situation in Haiti fit into theoretical frameworks of 'reproductive' and 'productive' labour as articulated by Momsen (2010), and the concept of women as 'embodied infrastructure', as put forward by Clisby and Holdsworth (2016). As we saw earlier, when discussing birth rates, women in Haiti are, like women across the Global South, involved in reproductive labour. This not only consists of 'biological reproduction', or child birth and infant nursing, but also 'social reproduction', which include 'tasks related to housework, food preparation and care for the sick', which, as Momsen points out, are 'more time consuming in developing countries than in the industrialized world'. Included within this is also the expectation that women will 'ensure the reproduction of the labour force by assuming responsibility for the health, education and socialization of children' (Momsen, 2010:46). Particularly relevant to rural Haitian women is the expectation that women will also adopt the roles of 'production' and 'community management', by, as demonstrated above engaging in productive labour as well as maintaining social, kin and family networks for the welfare of the household and community (Momsen, 2010:16). As women play this integral role within their

households, communities and societies, they exemplify the concept of 'embodied infrastructure' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016).

> 'Community management work is the usually informal, unpaid and often invisible but nonetheless critically important labour that is performed at the community level that also acts as a form of embodied infrastructure to facilitate and support families and communities. [...] this a highly gendered form of labour inasmuch as it tends to be performed overwhelmingly by women and is often perceived as an extension of women's biologically essentialised but socially constructed caring and nurturing roles. As such it confers the concomitant low status and undervaluation of this labour one associates with much of these gendered social roles.' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:11)

Not only does this additional imposed responsibility of community management add to women's reproductive roles in such a way that communities, society, and often they themselves, are blind to (Sen, 1995), but it is performed in conjunction with productive labour. As women carry out increasing loads of productive labour without any diminished responsibility within their household chores, they are laden with a 'double burden' (Momsen, 2010:48-52). The invisibility of women's labour is a crucial aspect of this double burden in what Sen (1995) terms 'co-operative conflicts' where 'gender inequality is made acceptable to women themselves [...] by playing up the demands of efficiency in particular social arrangements (Sen, 1995:270). Sen argues that, compelling the agency of women themselves, '[t]he perceived justness of such inequalities and the absence of any contrary sense of deep injustice play a major part in the operation and survival of these arrangements' (Sen, 1995:260). Moreover, Okin (1995) argues that the

women being '*over*-worked' means they are considered less economically valuable than men (Okin, 1995:282), which in turn, devalues the work that they do. She adds that the gendered division of the public (men's) and domestic (women's) spheres results in the 'failure to count a great deal of the work done by women as work, since all that is considered 'work' is what is done for pay, in the public sphere' (Okin, 1995:280).

Socially and culturally in Haiti, women's work within the home is not considered labour in the same way that men's work is. Men are often unaware of the physical, mental and emotional efforts of this type of work, and often consider themselves to work harder than their wives or female counterparts. One member of the *Fondasyon Limye Lavi* team said, *'[women] have more time and are always around*' (*Limyè Lavi* team, 12/11/2014). This might stem from a patriarchal social structure in which men are usually in positions of authority over women, and are typically heads of the household.

One report by USAID states:

'Women are marginalized in relation to their male counterparts but at the same time exercise a considerable degree of autonomy and independence in the management of a household's resources. What is of note here is that women maintain a subservient demeanor in the presence of men, but in women-only groups they are as engaged, active and vociferous as men, as is quite apparent in market places, around laundry and water sites, and in other places where women congregate. Women also evidence submissive behavior in the

presence of both men and women of a higher class or from urban areas.' (Gardella, 2006:17)[28]

When asked what the difference is between men and women's work, one woman in the Ma community said that men's work is harder, because men are 'stronger'. However, as I noted in a blog post, the same woman who said this would carry gallons of water up and down the mountain every day. She had also given birth to nine children. Her husband jovially said she was 'the smallest lady in the community, but with the most children', and it seemed quite true.[29]

> *'We had discussed with them the division of labour between men and women, and they had all echoed the popular Haitian opinion that men work harder than women. Men are stronger, they say, their work is harder. Certainly, men have to replace machines, and toil in the hot sun, sweat dripping down their faces and bodies, pushing, pulling, building, planting, digging, lifting. Yet, we had sat with men from Ma, talked with them, played dominoes, walked around. But it was only in this moonlit moment, after three days of constant working, cooking, cleaning, carrying water, pounding millet, washing clothes, washing dishes, shelling beans, bathing children, clothing children, feeding pigs, braiding hair, that Altamene could sit with us, for a few minutes of peace, her youngest child in her arms. It strikes me again, as it has many times, that women's work is so constant, so demanding and incessant, it is invisible. Even to the women themselves.'* (de Hoog, 2015c)

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[28] These observations reflect my own experiences, spending considerable amounts of time among women, both in the presence of men, and in groups of women and children.
[29] Based on participatory observation in the Ma community, South East Haiti.

Though caring for children is extremely demanding and labour intensive work, it is usually not considered work at all by Haitian men. I note that in the meeting with the *Limye Lavi* team, the topic of gendered division of labour caused the group to laugh and joke. '*Lots of laughing and debating turning to Kreyol. It seems it is all the men against the one female and me*' (*Limyè Lavi* team, 12/11/2014). I noted that the change of tone of the discussion was due to discomfort, a sort of 'nervous laughter'.[30] In this case, as in many discussions with Haitian men about gender divisions, the conversation turned to interpretations of Christian teachings as a way to justify the authority of men over women.

The divisions between male and female roles in Haitian society are important contextual markers that contribute to the *restavèk* system, and women's involvement within it, by creating an environment wherein women are unequal to men on a social level, and have less access to power and authority. We will continue to look at this throughout this chapter, but it is important, at this juncture, to establish the fact that women and men do not have equal footing, and are living very different lives. This is worth noting because of how it influences women's decisions regarding their, and other people's, children.

Cultural elements: influence and isolation

This discussion of gender roles within agricultural and domestic work in rural areas leads us on to the topic of culture. Gendered roles are rooted in cultural norms and traditions. Haitian culture manifests an interesting paradox because it is both influenced by a multi-cultural colonial history as well as extremely isolated from the modern world through poverty and lack of infrastructural development.

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[30] 'Nervous laughter', as I attest, is a way that many Haitian people use to diffuse a situation of social discomfort. Loud arguing is almost always followed by raucous laughter, as a way to re-establish pleasantness between people who disagree.

My ethnographic observations led me to attest that Haitian culture has preserved much of its African roots due to the isolation of rural communities and the passing down of customs through generations. The *Vodou* belief system is an example of this. However, in many ways, Haitian society is also considerably affected by external influences. This is more evident in the towns, cities, and particularly among the social elite. Once a French colony, Haiti has firmly preserved many aspects of French culture. The rich upper class, that wields political and formal economic powers, still associates itself strongly with French identity, language and cultural preservation (Djaloki, 2004). The United States' 19 year occupation, from 1915 to 1934, left many cultural markers on Haiti, and still continues to do so as a superpower with economic and political interests in Haiti (Farmer, 2003). However, it can also be said that much of Haiti remains somewhat annexed from the rest of the world through the isolation of rural areas and people's lack of access to education and the media. The vast majority, 92 per cent, of Haitians do not use the internet on a regular basis (Info as Aid, 2012:17). Newspapers are widely read, but only among the educated and elite since all newspapers are published in French (Info as Aid, 2012:116). Information about the outside world travels slowly within Haiti, if at all. The lack of education and literacy also contribute to plunging Haiti's population in the dark. Many people know very little about what is outside of Haiti and, to an extent, their immediate neighbour Dominican Republic.[31]

International migration has played a role in spreading more information over the past few decades. For example, a steady flow of both legal and illegal immigration has led to many Haitians having some family members abroad – mostly in the Dominican Republic, the United States, Canada, France or other Caribbean countries– which has increased some people's understanding of the

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[31] Based on ethnographic conversations with poor Haitians both in urban and rural areas.

globalised world (Wah, 2013:58). Networks of friends and relatives overseas have contributed to a wider sense of multi-culturalism and, arguably, increased 'cosmopolitan capital' as people travel to, understand, and engage in different cultures before returning home and sharing what they have learnt (Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Weenink, 2008).

However, Haitian culture for the most part, seems relatively untouched by many of the influences of the outside world. As mentioned above, this is especially true for the rural population. Haitian society remains a strong reflection of its African and French colonial roots as well as its North American, economically imposed, influences.[32] In observing the culture and its norms, it is evident that it is one that is heavily affected by the country's deep and widespread poverty. As Caribbean born writer, Frantz Fanon, says in his exploration of post-colonial societies, *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> 'After one or two centuries of exploitation the national cultural landscape has radically shrivelled. It has become an inventory of behavioural patterns, traditional costumes, and miscellaneous customs. Little movement can be seen. There is no real creativity, no ebullience. Poverty, national oppression and cultural repression are one and the same.' (Fanon, 1968:172)

This seems an accurate depiction of Haiti's poverty-influenced culture. Haiti's traditional customs, arts, and other cultural determinants are seemingly, to a large extent dictated by poverty. Looking at this through a post-colonial lens, we reference Fanon again who, talking about the difference between the 'settler' and 'native' societies, states:

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[32] This has been evident through the participatory observation of rural populations, who are, for a large part, disconnected from media and contact with the middle or upper classes, or foreigners.

'The town belonging to the colonized people [...] is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty arabs.' (Fanon, 1968:30).

This quote not only describes post-colonial societies like that of Haiti in terms of the poverty left behind by its exploitative past and its existence in a polarised and racist global civilisation, it also refers back to the aforementioned themes of 'structural violence' and 'symbolic violence' (Farmer, 2004; Bourdieu, 2001). As Farmer states, talking about structural violence, about Haitian society:

'Poverty, crime, accidents, disease, death—and more often than not their causes—are also seen as problems locally derived. The transnational tale of slavery and debt and turmoil is lost in the vivid poverty, the understanding of which seems to defeat the analyses of journalists and even many anthropologists, focused as we are on the ethnographically visible—what is there in front of us.' (Farmer, 2004:305)

He continues, 'In Haiti structural violence continues to play itself out in the daily lives and deaths of the part of the population living in poverty.' (Farmer, 2004:311). The post-colonial discourses by both Said (2003) and Césaire (1972), discussing the inherent racism and savagery of colonialism attest to the violence and long-held consequences – particularly in terms of

racial narratives – of European colonial interference in the world. It is thus impossible to separate Haiti's history of colonialism and continued post-colonial consequences from its economic poverty and the influences of that on its culture and particularly, for the purpose of this thesis, on the *restavèk* system. We will look at this in further detail in the subsequent chapter.

Households, who is in control?

Numerous women in rural areas are living alone with their children. Many of these women have husbands who have left to try to make money elsewhere. In the case of the women I interviewed in the *Wo Jefre* community in the South East of Haiti, most of them said their husbands were in the Dominican Republic looking for work. These same women said that they did not receive any money from their husbands. Other single mothers' husbands had died (Groups 1&2, 27/11/2014). These female-headed households are the most vulnerable to extreme poverty, and most likely to send children into the *restavèk* system (Groups 1&2, 27/11/2014; Groups 3&4 12/12/2014; KOMANTIM, 17/11/2015). Indeed, a number of the women interviewed had sent children away.

There is a high number of female-headed households in Haiti. The World Bank estimates them to make up approximately 41 per cent of Haitian households (World Bank, 2012). The prevalence of female-headed households in Haiti is not a new occurrence. In 1994, it was estimated that female-headed households made up 44 per cent of all urban households and 26 per cent of rural ones, a figure that had been steadily increasing up until that point (Gammage, 2004:751). Female-headed households tend to be poorer than male-headed households, particularly in rural areas where extreme poverty affects 62 per cent of the former, and 54 per cent of the latter (Verner, 2008:33-4). Moreover, female-headed households in a

rural setting are 11 per cent more likely to be poor than female-headed households in urban areas (Verner, 2008:46). These figures, along with an increase in female involvement in agricultural work has led to what some theorists have referred to the 'feminization of poverty' (Gammage, 2004:751). Originally, this phrase reflected three main notions, that 'women represent a disproportionate percentage of the world's poor, that this trend is deepening, and that women's increasing share of poverty is linked with a rising incidence of female household headship' (Chant, 2006:202). However, it has been criticised for lacking the nuances of poverty by assuming that women are a 'homogenous mass' and leaning too heavily on a lack of income rather than a more holistic analysis of poverty that takes a number of factors into account, such as 'gendered privation, encompassing capabilities, livelihoods, subjectivities and social exclusion' (Chant, 2006:203). Following on from this criticism, my research into women in Haiti thus includes a wide contextual approach that looks not only at poverty from a financial perspective, but also in terms of social, environmental and cultural capital.

Apart from female-headed households, which are characterised by women's unmarried, or unattached status, most families in rural Haiti consist of a couple, usually married under customary law, and occasionally under statutory law. Marriage, whether under customary law, or statute law is an important factor in rural women's statuses, as it grants more respect (N'Zengou-Tayo, 1998:121). However, it also entails an increase in workload, and to an extent, deprives women of an individual identity, as after marriage, they are known by their married name, '*Madanm X*', 'Mrs X' where 'X' represents the husband's name (N'Zengou-Tayo, 1998:123).[33]

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[33] This fact has been verified through all the introductions I have had with married women, whose names I only know as '*Madamm X*'. Even their husbands refer to them by this name, as exemplified by my host family in the Ma community, where Mr. Delange would call his wife '*Madanm Delange*'.

My empirical evidence suggests that in families where there is a man present, he is usually considered the head of the household. This means that, while his female partner is responsible for the household, he is the leader of the family, possessing the most authority. As women are usually in charge of the commerce aspect of the household's labour output in rural areas, money coming into the home typically passes through their hands first. This, together with the fact that the mother is normally in charge of household duties, including purchasing food and other items, grants her a level of financial autonomy (N'Zengou-Tayo, 1998:123; Gardella, 2006:16). Expressing an opinion that women are granted more authority and autonomy than most theorists believe, anthropologist, Timothy Schwartz insists that:

> 'Haiti has often been represented as one of the most repressive countries for women on the planet. But with respect to rural Haiti this is an error. Control over households, obtained through their natural position as mothers, engenders a control over the local economy and individual autonomy that arguably puts women in a position of power superior to their spouses.' (Schwartz, 2009: Location 4001-5)

According to my empirical research, there does appear to be a level of teamwork and discussion between men and their wives. Most women interviewed admitted that decisions regarding money and children were discussed together as a couple. It is usually a joint decision which sends children into the *restavèk* system, and women often have the opportunity to discuss what money will be spent on. This is the case because, as the woman, she is more in tune with what the household, and the children, are in need of. This is more so the case in rural households, where the woman is more likely to be bringing in the income through

her trading activities (Monique, 15/07/2015; Charline, 18/08/2015; Fonise, 22/07/2015). This position of financial control on behalf of rural women was also represented in a number of interviews, particularly in the case of female agricultural produce intermediaries, also known as *'Madam Sara'*. One stated:

'My husband [if I had one] could decide what the money is spent on. But I could say to him, 'Darling, today this amount of money is going towards this particular thing.' This means it's his will and my will together that make a household.' (Charline, 18/08/2015)

Another intermediary, responding to the same question regarding who, in the household, makes decisions relating to money, said: '*Well, if we are married, it means we are one.*' She elaborated:

'Yes, since we are in one house, we can decide what the money is for. He [my husband], if he sees something is not right, can say, 'Darling, this is not good', he can decide what would be better. But there isn't really an obligation that says 'I [the husband] can decide because I have the monopoly'. That's not how it is.' (Monique, 15/07/2015)

In this sense, marriages and relationships are *seen* as, more-or-less, equal partnerships between men and women, in terms of certain decisions regarding money and expenditure. However, that is not to suggest that men and women always have the same priorities when it comes to spending money. It has indeed been evidenced, through GAD theory, that women are less likely to spend money on themselves than men, and that children tend to be better nourished in female-headed households than in male-headed households with a mother's income a stronger predictor of child nutrition than a father's (Blumberg, 1993; Chant, 1985). It has also been found that women are less likely to reserve income to spend on alcohol compared to men (Blumberg, 1993:28). Regarding his own parents, one

survivor of the *restavèk* system, child labour and domestic abuse explained: his mother would make money at the market and buy whatever the household needed, like cooking items and clothes and shoes for the children etc. His father would let her do this, but sometimes, when he earned money directly from his own activities, he regarded that money as his own and would spend most of it on himself, usually on '*Tafya*', a homemade rum, or he would play the lottery (Céné, various dates). Another participant, a mother of four children in a rural community, added:

> *'Well, what I would say is the biggest problem for women in Haiti is that most women in Haiti don't have any [economic] activity to make a little money so she can choose what to spend it on. That means, it's not all women who can work, or can have somewhere to go to do a few days of work. And when she can't work to make her own money, she has to have [money] given to her […] it means she isn't her own master. Because when someone gives you ten gourdes for whatever reason, you might want to do something else with it but you can't. But if women had work and could make their own money, they could make a little money and save a little money, it would be her own business.'* (Jolène, 14/04/2016)

Many of my interviews echoed this opinion, that women are often dependent on others, usually men, for the financial needs of their children and household.

> *'Madanm Christmas: I feel I am not competent enough to fulfill my main mission. That's what I feel because all the responsibility that rests on my shoulders, I don't feel like I can even fulfill even five per cent of it, in the way I'd like to. Because for what I would like, […] I'm not capable.*
>
> *Interviewer: What would make you feel you are competent?*

> *Madanm Christmas*: *To be able to answer to the needs of my children, the needs of my family, but I'm not capable.*
>
> *Interviewer: But is that you or your circumstances?*
>
> *Madanm Christmas: It's me and my circumstances.'* (Madanm Christmas, 14/04/2016)

This is indicative of the effects of women's roles, as being over-burderned and unable to fulfil the responsibilities attributed to them. As Clisby and Holdsworth state, 'requirements on women to juggle multiple roles often leave women feeling inadequate in all of them' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:128). Another rural participant added:

> *'What makes it difficult is that it's only men who can work, and the work they can do doesn't really make any money. When they come home with the little bit they come home with, it's women who have the biggest problem because we are the ones who have to think of what we can do with the little money that has come in. What I'm going to make this money do… It's not what it* can *do, no, but we have to* make it *do it. When there are four children at home so you should buy 20 gourdes worth of bread so each child can have a piece – but you have to buy ten gourdes worth and cut it in half so that each child can have a little, and it doesn't satisfy their hunger.'* (Darline, 14/04/2016)

Although it is true that some women are able to acquire their own money through market activities, the above quotes show that that is not the case for most rural women. We will look in more detail at the aforementioned agricultural intermediaries, '*Madam Sara'* women, in chapter eight, their status and perceived autonomy. However, a more accurate representation of rural women as a whole

does not place them in a position of financial independence, as the participants' contributions above clearly convey.

In terms of parenthood, one cannot discuss mothers without mentioning fathers. The relationship between the two is positioned in a social, political and historical system of gender disparity. In the case of families in which the father, or a male father-figure, is present, the man usually has the responsibility of providing for his wife and children resting on his shoulders. As we have seen women are systematically discriminated against, charged with the main responsibility over children. It is much easier for a man to leave his family, his children, than for a woman who remains in charge of household and directly responsible for her children. Men are habitually considered the head of the household. Women are said to be in charge of the home, but evidently men are in charge of the women who are in charge of the home. A married (whether legally or under customary law) woman's autonomy is often limited to what her husband dictates.

> '*Men are always at the head [in charge]. It's him who makes the decisions as well, women can only agree. Most often, you'll find women agree with what their men say because they are the boss. […] They are the boss, and when they are the boss, if they give orders we have to obey them.*' (Chantalle, 17/03/2015)

There is a Kreyòl expression, *'Ravèt pa janm gen rezon devan poul',* which translates as 'the cockroach is never right in the presence of a chicken'. This is sometimes used to describe the relationship between men and women, where the woman is never right in the presence of a man. In other words, her opinions are considered of lesser importance (Céné, various dates).

In correlation with the segregated gender roles already discussed earlier in this chapter, women's socially imposed dependency on men for their and their

children's financial survival, and the consequential dynamics within households form the context in which women are disempowered and children are rendered vulnerable.

An important side-note on relationships

Referring back to the beginning of this chapter where we discussed the high birth rates, there is another relevant factor that is connected to gender dynamics, financial reliance on men and infidelity. Several participants brought up the high fertility rate of women, pointing out that many women set out to have children with a man in order to render him financially responsible for her and her future child. This is a recurring theme in this thesis as it affects women in rural as well as urban areas. A key professional working in the government branch of social welfare and child protection stated:

> *'Women understand as long as they have a man, and they're not*
> *married to him, they have to have his child. When they have to have*
> *a baby, it means they tie the man down, he will always have to*
> *provide [for them].'* (Delouis, 24/02/2015)

A pattern develops in which women seek male sexual partners and become pregnant. Sometimes, this leads to the man marrying the woman in order to provide some security for the child. However, it is more often the case that the father will leave and will either sporadically provide for the child or not at all.

> *'That's the way it is. The girl has a first child with a man, and he*
> *runs away. Since he knows he's not capable, he runs away.'*
> (Delouis, 24/02/2015)

Chantalle, a single mother of two children of different fathers explains:

> *'Well, most often it's the woman who decides to have a child. Men might ask 'can we have a child?', but it's more the woman who decides. [...]Even if the situation is not good for the woman, she is more willing to have a child because she has it in her head that once she has a baby, the man will help her with it, he will look after her better.* [...] *Sometimes it doesn't work because if you don't find a good person, a good man who loves his child, he can go and leave you with it [the child], and he doesn't look after you and the baby. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work. It's going to depend on what person you go for [...] it's going to depend on the man.'* (Chantalle, 17/03/2015)

In this context, the woman, now a mother, may attempt to secure the financial help of another man by doing the same thing. It is thus not uncommon for a woman to have several children with different fathers.

> *'It's so they can have security because there are many girls you'll see, who have several children, you'll see the children have several different fathers. It's because if she had two with the other man [who left], and she found a man who will look after her, they begin a sexual relationship. In order for her to keep this man, she decides to have a baby. [...] That's why you'll see lots of girls in Haiti have lots of children'* (Chantalle, 17/03/2015)

In some cases, where she eventually finds a man to commit to helping her, the first child or children who do not belong to this man are vulnerable to being badly treated. They also become vulnerable to being sent into the *restavèk* system, as Delouis points out:

'The first [child], whose father ran away, becomes a domestic in that same house. That's how [the system of] children in domesticity begins. The child in the home becomes the domestic worker, responsible for everything in the house.'

She adds:

'And if it's a girl it's even worse, because this man who is with her mother, when this child is 12, 13 years old, he can have sex with her too.' (Delouis, 24/02/2015)

As it is evident from numerous interviews with women throughout different areas, these sorts of relationships between men and women, centred on financial assistance are very common in Haiti. In some cases, women can have an arrangement with a man who provides money for her, sometimes even pays for her home, in exchange for sexual intercourse. Often, this man is married to another woman.

Interviews and ethnographic conversations informed me that infidelity is, seemingly, very common in Haiti. It appears to be somewhat accepted, and almost expected, when it is on the part of a man. However, women who have been unfaithful tend to be ridiculed. Adultery on their part is not as socially accepted. It became apparent from various people's attitudes that violence done unto a woman who has been unfaithful is, to some extent, accepted as normal. This can be exemplified through a story which was in the Haitian media in October, 2015. A Haitian celebrity couple were involved in a dispute in which the man discovered his partner in a sexual act with another man. He physically assaulted her, leaving her injured and bruised. Though her injuries were evident in photographs in the media, it was clear from the dialogue I witnessed from the public surrounding the

case, that many Haitian people were in support of the man's actions, finding it unacceptable that a woman should be unfaithful (Haiti Sentinel, 2015).

This might be a residual attitude regarding gender-based violence that reflects a long history of violent female oppression. Up until 2005, Haitian legislation criminalised adultery in a law in which women were subject to imprisonment of between three months and two years. Men, on the other hand, were subject only to a fine ranging from 100 Haitian gourdes to 400 Haitian gourdes (USD$2 – USD$8). Moreover, adultery committed by a woman was considered 'extenuating circumstances', which excused a man from killing his wife and her sexual partner, if the crime was committed shortly after the discovery was made (Chancy, 2007). Since 2005, adultery is no longer considered a crime in Haitian law.

The dynamics of many male-female relationships, and the aforementioned financial dependency within them, create a situation in which there can be a lack of male responsibility towards children, particularly those born outside of marriage, and therefore increases their vulnerability.

Lights, cash: the lure of the city

People living in rural areas know the challenges they are faced with in their environment. They are aware that there are areas, even within Haiti, where some basic elements come easier. As mentioned above, though areas are isolated, there tends to be a lot of travel on the part of certain members of the community, women involved in commerce for instance, back and forth between their home and the towns and cities. One thing that people assume, is that it is easier to make money in the towns, especially Port-au-Prince. When a Port-au-Prince resident returns to his rural home, for a visit for instance, they are expected to give some money to

most people they know in the community. During a visit to a rural area in the North of Haiti, I noted the following regarding my guide, Maxo, after we had been greeted by a group of people watching a cock-fight:

> *'As we walked away, Maxo told me he had given away 600 gourdes, and that was just the beginning. Travelling home is very expensive for Maxo, he needs to bring enough money for gifts for almost everyone.'* (de Hoog, 2015b)

This belief, that life might be marginally easier in towns and cities, led to a steady influx of migrants from Haiti's rural areas to the capital before the 1970s and in the 1980s and 1990s, when the agricultural economy started to decline (Forsman, 2009:26-7). This migratory trend is still continuing, as more and more people move to Port-au-Prince suburbs from rural areas (UN, 2015). The reality in Port-au-Prince can be very different to what is assumed by rural communities. As we will see in the next chapter, though urban income is up to three times greater than rural income (IFAD, 2012:2), many basic necessities come at a higher price in the capital. Rural families have easier access to food from their own crops, than urban dwellers have to food in the markets. Agricultural produce is more expensive in the capital than in the provinces, because of the marked up costs of its transfer into the hands of market women. Moreover, housing is more costly, as is water for the home, and for consumption (Fonise, 22/07/2015; Somène, 18/08/2015). Whilst it is also assumed, not without foundation, that access to school would be easier in the towns and cities, in reality accessing school may be more difficult than parents anticipate. With a higher cost of living, urban families cannot always afford to send their children to school. Although, people living in urban areas are more likely to have access to water and be connected to the

national electricity grid, electricity is never available all of the time without acquiring one's own means, such as a generator, solar panel, or inverter and batteries. Because it is so expensive, most people do not supply their own electricity unless they have a business that relies on it.

As I have found through my own empirical research, the contrast between urban and rural areas, and especially people's perceptions of it, means that many see Port-au-Prince as a step up from where they are living. This feeds the notion that there are opportunities for people in the city to make money and to find a better, wealthier life. These factors could largely affect parents' decisions as to whether or not to send their child away to live with a family in Port-au-Prince.

Measuring maternal love?

Just as people in rural Haiti can be unaware of the realities of Port-au-Prince, they are often uninformed regarding the experiences of *restavèk* children. The instability and poverty of Haiti means that parents are aware of the dangers for children all over the country. However, they may not know the particular dangers encountered within the *restavèk* system. As the General Coordinator of a local, Haitian-run NGO, Gina, says: *'When the parents send a child to a town, they don't really know the situation'* (Gina, 22/02/2015). However, many parents choose to send children away. It is my assertion that, aside from the wider socio-cultural and economic contexts, this could be for two reasons. Firstly, there might be a degree of trust towards the people in charge of their child. This might be because they know their child will be the responsibility of a woman, and there might be an understood level of trust that a woman is more caring for children due to a perceived natural mothering instinct. Secondly, as was mentioned earlier in relation to children's labour in the home of their parents, it is not unusual for

children to be treated in a way that is damaging to their physical and psychological health. The child protection committee of the Ma community near Jacmel informed me that many parents have not been exposed to dialogue relating to children's rights and they may not be aware that theirs and other people's actions can be extremely damaging (KOMANTIM, 12/12/2014). This must be understood in the context of life in Haiti, and the dangers associated with poverty, social violence and a lack of infrastructural development. Life can be challenging and dangerous for people of all ages. In the midst of people's struggle for survival, children's rights might not be a priority. Issues of children's rights and child protection have to be understood in the context of Haiti's poverty and the consequential effects this has on society and children. This should be considered in the context of the mundanity of violence as reflected by Scheper-Hughes' (1992) study in Brazil, in which she states:

> 'in many Third World countries mired in a relatively crude form of dependent capitalism and still characterized by a high mortality and a high, "untamed" fertility, the naturalness of infant and child mortality has yet to be questioned, and parents may understand a baby's life as a provisional and undependable thing – a candle whose flame is as likely to flicker and go out as to burn brightly and continuously. There, child death may be viewed less as a tragedy than as a predictable and relatively minor misfortune, one to be accepted with equanimity and resignation as an unalterable fact of human existence.' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992:275)

There exists a fine line between intentional abuse towards a child and neglect of a child's rights through a lack of means. Moreover, the ways in which children are treated, taught and disciplined varies from culture to culture. What might be

considered abuse in the UK might be considered normal by many Haitians. An example of this is corporal punishment of children. Both Gina and Sabine, who works for an organisation that helps child victims of sexual abuse, brought up the fact that violence towards children is widespread and accepted. Sabine said '*We have a big problem because we have a proverb that says when we raise children, for the child to come out well, we have to give him/her the rod [beat him/her with a rod]*' (Sabine, 19/02/2015). Gina stated:

> '*You'll see there are mothers who mistreat their own children. And when we go further, to understand how this person grew up, we understand. And we live in a society that accepts the whip. [That accepts] that children are whipped. Even if today we say we don't accept it, but we know that a good spanking, a few good shots of a whip, it helps.*' (Gina, 22/01/2014)

According to a UNICEF study, approximately 79 per cent of children experience physical aggression, and 64 per cent are subject to psychological aggression in the home (UNICEF, 2014:97). It must therefore be understood how varying ways to treat children affect them physically and psychologically. Then, it must be put into a local context wherein it might indeed be impossible for even the most loving of parents to ensure all their rights are respected because of the environment they live in. For example, the majority of the women I interviewed stated that their children did not eat enough every day to be well nourished.[34]

As I discussed in chapter two, the cultural separation which exists between me as a researcher and Haitian parents makes it difficult to measure, or judge, the love and affection given to a child from its mother. Some experts say there is a lack

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[34] General response to one of the interview questions: 'Does your household have enough food for everyone to eat every day?'. A minority said yes, and majority said they eat something every day but it is not enough.

of love between some Haitian mothers and their children, rendering children vulnerable to abuse and to being sent into the *restavèk* system (Penny, 13/11/2014; Delouis, 24/02/2015). Such statements are difficult substantiate, and they are by no means unanimous among the participants. However, as was previously pointed out earlier in this chapter, some women choose to have children in order to attain a level of financial security, or provide some insurance for the future. This alone does not mean that there is no love felt by a mother for her child, but it might begin to point at one of the roots of the problem. Before the child is even born there is already a level of expectation put on him/her, and a gain to be made.

In general, compared to cultures in the Global North, children in Haiti are subjected to more violence. One study found that among 60.5 per cent of girls and 57 per cent of boys experienced physical violence prior to age 18 by an adult household member or an authority figure in the community (CDC, 2014:51-2).

As mentioned above, it is common for parents to punish their children with physical violence. Corporal punishment is also the norm in schools, as a means of discipline (Anis, 2015; Cené, Saint-Louis, various dates). However, children are also a source of great joy for many Haitian parents. Though feelings of love are difficult to determine due to their intimate nature, it is clear that many Haitians feel a strong sense of obligation and duty towards their families. The Haitian proverb mentioned in the title of this chapter states, *'Manman pa janm mòde pitit li jouk nan zo',* 'A mother never bites her child to the bone'. This suggests that despite the difficulties and hardship of life, where a mother cannot always do what is best for her children, she will never intentionally harm them.

In response to the question regarding a mother's love for her child, Gina says. *'Oh but of course! I believe that Haitian mother would do anything for their*

children, even the impossible. And I've seen that' (Gina, 22/02/2015). Chantalle expresses: *'For women in Haiti, what is most important is their family. For their families to be well. Work is important, yes, because that is what will allow you to help your family, but the priority is family'* (Chantalle, 17/03/2015).

Female authority

In making the decision to send their children away, into a potentially dangerous situation, women may be doing so because of a lack of agency. This is not to say that all decisions of this kind are made against the will of mothers. They might in fact be decision-makers. However, the decisions they make, and the situations they live in, might be outcomes of a deeper level of gendered disempowerment. It is important to look at women's power and agency within the context of their lives, and the levels of power and control they have in their households, communities, societies and nation (Moser, 1993:26-7). It is partly this lack of social and economic power that creates the environment in which women are stripped of control, and children are rendered vulnerable. It increases the poverty of women themselves and their children, as well as men, indirectly. Okin addresses this notion of women's lack of power linking it to the devaluation of their work and their dependence on men which gives them a diminished place in intra-household relations (Okin, 1995:284-5). In analysing women's authority within a patriarchal system, de Groot (1991) calls not just for a reduction in female oppression and exploitation, but also a concern with 'women's positive ability to create and sustain both material and cultural autonomy and to subvert, adapt and resist within the structures of male power' as a step towards increased female social power (de Groot, 1991:125).

Women typically lack power, not only on the level of households and communities, but also in terms of political representation. The defined gendered roles and behaviours of Haitian society are reflected at all levels. As we can see globally, the political sphere tends to be perceived as a male space. Moser (1993) identifies a pattern of female suppression through widespread male power by asserting that '[p]atriarchy is maintained through male control over such arenas as politics, industry, religion and the military' (Moser, 1993:42). A lack of gender mainstreaming – 'a commitment to integration of a gendered perspective on all levels' (Clisby, 2005:23) – means that women's participation in politics is both disproportionate to men's and systematically undermined, regardless of the fact that many women are often involved in community management. As Clisby points out:

> '[w]omen's community organising is something that both men and women […] overlook – or rather do not apportion significant value to – despite the fact that the work of the women's community groups is frequently both implicitly and explicitly political' (Clisby, 2005:27)

As women tend to be time-poor due to their over-burdened responsibilities and the lack of recognition of the importance of their work, gender roles are both one of the causes and the results of women's lack of participation in politics.

> 'The fact that men are more likely to be involved in community politics means that the participation of local women as community managers is frequently either invisible or not valued. However, there is also a negative side to women's participation. While their participation is often crucial for project success, this is based on the assumption that women have free time. Lack of

awareness of women's triple role, therefore, can be the cause of project failure. When women fail to participate, it is not women who are the problem, as frequently identified. It is a lack of gender-awareness of planners about the different roles of men and women in society and the fact that women have to balance their time allocation in terms of their three roles.' (Moser, 1993:103)

In 2011, the Haitian President, Michel Martelly – who had just previously proposed subsuming the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Women's Rights into the Ministry of Social Affairs – approved a constitutional amendment to include a quota of 30% of women in governmental positions (Shaw, 2013). However, despite this quota, women remain marginalised from government. There was not one woman included in the newly elected 2016 parliament (Charles, 2016). The outgoing Senate President, Riché commented on this fact:

'Despite all of the years of existence of our nation [...] we are incapable of electing women in the Senate. We will be 30 guys deciding on the future of this country, while 53 percent [sic] of the population are women and they assume all of the economic responsibilities.' (Andris Chiné cited by Charles, in *Miami Herald* January 18th, 2016)

Speaking on masculinity in Haiti, participant Gina stated:

'*Because, to be a man, for me, based on what I've seen in Haiti, you have to be strong, you raise your voice, you are this and that. [...] 'I am a man, I say what I say, and that's that!' That's the situation. And it's the same thing in the government, even if there are women, they are just there to listen.*'

With regards to whether all decisions on a social, political and economic level are made by men, Gina replies:

'Of course! It is men. We haven't arrived yet in the phase where women take the reigns. It's possible, but we are still a long way off'

(Gina, 22/02/2015)

The factors which contribute to children's placement into the *restavèk* system are rooted in the poverty of rural families and the lack of development and infrastructure in Haiti. My research has found that parents', particularly mothers', difficulty, or inability, to provide the basic necessities for their children is one of the principle cause for the supply of children into the system.

Though these factors have been identified and discussed in the Haitian children's rights discourse, the prescribed treatment of these causes have generally failed to take into account their gendered contextual background. Rural Haiti's economic conditions and the subsequent poverty of rural families do not exist in a vacuum. Women's secondary place, next to men, in Haitian society plays its part in impoverishing society, both economically and socially. Families pay the price for the disempowerment of women, and communities rely almost solely on male leadership. Women's lack of education, and their concept of their established place in society, deprives them of a platform and prevents them from contributing their perspectives to their own communities.

Women's direct influence over children through their societally imposed role as primary caregivers must be looked at in the context of their lives, and in the causal effects their disempowerment has on children. As we have seen, gender roles and perceptions in Haiti are deeply set in people's minds. Men and women have distinct functions in society, with many more men in positions of power and

authority than women. The aforementioned phrases, '*Poto Mitan'*, ('women are the central pillar') and '*Fanm se magi*' ('women are stock'), suggest that women are seen as important elements of society, and that they are heavily relied on. However, this does not mean that women's rights are respected or protected. On the contrary, women are utilised for their physical capacities and labour, and largely unrewarded. This can be noted in the high occurrence of violence against women and girls and the high levels of rape.

In rural areas, where families tend to be closely knit together, and households generally comprising of a nuclear or extended family (Now Institute, 2014:377), men are responsible for maintaining the agricultural business, if the family have land. The decision to send children into other people's households are often made in good faith. The concept of doing so emerges from a desperate situation in which it has become evident that the child, and the household will suffer if he/she stays. Parents usually know there is an element of risk, as any parent would when they are unable to directly supervise their child, but they may consider the risk worthwhile. They may believe that there is little chance that he/she will end up in a worse situation than at home, where they cannot attend school and there might not be enough food to maintain a healthy life. A lack of awareness about children's rights prevents many parents from thoroughly considering the physical and psychological effects that their new situation might have on them.

Chapter 6

Haitian Masculinities:

Manifestations of Power Hiding Disempowered Realities

'Ravèt pa janm gen rezon douvan poul'

'Cockroaches are never right when facing chickens'[35]

'The road comes out of the forested area, into a bright clearing. At the foot of a large almond tree is a cement water fountain. A small crowd of people stands around it. They are holding empty plastic containers. The round green and red leaves of the almond tree shade them from the hot sun. The road forks beside it. One strand points to the mountain. It edges up and up. For a short breath, it turns to cement. It is smooth and grey. The dust from the earth road settles on the cement in a light layer. It squeezes into a hairpin bend and then quickly turns back to rocks and dust. A motorbike freewheels down it, carrying five passengers. One woman sits crossways on the handlebars. The road winds up the steep mountainside. It overlooks the blue bay below, offering a gasp of beauty to the weary travellers whose feet rhythmically climb the rocks.' (de Hoog, 2016a)

The previous chapter provided an analysis of women's lives in Haiti and the push factors that contribute to child domestic slavery there. As well as women's economic and social circumstances, we found that female agency – women's diminished power, and how they choose to use what little of it they have - is an important factor in the perpetuation of the *restavèk* system. As we looked further

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[35] Meaning: Whenever there are disagreements between two parties, justice will always be on the side of the stronger one of them.

into the reasons behind the marginalisation of women, and its effects on their decisions regarding children – theirs and other people's – we found deep gender inequality to be the basis for women's relative powerlessness. We found that, as a whole, women are victimised through gender inequality and are largely vulnerable to different forms of violence. As we discuss violence towards women, whether it is direct, as physical assault and/or emotional abuse, or indirect in terms of the overall effects of a society with significant gender divisions, we point to men as the perpetrators of violence and those sustaining social inequality. It is therefore important to look more closely at the assumptions made regarding men's involvement in women's subordination, to interrogate the socio-cultural context of these complex gendered frameworks.

In this chapter, I look more specifically at concepts of masculinity and discuss the particularities of the notion from a Haitian cultural perspective. I look deeper into the division of gender roles and analyse the different ways Haitians are treated according to their gender from childhood. I provide a gender analysis of Haitian modern society, focusing on men, masculinities and their influences on the gender hierarchy. I further present an argument that offers a contextual underpinning and understanding of certain manifestations of 'masculinity' by examining Haiti's contemporary social, economic and political realities, and their effects on men's behaviours. I suggest that these factors have a 'disempowering' consequence that contrasts sharply with the social expectations put on men, and have the result of re-routing Haitian 'masculinity' to reflect different norms. These can be attested in the high levels of violence in general as well as violence and oppression directed at women – a relatively less 'powerful' social group. Through this analysis, I explore contributing factors in the relative disempowerment of men. This is relevant because exploring and understanding socio-structural

frameworks of Haitian hegemonic masculinity is a necessary precondition in understanding the *restavèk* system. I argue that the substantial social inequality between men and women, and the lack of economic opportunities for men, cause women to be subordinated and victimised which consequentially leads to the increased vulnerability of children, as I have variously argued in the previous three chapters.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section locates Haiti within a global system of patriarchy, looking at wider perspectives of masculinity and male power and their theoretical basis. Section two focuses on Haitian definitions of masculinity and how they are reflected in local society and culture. Section three examines how gender roles and perceived masculine and feminine characteristics are established from childhood in the Haitian context. The fourth section analyses the masculine trait of sexual dominance and conceptions of 'machismo' in Haiti. Section five provides a snapshot of certain masculine spaces in Haiti, namely those wherein alcohol, tools and leisure play a predominant role. The final section places Haitian masculinities within a wider context of historical, socio-political and economic factors, providing a contextual basis and rationale for certain manifestations of masculinity through power and violence.

Throughout this discussion, I use my own ethnographic observations and conversations, as well as data from interviews conducted with Haitian men and women, to support my gender analysis. Interviews were conducted in both rural and urban areas. There are individual interviews with men and women and two focus groups – one of women and one of men – to provide further context and depth of analysis.

Haiti in the context of global patriarchy

The previous chapter set forth a depiction of women's experiences in Haiti and suggested that women are structurally and systematically accorded less power than men in society. This gendered hierarchy and unequal distribution of social power is in no way unique to Haiti. A pattern of patriarchy can be identified in societies throughout the world, as has been discussed by many scholars, such as Bourdieu (2001), Connell (1987, 1995, 2005), de Beauvoir (1953), Walby (1990), Brownmiller (1975) and hooks (1982, 2004), to name a few, who, despite emerging from different theoretical spaces, all attest to the existence of global male domination. Individual incidences of male domination and gendered social norms, as we know them, exist within an established 'structure of power' that maintains itself through these very infractions (Connell, 1987:107). An established patriarchy, defined as a 'system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (Walby, 1990:20), preserves its authority through a delicate and calculated system that specifies social roles and spaces, whether they are dominating or submissive, for each member of society based on gender, class, colour and so on. Bourdieu argues, in his book, 'Masculine Domination' (2001), that this system is established and preserved through sexual divisions of labour, which ultimately dictate gendered roles and positions in society:

> 'The social order functions as an immense symbolic machine
> tending to ratify the masculine domination on which it is founded: it
> is the sexual division of labour, a very strict distribution of the
> activities assigned to each sex, of their place, time and instruments;
> it is the structure of space, with the opposition between the place of
> assembly or the market, reserved for men, and the house, reserved

for women, or, within the house, between the male part, the hearth, and the female part -the stable, the water and vegetable stores; it is the structure of time, the day and the farming year, or the cycle of life, with its male moments of rupture and the long female periods of gestation.' (Bourdieu, 2001:9-11)

Moving away from 'sex role theory' – a way to understand the ways in which 'men and women become masculine and feminine through social conditioning' (Alsop et al,. 2002:66), Connell points to gender as a way in which 'social practice is ordered', clarifying that '[i]n gender processes, the everyday conduct of life is organized in relation to a reproductive arena, defined by the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction. This arena includes sexual arousal and intercourse, childbirth and infant care, bodily sex differences and similarities' (Connell, 1995:71). As Bourdieu argues, the ways in which labour, tasks and responsibilities are divided largely establish the 'value' of men and women in society.

'Because the whole of the finite world in which they are confined - the space of the village, the house, language, tools -contains the same silent calls to order, women can only become what they are according to mythic reason, thus confirming, and first in their own eyes, that they are naturally consigned to what is low, twisted, picayune, futile, menial, etc.' (Bourdieu, 2001:30)

In this sense, diminishing women's status to be concerned with the 'menial' and the 'futile', means men get to occupy a superior, public space in social hierarchy. Through gender role segregation, we see more men in positions of authority than women, and, as a result, a disproportionate distribution of power, that ends up mostly in the hands of men. Jukes (1993) states:

'Every day of our lives, boys are exposed to demonstrations of the minor role women are forced to play (and made to believe it is the only role they can play). We are exposed to the double standards of men who maintain reciprocal relations with each other, yet insist on and expect submission from women. We are given sex role models which inform us that men are strong, don't show vulnerability or confusion, are never afraid, are not tender; their sexuality is split from their love, their mind from their body, their thinking from their feeling; they are never childlike, and so on.' (Jukes, 1993:109)

In this way, masculinity is defined in contrast to femininity by creating conceptual binaries of behaviour, or expectations of behaviour. Nurse (1996) echoes the above view, pointing to Western concepts:

'Masculinist notions of gender relations are grounded in Western thought. The epistemological roots are to be found in the Newtonian-Cartesian world-view which dichotomizes and hierarchizes cultural values in binary opposites: objectivity versus subjectivity, reason versus emotion, mind versus body, culture versus nature, competition versus cooperation, public versus private. These differences are usually used to differentiate between male and female traits. In the dominant masculinist phallocentric discourse, the "feminine" is conceptualized and actualized as the "ontological other".' (Nurse, 1996:10)

For Brownmiller (1975), masculine domination is established and preserved through sexual violence, namely rape, and its threat. Brownmiller's views fit into a framework of radical feminist accounts that focus primarily on 'men's control over women's bodies in terms of their fertility and sexuality and in

their exercise of control over them through violence, both domestic and sexual' (Alsop et al., 2002:70). As violence, and the threat of violence, form a foundational basis for male domination and relationships between men and women, it is important to interrogate and analyse gender based violence as the result of performances of masculinity. Jukes argues, 'it would probably not be an overstatement to say that violence is the underpinning rather than simply a central part of heterosexual relationships' (Jukes, 1993:258). Indeed, the presence of violence, or the mere possibility of it, defines many relations between men and women, as Stanko states:

> 'The brutal rape, the sexually harassing comments, the slap in the face, the grab on the street – all forms of men's threatening intimidating and violent behaviour – are reminders to women of their vulnerability to men. Try as they might, women are unable to predict when a threatening or intimidating form of male behaviour will escalate to violence. As a result, women are continually on guard to the possibility of men's violence.' (Stanko, 1985, cited in Jukes, 1993:261)

Within this framework, violence becomes an intrinsic element of masculinity in the framework of global patriarchies. However, it is not all men who benefit from the same social status, nor do all men portray the same qualities deemed to represent 'masculinity'. There exists, in fact, a hierarchy and conflict within 'masculinity' itself, as I discuss in relation to Connell's theory of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1987, 1995, 2005), and its relevance to Haitian men. Although the concept of hegemonic masculinity formulated by Connell in the 1980s has been critiqued and somewhat reformulated (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Beasley, 2008; Messerschmidt, 2008), I am referring to it here because it is a useful theoretical

framework through which we can look at masculinities in the Haitian context. Connell provides an explanation of a patriarchal system in which a certain, socially recognised and maintained, form of masculinity is considered to be the ideal behaviour, or status, for men to aspire to. She states:

> 'At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.' (Connell, 2005:77)

Robinson (2007) points out that 'hegemonic masculinity can be viewed as how dominant male sexual practices are used to generate a naturalized view of the world that is so engrained in dominant culture that it appears as natural or as "common sense"' (Robinson, 2007:63). Though not all men embody the qualities represented by their societies' versions of 'hegemonic masculinity', the idealised image itself is there to sustain male domination. The characteristics that symbolize masculinity may vary through time and across cultures, but, as described by Connell, they all serve this same purpose. Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon point out that:

> 'Hegemonic masculinity in Western society is recognized in most literature as hinging on heterosexuality, economic autonomy, being able to provide for one's family, being rational, being successful, keeping one's emotions in check, and above all not doing anything considered feminine. Yet what constitutes masculinity is not fixed. Indeed, it is increasingly recognized within the literature on men and masculinities that hegemonic masculinity is a "historically

mobile relation" and that the content of hegemonic masculinity is fluid over time and between cultural contexts.' (Alsop et al., 2002:41)

Aligning with heterosexuality, hegemonic masculinities 'are premised on masculinity being defined as femininity's opposite and within this context, heterosexuality is the unchallenged, often essentialized norm which upholds this hegemony' (Robinson, 2007:63). Recognised within concepts of hegemonic masculinity are elements which serve to further form the identities of males, such as 'compulsory heterosexuality', 'misogyny' and 'homophobia' (Robinson, 2007:64). I will discuss these elements in relation to Haitian masculinities further in this chapter.

As hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a narrow concept of often unobtainable ideals conflict can arise as men are not capable of living up to the expectations set for them:

> 'Because of the unobtainability of the masculine ideal, it is argued, there is a constant need for men to prove that they are achieving the goals of masculinity and with it a permanent insecurity attached to manhood. Being able to display signs of hegemonic masculinity – for example, strength, sexual prowess with women, the ability to consume beer – becomes vital to demonstrate that one is a "real man". Masculinity is presented as a process which needs constantly reaffirming; one's status as a man is never secure but in perpetual need of validation by other men.' (Alsop, et al., 2002:143)

Connell points out that the validity of the 'male sex role', and its claim to represent men, was first brought into question during the 1950s in American social sciences which identified a 'conflict within masculinity, derived from conflicting or

unmanageable social expectations' (Connell, 1995:23). It was noted that although men were expected to fulfil roles attributed to them in order to reflect ideals of masculinity, many developed feelings of 'deficiency' which had negative effects on them. For Connell, one such study was that of Mayer Hacker, who, in her 1957 study of masculinity in the United States, found that:

> 'the ideal man is considered by men as being, among other things, a good provider, the ultimate source of knowledge and authority, and strong in character so that he may give a feeling of security, not only financially but emotionally, to his wife and children, and it was evident from their further responses that the respondents found themselves deficient in meeting these demands.' (Mayer Hacker, 1957:227)

According to Mayer Hacker, these feelings of deficiency were capable of leading to feelings of guilt towards women, and guilt, if left unresolved could lead to hate (Mayer Hacker, 1957:228). Ideals of hegemonic masculinity, then, while varying across cultures, remain, in Connell's framework, a persistent global concept. Accordingly, the consequences of men's failure to assume socially accepted masculine qualities can be identified across societies.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, regarding spiritual beliefs, European colonialism imposed social institutions that established gendered structures of power unto Haitian society. It is difficult to discuss gender and society in pre-colonial Africa, which is the origin of black Haitian society, due to a lack of research in the area. Griffiths (2011) argues that '[e]fforts to investigate gender relations in pre-colonial African societies are undermined by the fact that gender has not featured as a category in historical research until relatively recently' (Griffiths, 2011:127). However, because of the resilience of African

culture in Haitian society – due in large part to the fact that most of the slaves who found their freedom in the Haitian revolution were African-born, as discussed in chapter four – it is worth noting that current gender hierarchies in modern Haitian society might be influenced largely by European colonialism. Griffiths adds that '[t]he impact of the Slave Trade on gender relations was immense. The differential value attached to the reproductive and productive roles of male and female slaves at the point of sale, and later in the plantation colonies of the Caribbean, redefined relations between individuals in the enslaved environments' (Griffiths, 2011:143).

Though not focusing on post-colonial Haitian society in particular, in her study on black men and masculinity, hooks (2004) discusses the idea that men who had come out of slavery intended to 'mimic' a form of benevolent patriarchy in which men would 'exercise their power without using force' (hooks, 2004:3-4). While not suggesting that patriarchy is a colonial invention, I would concur with hooks when she argues that a majority of black men adopted a model of patriarchy demonstrated by their former white masters, in which violence was an important tool in the subordination of black women (hooks, 2004). Haiti, with its history of slavery might also reflect these patriarchal ideals. As we saw in chapter four of this thesis, Haiti's past, both before and after independence, is marked by violence. Slavery, under the colonial regime, was an institution defined by and maintained through violence. This is relevant not only in terms of masculinities but also race, as 'colonial societies were constructed [...] upon the demographic basis of a dominant white-black male encounter' (Beckles, 2004:228). Connell argues:

> 'The historical processes that produced global society were, from the start, gendered. Colonial conquest and settlement were carried

out by gender segregated forces. In the stabilization of colonial

societies, new gender divisions of labor were produced in plantation

economies and colonial cities, and gender ideologies were linked

with racial hierarchies and the cultural defence of empire.' (Connell,

2005:73)

It is indeed impossible to separate Haitian masculinity from a discourse on

colonialism, slavery and race because of Haiti's history and its aftershocks. Mercer

and Julien argue:

'The centrally dominant role of the white male slave-master in the

18th and 19th century plantation society debarred black males from

the patriarchal privileges ascribed to the masculine role. For

example, a slave could not fully assume the role of "father" because

his children were the legal property of the slave-owner. In racial

terms, black men and women alike were subordinated to the power

of the white master in the hierarchal social relations of slavery and

for black men, as *objects* of oppression, this also cancelled out their

access to positions of power and prestige which are regarded as the

essence of masculinity in patriarchal culture. Shaped by this history,

black masculinity is a highly contradictory formation as it is a

subordinated masculinity.' (Mercer & Julien 1988:112)

As Mercer and Julien explain, black males are part of a subordinated masculinity as

a result of historic race relations and continued oppression, and it is this position in

relation to global hegemonic masculinity that has the effect of gendered

subordination of women, as Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon discuss:

'Dominant discourses of masculinity define maleness as being in

control, having power over others and one's environment. Racism,

colonialism and slavery have denied and continue to deny black men such authority; indeed the conditions of racism threaten to take away many of the staple dimensions of hegemonic masculinity. The hustler, streetwise role adopted by many of the young black men [...] provided one such way for black men to reclaim authority. Recovering male power may also be sought via the subordination and devaluing of women or through homophobic discrimination.' (Alsop et al., 2002:152)

Race and racism in the context of European colonial history are important elements of Haitian masculinities, the way Haitian men define themselves and each other and the manner in which they are positioned, not only in relation to Haitian women, but also in relation to a white Western patriarchy. Dominant images of black men have been structured by Western racist assumptions, depicting black masculinity as deviant from white masculinity (Alsop et al., 2002). Connell argues that '[w]e cannot understand the connection of masculinity and violence at a personal level without understanding that it is also a global connection. European/American masculinities were deeply implicated in the world-wide violence through which European/American culture became dominant' (Connell, 1995:186). Moreover, a fixation on the black male body, it has been argued, has contributed to the image of black men as having animalistic, overly sexual qualities, in contrast with white men (Alsop et al., 2002; Mercer & Julien, 1988; Fanon, 1952). Fanon, a post-colonial philosopher and psychiatrist who dedicated much of his writing to race, identity and the morality within decolonisation theory, explains:

'There is one expression that through time has become singularly eroticized: the black athlete. There is something in the mere idea,

one young woman confided to me, that makes the heart skip a beat.

A prostitute told me that in her early days, the mere thought of going

to bed with a negro brought on an orgasm […]. Still on the genital

level, when a white man hates black men, is he not yielding to a

feeling of impotence or of sexual inferiority? Since his ideal is an

infinite virility, is there not a phenomenon of diminution in relation

to the Negro, who is viewed as a penis symbol? Is the lynching of the

negro not a sexual revenge? We know how much of sexuality there is

in all the cruelties, tortures, beatings.' (Fanon, 1952:122-3)

Nurse (2004), an economist, whose work focuses on development and Caribbean

societies in particular, discusses black masculinity in relation to white men:

'The white supremacist discourse sees black men as a threat from

below because of their strong animal propensies (read sexuality).

Black masculinities, in the context of slavery, colonialism and white

supremacy, have been constructed as primal, debased and infantile

and thus in need of control and supervision by white men.' (Nurse,

2004:10)

Mercer and Julien add that 'images of the hypersexual "savage" or the threatening,

marauding "buck", tell us more about the "repressed" fears and fantasies of

European civilization than they do about black people's experience of sexual

intimacy' (Mercer & Julien, 1988:119). Though the concepts of black masculinities

have been produced by racist discourse based on myth, they nevertheless impact

behaviours of black men, their perceptions of themselves and global

understandings of them. Mercer and Julien argue that '[s]ocial definitions of what

it is to be a man, about what constitutes "manliness", are not "natural" but are

historically constructed and this construction is culturally variable. They continue:

> 'Patriarchal culture constantly redefines and adjusts the balance of male power and privilege and the prevailing system of gender roles by negotiating psychological and personal identity through a variety of material, economic, social and political structures such as class, the division of labour and the work/home nexus at the point of consumption. Race and ethnicity mediates this at all levels, so it's not as if we could strip away the "negative images" of black masculinity created by Western patriarchy and discover some "natural" black male identity which is good, pure and wholesome. The point is that black male gender identities have been culturally constructed through complex dialectics of power.' (Mercer & Julien, 1988:136)

The creation and promulgation of such concepts of 'black' masculinities, such as a propensity for sexual 'savagery' or 'violence', can be conceived as contributing to a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' in which men enact behaviours 'assigned' to them. For Mercer and Julien, this 'cycle between reality and representation makes the ideological fictions of racism empirically "true" - or rather, there is a struggle over the definition, understanding and construction of meanings around black masculinity within the dominant regime of truth' (Mercer & Julien, 1988:137).

Furthermore, as I allude to in chapter five, modern Haiti, since independence, continues to be a violent environment. This is discernible in high levels of crime and physical violence (Kolbe & Hutson, 2006; Farmer, 2004; Marcelin, 2012; Faedy Duramy, 2014). It is also apparent in the violent nature of life in economic poverty and the effects of post-colonialism (Fanon, 1968; Smith, 2001). Discussing Fanon's theories on violence in the post-colonial context, Mercer and Julien state:

'Violence breeds violence and Fanon's view was that in the colonial context the native is forced to imitate and adopt violence as an instrument of the will. *But* [...] the colonised direct acts of aggression not onto the white male coloniser, the original agent of violence, but against fellow colonised men and women. Such intracommunal violence can be seen as an almost pathological misdirection of rage – as the outward expression of internalised oppression it is consonant with self-hatred.' (Mercer & Julien, 1988:115)

Indeed, Fanon reflects on the effects of such a misrepresentation of black masculinity and the impact on black men describing it as 'crippling', 'disembowelling' and with 'paralysing effects' (Fanon, 1952:107-8). He reflects further on the perceptions of blackness in relation to whiteness:

'The torturer is the black man, Satan is black, one talks of shadows, when one is dirty, one is black – whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or of moral dirtiness. It would be astonishing, if the trouble were taken, to bring them all together, to see the vast number of expressions that make the black man the equivalent of sin [...] Blackness, darkness, shadow, shades, night, the labyrinths of the earth, abysmal depths, blacken someone's reputation; and on the other side, the bright look of innocence, the white dove of peace, magical, heavenly light.' (Fanon, 1952:146)

After spending time in Haiti and witnessing the lives of Haitian people in the context of a post-colonial society and the racial social dynamics there, I noted in a blog post, employing the voice of what I perceived as the oppressed black people of Haiti:

'They say that "good" is pure, clean, white, like our brightly bleached laundry that we wear to experience what is to be human – because everything in our experience tells us we are not. We are black. Are we all that is evil, rank, dirty and worthless? Are we destined to be creatures that find freedom in the night, like the spirits and the spiders we live with? Will the blessed light of day only bring us a hardship few can ever know? They talk about dark things being full of evil. They say light will counter the darkness. Who, what, will counter the light?' (de Hoog, 2016c)

It is then crucial to take into account Haiti's colonial history and position in the modern post-colonial world to better contextualise the realities and behaviours of Haitian men, their attitudes towards women and children, and the consequential effects these have on the *restavèk* system.

What makes a man feel like a man? Defining Haitian masculinity.

We turn now to an exploration of Haitian concepts of masculinity. In order to better understand normalised male behaviour, we must look at the components which make up the cultural norms of masculinity in the local cultural context. According to my research on the subject, through ethnographic observations and interviews, I found that masculinity in Haiti has three main components, which are in line with Western concepts of hegemonic masculinity, as discussed in the previous section. Though they each have their own separate significance, they are nonetheless interconnected, as I will demonstrate. Firstly, there is the role of the 'provider' which symbolises a man's duty or ability to claim responsibility for his family. This role is connected to a man's ability to work, or to access employment. It is consequentially, and most importantly connected to money. Secondly, we

have the characteristic of strength. Though this mostly refers to physical strength, it also includes mental strength. This is connected to the male body, and, to put it simply, the size of one's muscles. This can also refer to men's physical ability to work, and therefore ties in to the first component. Moreover, it is connected to violence, whether that be physical or symbolic. It also refers to notions of respect. Thirdly is the concept of heterosexual sexual activity. This is connected to the body again, through strength and virility. Furthermore, because of the nature of many heterosexual relationships in Haitian culture, it is also connected to money, and thus linked to the role of the provider.

Next, I discuss in further detail the components of Haitian masculinity, as perceived by Haitians themselves, by looking specifically at gender roles and expectations. Here, I categorise gendered divisions of labour and discuss the ways in which these are initiated in childhood. I also discuss their effect on families, communities and society, and consider their outcomes, as well as the consequences of men's failure to meet the expectations imposed on them by society, and by their families.

After spending time in Haiti, living alongside and conversing with local people, men and women, it became clear that the 'gold standard' for Haitian men, and supposedly a cultural marker of their manliness, is the expectation that they will provide financially for their families. This assertion reflects the findings of Davis et al., (2006), who conducted a study of masculinity with men from the Caribbean island of St Lucia. They found that the majority of their participants equated 'manliness' with being a 'breadwinner' (Davis et al., 2006:305). Similarly, Gutmann's research with Mexican men and masculinity found that 'support[ing] the family economically' was a primary role for men in family life (Gutmann, 1996:1669). In my research in Haiti, this idea surfaced in several interviews as

well as in ethnographic conversations. In most scenarios, it was not always explicitly stated, but often pointed to as an unspoken, but very much acquiesced, social norm. This can be deducted from interview participants who pointed to a cycle, which I described in chapter five, in which women have children with men in order to secure their help.

> *'This is what I say has brought us here [in this situation of inequality between men and women]. There are women who have between six and ten children. It's not ten children she had ever planned on having, because after she had the first one, the father didn't look after it so she looked for another man. This man added another [child] and did the same thing, so she finds another man and the same thing happens again and she ends up having ten children. In looking for 50 gourdes to look after one [child] the girl takes [one man after the other], and finally she is left with all these children in her care.* (Darline, 14/04/2016)

Concerning women's dependence on men, in terms of men being financial providers for their families, the participants often pointed out men failing to fulfil that crucial role:

> *'Sometimes what happens, especially when it's the man who has the monopoly [in the home/family], that's why I advise all women who are able to make efforts, if you can find work, if you are able to work, work! There are men, when they work, when they have a little money in their pockets, they pass by any area that has* 'machann' *[women selling food on the streets] and they fill their stomachs. Their children are at home, their wives are at home, hunger is killing them.. and then on their way home, they look for*

another woman[36]. The little money they have left in their pockets

they give to you [the wife] and you and your children are there at

home suffering.' (Darline, 14/04/2016)

Above, I referred to this role of provider as a 'gold standard' because, although it is an idealised concept of masculinity, as can be seen from the quotes above, it does not reflect the reality for many men. A failure to live up to this standardised masculinity can be seen as a form of oppression, as Nurse discusses:

'An alternative view would be to see the breadwinner role as a mechanism of patriarchal oppression of men which is then directed at women. Men's masculinity and perception of self-worth is most often defined in terms of their work and ability to be providers for their family. Male breadwinners are portrayed as *real men*. Patriarchy encourages men to pride themselves on the "hard work and personal sacrifice they are making for their families" [...] It also trains men to "accept payment for work in feelings of masculinity rather than in feelings of satisfaction", consequently men accept unemployment as their personal failings as males. The social construction of the male breadwinner role is therefore an important mechanism by which men are enslaved into their own oppression.' (Nurse, 2004:15)

This can be seen in relation to Connell's notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1987, 2005) and a normative ideal of male representation which does not necessarily reflect the reality of men's power, but rather, creates male power

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[36] In this context, what is implied is that the man looks for another woman to have sex with, which also implies that he will give this woman money. This is not seen as prostitution, necessarily, but rather demonstrates the liaison between sex and money in a large number of relationships in Haiti.

through its effect of female subordination. Connell refers to this in her explanation of the term:

'The public face of hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support. The notion of 'hegemony' generally implies a large measure of consent. Few men are Bogarts or Stallones, many collaborate in sustaining those images.' (Connell, 1987:185)

In the context of Haitian male roles, the expectations placed on men, through this idealised notion of masculinity, serve both to maintain the subordination of women through patriarchal systems, and to simultaneously disempower Haitian men. In the context of Haiti, there emerges a different idealised concept of masculinity that reflects a more 'macho' image. This image then becomes an alternative form of the culture's 'hegemonic masculinity'. As one of Davis' participants in St Lucia states:

'When you get a good-paying job, when you get a beautiful woman to marry, when you are really successful in your life and people respect you as a big man in society, people see you as a man. The males who work very hard, who are not as popular, who strive hard to support their families, who are diligent in whatever they do, these people are so invisible in our societies.' (cited in Davis et al., 2006:304)

This suggests that although the ideals expected of men are originally centred on responsibility for one's dependents, to negate other aspects of what might be considered the 'hegemonic masculinity' of the society in question, actually serves

to undermine one's 'manliness'. As we will see, in Haiti, many of the expectations placed on men, combined with the liberties given to them in the social context, create an environment in which renouncing responsibility for one's family is relatively easy, or non-consequential, and the opportunities to do so are habitually available. Though men are allocated this higher level of responsibility, it is also commonly socially accepted, if not partially expected, that men will not claim financial responsibility for their children, particularly those born outside of marriage (Alterpresse, 2012). This ties in with the cycle I mentioned above in which many women seek a male partner for financial assistance and attempt to secure his commitment by having his child. During the same group interview, Molenita stated:

> '*Some men understand [the difficulty of women's lives], there are some men who make an effort, they leave to go to the Dominican Republic to find work so that they can take care of their wife and children in Haiti. But then, some too, find a woman [in Dominican Republic], they attach themselves to that women and leave the woman [who is] in Haiti, with their four or five children and she needs to manage alone to take care of them.*' (Molenita, 14/04/2016)

Molenita's example shows that even among the men who are considered willing to try to be responsible for their families, sometimes referred to as '*gason eklere*', 'enlightened men'[37], there are still many who falter along the way. Opportunities to 'resign' from the role of responsible father come even after the initial decision has been made to stay faithful and to provide for the family. These choices, or freedoms, to detach from the family given to men provide a sharp contrast to the lives of

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[37] A term used by the women in a group interview

women, who, because of their gendered responsibilities and roles, are not usually able to leave as easily in the first place.

This leads us to discuss further the themes of fatherhood and mobility, that are particular to the experiences of men. As we have seen, men in Haiti have the freedom of greater mobility than women because of the different duties they have toward children. The essentialised biological and social links between women and their children, dominant in the concept of motherhood, make it more difficult for a woman to walk away from her family situation than for a man. Men's responsibilities to provide can also mean that they are forced to leave their family home in search of work, as we saw in Molenita's example above. However, men in Haiti are generally provided with more choices regarding their mobility and whether or not they commit to supporting their families financially. As Pleck and Marsiglio state, in relation to black men in the United States, as a 'disadvantaged population':

> 'Because African American men are disproportionately disadvantaged, with fewer opportunities to achieve and display their manhood using mainstream strategies, they are more likely than their white counterparts to rely on risk-taking behaviors […] to express their male identities. The difficulties they encounter in fulfilling the family provider role are related in complex ways to assuming full-time parenting roles.' (Pleck & Marsiglio, 2005:260)

This is relevant for Haitian men who are also part of a disproportionately disadvantaged group, assuming the same difficulties in asserting their masculinities through hegemonic ideals.

Based on my ethnographic data, I would argue that, although socially, it is considered more appropriate for a man to marry the mother of his child, it is not

something that is enforced with consequences.[38] A large degree of sexual freedom for men, as we will look at later in this chapter, contributes to men often having children with different mothers. In as much as children are an important topic of conversation in Haiti, the amount of children a man has, particularly if they have many, can be a source of pride. Men who have a very large number of children, like one man who told me he had 32 children, tend to announce the fact with a notable sense of achievement.[39] When the conversation turns to question how a man of low economic means could possibly provide for that many dependent children, the topic is avoided and the conversation directed towards something else. This last example illustrates the considerable difference there can be between 'fathering' and 'fatherhood'. Where 'fathering' represents the 'biological father', 'fatherhood' refers to the 'social role performed by men in relation to children' (Morrell & Richter, 2004:36). It is therefore important to look at the Haitian concepts of fatherhood by analysing the 'father' model and the cultural aspects to the role. Fathering and fatherhood are both manifestations of masculinity in different ways, within the Haitian context. In many ways, fathering, like the example above of the man with 32 children, is a sign of a man's virility and sexual competence. This serves to illustrate that he is capable of procreating, of having sexual stamina and of continuing his family line, and is reflective of 'macho' ideals. As Gutmann found to be the case in Mexican understandings of the term, as he states, '[t]he implication was that although machos may sire many children, they do not attend to them later because that is women's work and machos by definition shun those kinds of duties'

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[38] I encountered two situations in which a Haitian man found out his sexual partner was pregnant. One arranged to marry her, stating that it was the right thing to do. The other refused to marry the girl, despite the fact that the mother of the girl stood outside his house every day and threw rocks at the windows. She also went to the police to ask them to intervene, but nothing came of it.

[39] I met this man in a rural community. As small talk in Haiti usually begins with questions regarding the number of children each person has, this information was offered to me before I knew anything else about this man – and I was heavily reproached for not having any children myself yet. I later found out this man is quite elderly and lives with his wife, who is the mother of one of his children. It was also clear that his economic situation was not good.

(Gutmann, 1996:1320). Fathering is the answer to a series of social expectations placed on men. They are expected to be sexually active and, to an extent, to have multiple female sexual partners. In addition, although most men in Haiti are aware of methods of contraception, like condoms, very few utilise them. A study performed in *Cité Soleil*[40] found that only three per cent of the adult men surveyed there had ever used contraception, most of them stating it was the responsibility of their female partners to do so (Boulos et al., 1991:323).

Fatherhood, on the other hand, tends to have a different set of expectations. These centre more around financial provision as well as the benefits of a paternal relationship (Morrell, 2004:38). As Hewlett (1992) states:

> 'Fathers in all parts of the world do share certain characteristics: fathers provide less direct caregiving than mothers, […] fathers are expected to provide at least some economic support for their children, and fathers are expected to support the mother economically and/or emotionally.' (Hewlett, cited in Pleck & Marsiglio, 2005:252)

While an expectation for economic support on behalf of hopeful mothers might be present in Haiti, many do not benefit from much more cooperation or emotional support in terms of parenting. This is evident in the separate gender roles we have seen to be significant in Haiti. Hooks makes the point that '[m]en are socialized to avoid assuming responsibility for childbearing and that avoidance is supported by women who believe that motherhood is a sphere of power they would lose if men

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[40] *Cité Soleil*, as we will see in the next chapter discussing women in an urban context, is Port-au-Prince's largest shantytown, where approximately 300,000 people live in extreme poverty. It is one of the most dangerous areas in Haiti. I refer to *Cité Soleil* because, as a poor urban area, it represents a large portion of Haiti's urban dwellers as the factors of *Cité Soleil,* though perhaps not seen on such a large scale, are replicated in many areas throughout the capital city. It is also an area that has attracted several studies and international attention, where other areas remain largely under-researched.

participated equally in parenting' (hooks, 1984:139). Moreover, as Beynon argues, 'as long as the nineteenth century patriarch provided for his family, he could be regarded as a "good father" and was, thereby, licensed to absent himself emotionally and, in the process, wreak huge damage on his family' (Beynon, 2002:129).

Based on my ethnographic observations in Haiti, the ownership of land is a dominant factor in men's concepts of fatherhood.[41] Many men who own land, choose to hold on to it so that their children can inherit it. For most, this means a life spent living in poverty and not being able to finance their children's education, as rural community leader, Christmas, points out:

> '*Imagine, once you've spent all that money buying land, and you think it will be good for your children, but it's just going to stay there, it won't really help [your] child. Because, if he doesn't have the means to build on it, it won't be useful to him at all. And for this man [the owner of the land], what do his children end up doing [to get by]... [they drive] Moto taxis[42] [...] while there are other things he could have done to help his family.*' (Christmas, 14/04/2016)

Land, as capital, is considered a form of wealth, and liquidising this asset, though it can pay for education and food and be an investment in their children's future, is seen as a last resort.[43] This comes across in men's expressed desire to be able to 'leave something behind' for their children. Ironically, many adult children who inherit land from their fathers often need to sell it immediately after their parent's

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[41] I discovered through ethnographic conversations that most Haitian people do not have bank accounts and instead, when they have a little bit of money, they buy either land or animals. These can therefore be seen as their main assets, and are important in terms of inheritance for children.

[42] Moto taxis is a very common way for men, mostly young men, to make money easily. In the sense Christmas refers to it here, it is not a promising vocation that will bring in enough income to really provide for a family's needs.

[43] Based on ethnographic conversations in the street, in public transport etc.

death in order to be able to finance the expensive funeral they are expected to hold for them.[44]

In the phenomenon of *'piti deyò'*, (lit. 'child outside'), where a man fathers a child with a woman outside of his marriage, there can be different expectations placed on the father. Many men choose to have nothing to do with the child. Others provide some financial support to the mother. However, few develop a relationship with the child which is stable and significant enough to be labelled as 'fatherhood'.[45] Though there is little written or acknowledged about *piti deyò* children, their existence, and the people's knowledge of them cannot be denied, as I discovered through ethnographic observation. As I mentioned the cycle in which women have children with men in order to secure financial help, it is possible to see how this phenomenon is widespread. *Piti deyò* children are virtually fatherless, apart from a few who receive some level of financial assistance from their biological fathers. This leaves them vulnerable to many difficulties, including being themselves sent into domestic service, as I discussed in chapter five in relation to female-headed households. The legitimacy of *piti deyò* children is something which also has a legal connotation because, on Haitian birth certificates, people are marked as either 'legitimate', 'natural', 'born out of adultery' or 'incestuous' (Alterpresse, 2012) as we saw in chapter three. This fact can have significant repercussions on the lives of children whose fathers are absent, and whose status has been so permanently tainted.

As I discussed in chapter five, men and women in Haiti perform distinct and defined roles in both rural and urban society. In rural areas, agricultural work is

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[44] When a neighbour died, I was introduced to the concept of the family of the deceased selling land to pay for the funeral. Funeral costs can vary, but for the most part, impoverished families either sell land, or take loans, to pay for an expensive funeral – costing between $500-$1500 USD
[45] A song by the Haitian music group 'Klass', titled '*Piti Deyò*' talks about the neglect of these children and how their fathers keep them a secret from their wives. One of the lines of the song asks what the child has done to ask for forgiveness as he/she did not ask to be born.

split between men and women. Men typically plant and sow seeds while women harvest (Gardella, 2006:16-17). One interview participant, named Altamene, a married woman with 10 children, living in a rural community, provided some examples of what constitutes everyday women's work:

> *'Altamene: Like in the home, men are not likely to help you in that [task], no. Because, when you wake up in the morning, you know what your duties are. When you have finished sweeping the yard and the kitchen [which is outdoors], you get into the work in the house. […] Like, when I get up in the morning, I do housework, I prepare food.*
>
> *Interviewer: When you say ''housework', [it's] washing dishes…*
>
> *Altamene: I wash dishes, wipe [the surfaces in the house], make the beds, sweep, wipe the floor with a wet cloth, sweep the ceiling to get rid of spider webs… like, these dishes [she points at dishes stacked on some shelves], I wipe them to remove the dust, I wash them, I put them away. After that, I go to prepare food, so that I can get into the laundry. Like on Saturday, whether I do laundry or not, it depends on the quantity there is. I could leave it until the following week… […] That's all work for women only.*
>
> *Interviewer: What do men do that women never do?*
>
> *Altamene: Like, men, when they get up, they go check on the animals, when he is finished feeding them, cows, goats, he moves them. All those are men's things. Pigs… he has to carry food to them, give them water. Then he rests. If there is something to eat, he eats. After that, he walks to his crops to see how things are going. He weeds, plants…*
>
> *Interviewer: It's as if all the work that demands more physical strength, that's what men do?*

Altamene: yes

Interviewer: Does washing clothes not demand a lot of physical strength?

Altamene: well, it does but men don't understand that, because they would have to do it to know it demands a lot of physical effort. It's a job that demands a lot of strength and resistance but men aren't able to know that. (Altamene, 13/04/2016)

Women are also usually responsible for selling agricultural produce or alternatively, preparing it for household consumption (Smith, 2001:95). Men's work is considered to be more physically taxing, as much of the more challenging physical labour tasks are reserved for them. This is related to the devaluing of women's labour and the construction of labour as a masculine domain. Connell (2005) argues that 'it is a characteristic of modernity that the world of "work" is culturally defined as men's realm' (2005:78). She goes on to explain:

> 'the structural distinction between the household (as a domain of gift exchange) and the commodity economy (where labour is sold and paid for) is a basis of the European gender system. This distinction has been exported into colonial and neo-colonial economies, restructuring local production systems to produce a male wage-worker and female domestic-worker couple.' (Connell, 2005:78)

The de-valuing of women's work, according to their socially constructed gendered roles was brought up at the beginning of this chapter, when I pointed to Bourdieu's argument about women being diminished to all that is 'low, twisted, picayune, futile, menial' (Bourdieu, 2001:30). As we can assess from Altamene's above example of doing laundry, women's work, though it can be equally physically

demanding as men's, is not recognised as challenging and therefore not awarded the same value.

In group agricultural work, referred to as '*kòve*' in Kreyòl, men and women are involved, but men are attributed the more physical labour. Women's tasks might be lighter agricultural work, watching over people's possessions and distributing rum and food (Smith, 2001:95). In urban areas, where commerce continues to be women's main method of earning money, men's economic opportunities are relatively more varied. Men often work as drivers of motorbike taxis, private cars and '*tap tap*' public transport. They also work as mechanics, builders, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, lottery kiosk agents, carriers and street vendors among other activities.[46] These are all examples of activities that, during my time in Haiti, I noticed men were more likely to perform. In fact, statistics measuring the proportion of men and women involved in different forms of labour, formal and informal, confirm that 24 per cent of men engaged in some form of economic activity work in manual labour, compared to four per cent of women (Now Institute, 2014:587). This does not necessarily mean that men have easier access to earning opportunities, but rather, it demonstrates the stratified gender roles within the, mostly informal, job market. In comparison, 71 per cent of women involved in a form of economic activity work in the 'sales and services' sector, compared to 16 per cent of men (Now Institute, 2014:587).

It might in fact be said that women may find it relatively easier to earn money through street commerce, that being a female activity, than men are able to find earning opportunities, whether formal or informal. However, where men are able to find work, they are more likely to be able to earn significantly more than women (Maternowska, 2006:54). Men are more likely to aspire to a salaried

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[46] Based on ethnographic conversations and participation

'formal' job, and women in general, prefer to maintain an 'independent' working status, where they are their own employers and are therefore not subject to exploitation and sexual harassment or abuse (IHSI, 2010:43).

Within the formal job market, particularly non-physical work, men and the relatively few women employed are more evenly spread across different roles. However, men are more likely to be in positions of power and authority, with 14 per cent of economically engaged men working as 'officer/technician/manager', compared to eight per cent of women. An example of this is '*faktori*' work, that is, working in one of Haiti's textile assembly factories. Although most women, as mentioned above, prefer to engage in street commerce and to retain their autonomy, the small percentage of working women in the formal labour market are largely employed in factories, where most of the employees are women (ILO, 2015:5). Many women shy away from formal employment, where their superiors are likely to be men, because of the likelihood that they will need to provide sex in order to attain or keep their jobs. This was mentioned in chapter five when one of my participants, Chantalle, talked about her experience of factory work. It was brought up in another interview with a group of women in a rural area:

> '*Darline: So, for me, what I know, the biggest problem that Haitian women have, women who are professional [in the formal job market], if there are any, it's a very small number... and in order for them to exercise their profession, they have to 'advertise' themselves [have sex with their boss], because for a woman to find a job, either the director demands that she has to 'give a little below' [provide sex] [...], just that, if she doesn't want to do that, she won't find work. It means [women] can't work, and when they can't work, it means they can't look after their needs. That's why you'll see the majority of Haitian women, you'll*

always see they prefer [street] commerce activities [...]. Now you see,

that's the reason that what they like to do, they can't do it. Their

profession, they can't work in it because [they] don't want to have sex

with the director. What the director asks of them, they don't want.

Jolène: What also happens is that the girl knows her rights but she has

to act as if she doesn't know. And there are some, too, that don't know

[their rights]. What I see is a problem is that a lot of women don't have

any support. [...] Yes, she has to sell all of herself.' (Darline & Jolène,

14/04/2016)

This is connected to the third component of Haitian masculinity I mentioned earlier, which is 'heterosexual sexual activity', which we will discuss later. First we will look at the attribution of gender roles from childhood, discussing how they are instilled in cultural practice.

Little boys play while little girls clean

Gender roles are instilled in children at a young age. Growing up in a typical Haitian household, young boys and girls quickly learn to identify the spaces allocated to them and what is expected of them. This educational process is performed on two levels. Firstly, children are taught through the example of their parents, who themselves, for the most part, adhere to defined roles according to their gender. In this sense, children learn by example. Altamene provides an explanation of this, based on her own household:

'Altamene: From the moment children start to understand, when they

get up [in the morning] you make the little girl wash dishes. Sometimes

she does a little housework in the house, and little boys go with their

father. They go out to tend to the animals and the little girl stays at

home with her mother. If you need to light a fire, you get her to do it if she is able.

Interviewer: So that means that it's from the very beginning, it's the mother who uses the little girl. If you're in the kitchen and you need someone to go get you a spoon, for you it's the little girl you send [to do it]?

Altamene: Yes

Interviewer: And the dad, it's the little boy he uses more?

Altamene: Yes

Interviewer: It's as if it starts at the very beginning.

Altamene: Yes [...] like when I was a child, when it was time to go to the market, I used to ask my mother if she would take me with her so she could show me the market, show me how to use money. When she was making food she would tell me to come and look at how she did it so that whenever I was to leave so they would see that the way my mother did it is how I do it too. [...]

Interviewer: How old is this little girl? [pointing to a little girl in the doorway]

Altamene: That little girl? She's going to be six.

Interviewer: Is it from when she is this young that you start showing her how to wash a few clothes or...

Altamene: Yes, she washes her little underwear, little items of clothing she rubs together.

Interviewer: have you started showing her how to cook too?

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Altamene: Yes, prepare little bits of food, wash plates... sometimes I say to her [...] 'come and taste the food to see if it's missing salt', she says 'manmi [mama], it's missing a little salt.'

Interviewer: It's as if from the ages 4 or 5, people start to show children little things, and as they grow up they learn to do more. And it's the same for little boys, too. From when they are little, dad goes to the fields with them, and it becomes something they are used to, so that they eventually know that the fields/crops are for boys, and the house is for girls.

Altamene: Yes.' (Altamene, 13/04/2016)

Similarly, children's labour in the African context reflects dynamics of female control over younger girls, where:

'girls work harder than boys because women direct children's labor and are able to control girls more firmly. [..] but there is more than that. The ethos of womanliness is "the dull compulsion" of daily work. Girls are reluctant apprentices. A woman's duty is to bind her daughter into service in order to secure her future as a farmer and a useful servant in the kinship network.' (Reynolds cited in Kielland & Tovo, 2006:21)

Secondly, many children are told what they should or should not be doing, and encouraged to pursue activities that fit their gender according to social norms. An example of this is Ville-France, who describes his upbringing within a resource poor rural family in the mountains, in the North of Haiti.

'*I used to be very interested in everything my mother did. I liked sitting in the kitchen and watching her cook. That's how I learnt to cook, myself. But I wasn't allowed to sit in the kitchen with my mother and sisters.*

When my father would see me there he'd drag me out saying it was no place for a boy, and he'd beat me to teach me a lesson.' (Ville-France, 17/02/2016)

Ville-France's interest in 'women's work' led him to learn, through observation, how to cook, clean, sew, do laundry, wash dishes and look after children. As a married adult, he performs most of the household chores in his home. He points out that, according to him, he might be one of the only men in Haiti who does this type of work every day. For him, this might be a source of pride, but many people consider it a shameful thing, and are quite shocked when they see it, as I noted in my field diary:

'I sat with Ville-France in his courtyard for hours while he was doing laundry. I watched the way his big, strong hands scrubbed the fabric with soap, and made a loud squelching sound. A giant pile of clothes sat behind him, organised into different colours. When he was done scrubbing one item – only after having scrubbed every little inch of it thoroughly – he would throw it in a bucket filled with fresh water and orange tree leaves, to give the clothes a nice smell. [...] Neighbours passed by, and almost all of them laughed nervously and shouted across some joke or question, aghast at what they were seeing. [...] Ville-France told me a story about when he was living with his friend Mario, and one day, all of Mario's clothes were dirty. Mario's girlfriend was not around at the time, and he didn't even have any clean underwear. Ville-France said to him, 'why don't you clean a few yourself?', and Mario said he would not be able to. So Ville-France went to get a bucket and soap. He told Mario to go get his clothes. Then he sat down with Mario beside him and showed him how to wash. Mario reluctantly took over

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and finished his washing. Later that day, Mario came over to Ville-France and said 'Thank you'. 'For what?', Ville-France replied. Mario said he had been taught an important lesson, that when you're in need, you shouldn't consider any work to be below you.' - Field Diary 21/12/2015

The group of women interviewed in Ma agree:

'Interviewer: I feel like there is something in men, they are ashamed to do it. Even if they want to help their wives by doing a job that they consider is not for them, people will judge them if they do it.

Molenita: Exactly

Madanm Christmas: That's no lie. There are some men who might choose to help their wives do some things, but there are others who would say they will not do it, they say [he is a restavèk *for that woman].*

Darline: I know a man in this community, himself and his wife they really cooperate. The water [source] is quite far, and you need an animal to go there, and this man always goes to get water for his wife. But the other people look at him, they think it's bad. They say 'Oh, is that man a restavèk *for his wife?' There are some who say, if it was them they would leave that woman, but they don't know how well it works between them.*

Jolène: It's true.

Madanm Christmas: That's what I was saying, because there are men who would like to do ['women's work'] but back when they were growing up, their parents were a bit strict. Like, a little boy does not sit near the fire [in the kitchen], if little boys sit by the fire, they say they are 'koyosann' [effeminate boys, homosexual]. So because of that, men

don't know how to cook. Because there are men with us [husbands] that

don't know how to cook. […] hunger will be killing them and it's only

'sugar water' they know how to make. Even a sweet potato, he doesn't

know how to boil. Every time I try to teach him how to cook, he says 'I'm

too old'!' (Group interview in Ma – Ladies 14/04/2016)

The unconscious gendering language in the quote above, where the women are discussing men doing 'women's work' is noteworthy in how the responsibilities are assumed to belong to women. The husband that fetches water *for* his wife, as mentioned by Darline, is assumed to be taking on a responsibility that is not his, according to his gender – and the reaction of the people around his is significant in this. However, the fetching of water for the home is for the benefit of every member of the household, and it is striking how deeply felt these gendered responsibilities are by individuals and society.

Establishing gender identities from early childhood and creating a gendered space for an infant is not a phenomenon restricted to the Haitian environment. On the contrary, it happens the world over and serves to delineate our roles in society as either feminine or masculine, just as these very identities shift through time and space. Gender as a performance implies that we are each complicit in adopting our roles and behaviours, as Clisby and Holdsworth point out, '[w]e are constantly and actively doing and performing, creating and recreating our gender identities' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:58). However, they go on to say:

'That we have degrees of agency does not mean, however, that we
can choose our gender identities at will, we are simultaneously
subject to powerful processes of gendering, and girls and boys
begin to learn what is expected of them as gendered beings from
the moment they arrive into this world. This "learning" takes place

in a variety of socio-cultural settings [...] Initially, however, the family and early years care environment is the primary site of gendering.' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:58)

In many ways, the defined segregation of gender roles has the result of creating dependency for both sexes. While a woman may depend on a man for financial support, most men are dependent on women, and their labour, for basic necessities such as food preparation, cleaning, laundry and to look after their children. Even when single, it is extremely rare for a man to cook and wash his own clothes.[47] As can be noted from the quotes above, there is a stigma associated with these types of jobs, and a man performing them is to be seen by society as effeminate or 'homosexual'.[48] In Haiti's 'machismo' society, many men avidly avoid being associated with such qualities. This has an effect on how the value of women is perceived. Remarks made by the group of women I interviewed suggest that, although men have more power in society, women and girls are in fact 'valuable', but for different reasons.

Interviewer: Do you think that, in men's minds, they think they are superior [to women]?

Darline, Madanm Christmas: Yes, they always see it that way.

Jolène: Most men see it that way.

Darline: Not only do they see it that way, that's the way it is too! It comes from Haitian customs, because a long time ago, they would always say, when a parent has a little girl, they used to say they

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[47] A single man is likely to have help from his mother, sisters or female cousins to do 'women's work' for him.

[48] It must be noted that to be treated of 'homosexual', or *'masisi'* in Kreyòl, is a serious insult. This is because of the extremely homophobic nature of Haitian society as well as confusion around the term. Through intensive and charged discussions with some Haitian people, I realized that the word *'masisi'* represents homosexuality, but also adds the labels of 'peodophilia' and 'trans-gender', due to widespread ignorance about the LGBT community. All of these terms appear to be considered abhorrent by many Haitians.

wouldn't send the little girl to school so she wouldn't write letters to boys on Malanga leaves [to communicate with boys]. But when they have a son, they are like 'yes, we have made a little ball of gold, it's him we will send to school.' That's how little boys come to understand the way things are here at home for us Haitians.

Jolène: In Jacmel, there is an area in the countryside, where, when people have a daughter, they consider her [as valuable] because that little girl will be good for them, but when they have a son they don't consider him. For them, girls mean less expense and boys mean they need to spend more.

[…]

Molenita: Like, in this area, now they have changed this, but when a woman was in labour […], if the midwife sees it's a boy, [the parents] will need to pay 20 [Haitian] dollars, if it's a girl, they will pay 30 [Haitian] dollars. They've changed that now.

Interviewer: What happened? [Did] girls have more importance than boys?

Molenita: No. It's like this, back then there used to be a lot of sugar cane to cut, but now there isn't.' (Group interview in Ma – Ladies, 14/04/2016)

Here, the Ma ladies divulge the engrained superiority of the male in Haitian culture, but the high value of the female in terms of her low-cost and high-return working ability. A woman is more useful because of her labour – as Molenita refers to above in her comment about women being valued because of their labour and sugar-cane crops - and a boy costs more money to rear because, as he is expected to be superior, he needs to be provided with more than would a girl.

This is reflected in many societies across the world, where, even though on a legal level boys and girls have achieved some equality, social perceptions of gender continue to effect the different ways boys and girls are treated. As Clisby and Holdsworth, in the context of modern British society, explain:

> 'this male valorisation both within their family lives and beyond has a significant part to play in girl's identity formation and self-esteem. […] boys were still (despite evidence to the contrary) assumed or expected to be, for example, more intelligent, better at sports, better able to negotiate the public arena, more confident, that boys' games are more exciting, that boys' subjects were better, harder and had greater value, and that eventually their careers are more important. Inevitably these deep-rooted beliefs learned as children continue to have a significant impact on women's self-esteem.' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:65)

We can therefore see, through these examples, how the subordination of women is performed, and how women are attributed considerably less social power than men. This, as we discussed in chapter five, has a significant impact on children and their vulnerability to being sent into the *restavek* system, through the diminished power of the adults who are responsible for their care. One of the ways superiority is demonstrated is in men's sexual dominance over women. Next we will look at the concept of sexuality in Haitian men and how it is understood through 'macho' terms.

Sexual dominance and Haitian 'machismo'

The ways in which Haitian men consider themselves as sexual beings form an important part of the expressions of their masculinity. In relation to concepts of

hegemonic masculinity, as discussed earlier in this chapter, there exists an emphasis on heterosexuality as a definitive marker of masculinity or 'orthodox masculinity'- 'a form of masculinity that is predicated on homophobia, misogyny, physicality and bravado' (Anderson & McGuire, 2010:250). Homophobia and the sexual objectification of women occupy a pivotal position in concepts of orthodox/hegemonic masculinity: 'Thus, the sexual degradation of women, and the broadcasting of heterosexual proclivity, are behaviors described as being central to the establishment of oneself as heterosexual, and therefore masculine' (Anderson & McGuire, 2010:250). Indeed, Anderson and McGuire (2010) point to Connell's suggestion that: 'only one dominating, hegemonic version of masculinity will exist (and it will have homophobia at its core). This is because homophobia is fundamental to the production and stratification of men as an ordered system of valued or subjugated individuals in a highly homophobic culture' (Anderson & McGuire, 2010:251). Although modern Haitian male society can indeed be assessed as homophobic in many respects,[49] there is not the space here to discuss it in relation to gay and bisexual men. The relevance of heterosexuality in relation to this thesis centres on Haitian men's treatment of women.

The heterosexual component of notions of masculinity manifests itself in conversations about sex and sexual performance, as well as in interactions with the opposite sex. A significant marker of Haitian masculinities, and indeed, masculinities worldwide, is in men's relationship with, and perceptions of, women as sexual objects as Jukes states '[m]en seem to possess of a sexuality which is

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[49] Based on ethnographic conversations and observations. In one particular conversation with a Haitian friend, it emerged that there was confusion concerning the understanding of homosexuality by many people in Haitian society, as the words used to label gay men, '*masisi*' and lesbians seemingly also, or predominantly describes acts of pedophilia. When I asked why my friend was so averse to homosexuality and those who identify as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, he said it was because 'those people abuse and molest children'. Though an interesting part of Haitian society's views on homosexuality, I do not discuss it here further so as not to detract from my main argument in relation to Haitian men's subordination of women.

founded not on intimacy or reciprocity but on the perception of woman as a prize, as an object to be chased and conquered' (Jukes, 1993:143). Here, not only is sexuality a point to consider in itself, but it is also connected to questions of dominance as well as the theme of gender based violence. In her study of *Cité Soleil*, Maternowska (2006) discusses the gender dynamics that exist in Haitian male-female relationships. Having previously pointed out the fact that men are largely disempowered economically, she asserts that '[as] in many places around the world, a significant part of male identity in Haiti is bound up in sexuality, both in terms of men's public bravado and their ability to follow through, find a suitable partner, and ultimately maintain the relationship' (Maternowska, 2006:48). An important aspect of men's sexuality includes the concept of unfaithfulness within sexual relationships. In the previous chapters, we looked at some of the ways in which women are the victims of sexual oppression and exploitation. Now we turn to examine men's perspectives, providing context for their actions.

It did not take much investigation to find out about Haitian men's 'reputation' of being sexual predators, for the most part unfaithful, and typically engaging in sexual relationships with several women at a time.[50] In fact, the information was offered regularly, and almost always with a detectable tinge of pride and/or humour. Maternowska's male participants in *Cité Soleil* all claimed to have on-going sexual relationships with at least two different women, apart from one participant who was older than the others and going blind (Maternowska, 2006:50). During my ethnographic social observation, I found there to be a large amount of 'bravado' on the part of young Haitian men, who talk about their sexual exploits to one another. This is particularly true for young men, who may not have reached a level of maturity that would allow them to strive to fulfil the

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[50] Based on ethnographic conversations and participation

aforementioned role of the 'provider'. Louiner, a young man I interviewed, living in Jacmel town, is the father of an eight year old boy. Struggling to make any money to provide for his child and wife, he pointed out the ways he feels he is unlike his peers:

> *'I'm not into wasting money. I see young guys are more interested in partying, but I'm not into that kind of thing. I'm not into it because, when I think about the way I live, if I had 50 [Haitian] dollars, it's not in a nightclub I'm going to burn it. You understand?'* (Louiner, 22/04/2016)

As Geofroy and Plummer (2010) point out, by the age of ten, boys in Caribbean societies have already learnt the principle elements of the 'traditional' masculinity expected of them, like toughness, physical strength and sexual dominance (Geofroy & Plummer, 2010:4-5). For many young men, being sexually aggressive is a social expectation placed on them through peer pressure as well as through social understandings of manhood and masculinity. Not only is sex a way for men to assert their masculinity, but it is also connected to the sometimes violent subordination of women. This can be attested through Maternowska's findings, as she states, '[t]wenty-one of the thirty women interviewed in Cité Soleil were forced – punched, beaten, and in one case gagged – during their first sexual encounters' (Maternowska, 2006:62). Another study, the 2005 Demographic Health Survey (DHS), performed in one area of Haiti, found that 18% of 15-24 year old females surveyed had experienced sexual violence (Gomez et al., 2009:508). The ladies in Ma added:

> *'Darline: Sometimes, too, when there is violence against women, it's because when the man... so, I'm talking about physical violence...*

sometimes, the man wants the thing [sex] and the woman isn't willing –

it's not that she doesn't want to. Firstly, women have something in

them, they need a man to give them attention; secondly, she might be

tired.

Jolène : She might be hungry too…

Darline:Yes, she might be hungry. The man could do what he wants to

do, but it's in the way he approaches her […] the girl can't ever agree to

that. But if he came gently, the girl would do it whether she is tired or

not. It's like that the man comes, 'oh, I'm married to my wife, I'm the

boss, my wife belongs to me, she is not entitled to know suffering or

fatigue…' She has to make sure she can give him what he needs.

Sometimes, when it's like this, a woman doesn't want it, the man forces

her to do it… That's called violence.' (Group interview in Ma – Ladies,

14/04/2016)

Just as Darline mentions it here, in an interview with the leader of the Ma

community, Christmas, discussed how men view women as their property:

'Interviewer: Can it be said that when a woman is married to a man, in

the man's mind, his wife belongs to him […] so he can do whatever he

wants with his property and no one can say anything, because they are

his?

Christmas: I think, for all the people who act that way, that's the

attitude they have in their heads. 'My kids belong to me, I can do what I

like to them. My wife is my property, I can do what I please'. […] There

are some men, who appear well-behaved in the street, but if it's with his

wife he has a problem, he's ready to beat her. It means, if he has a

problem with someone 'outside' [not in his household], he won't get into

that because he doesn't have any rights over that person, but the people

in his household, he has rights over them.' (Christmas, 14/04/2016)

Elaborating on what he understood to be the reasons behind some men's use of violence against women, based on his own experience and understanding as a community leader, Christmas added:

> '*For some [men], they use the pretext of jealousy [for violence against*
>
> *their wives], for others it's the situation they are in that is somewhat*
>
> *difficult, for the husband, and it's as if people [in the house] are*
>
> *annoying him. What happens, if someone is talking about the problem*
>
> *of hunger, and problems, in his head all the time… He feels like he needs*
>
> *to react, like the problems are overflowing for him already and [the*
>
> *members of his family] keep adding more. That's what makes the*
>
> *actions turn out like that.*' (Christmas, 14/04/2016)

We see, from the explanations of the participants from Ma, that many men consider their wives to be their property and that this renders women vulnerable to violence. Mercer and Julien discuss the concept of 'macho' in relation to the oppression felt through social disempowerment:

> 'There is a further contradiction, another turn of the screw of
>
> oppression, which occurs when black men subjectively internalise
>
> and incorporate aspects of the dominant definitions of masculinity
>
> in order to contest the conditions of dependency and
>
> powerlessness which racism and racial oppression enforce. Staples
>
> sees the legacy of the past writ large in the development of
>
> "macho" attitudes and behaviour in contemporary society. "Macho"
>
> is the product of these historical contradictions, as it subjectively
>
> incorporates attributes associated with dominant definitions of

manhood – such as being tough, in control, independent – in order to recuperate some degree of power or active influence over objective conditions of powerlessness created by racism.' (Mercer & Julien, 1988:112-3)

Furthermore, sexual subordination can take place in the ways many people interact. One young man I got to know in Port-au-Prince, called Waleme, talked about his use of a 'Whatsapp'[51] group he used to connect to girls. Using the application on his mobile phone, he would be in regular contact with several girls at a time. They would send each other photos of themselves, and arrange to meet. After meeting, he would send photographs of the girl, and some of them together, to his friends, and talk about his sexual exploits.[52] This is reflective of findings in Lewis' (2007) study of masculinity in the Caribbean:

'There is a particular quality, style and code of male fashion and aesthetic among men in the dancehalls of the Caribbean. […] Men are speaking to each other in the manner of their dress, in the swagger of their walk and in the pose they adopt.' (Lewis, 2007:4)

As Lewis recognises, men talk to one another through their style as well as through the women by their side (Lewis, 2007:4). Waleme provides a good example of this type of communication between young men. As we became friends, I also received some of his photographs, which depicted him in immaculate outfits, with, what can best be described as 'bling' accessories like chains, sunglasses, watches, caps and always spotless shoes. His outfits were clearly meant to represent status and

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[51] This is an online text-messaging service which allows users to communicate in groups as well as to send images and photographs. Many Haitians like it because it allows them to communicate without the cost of normal text messages. Although most Haitians are not connected to the internet through wifi, many are able to purchase data plans on their mobile phones to access the internet to be able to communicate online.
[52] Based on ethnographic conversations and observations

wealth, which he, earning less than $40 a month, did not have. While being well-dressed and groomed are important for men, it appears no such standards are expected of women. Based on conversations with Waleme and other Haitian men, women are judged more on their bodies - the bigger the better - rather than on their clothing, hair or accessories. When asked what men find attractive in a woman, Waleme referred to women's curves, and said a girl should be '*byen kanpe*', she should 'hold herself' well.[53] The differences in what men and women exhibit of themselves to serve their sexual image might be in reference to their gendered symbols of sexual power. For women, this can be their physical sexuality, and for men, their perceived relative wealth. This, in essence, provides the basis for many male-female relationships, where women seek financial security and men seek sexual dominance.

Young women are certainly often judged on their appearance, but where men demonstrate symbols of wealth and power, women are represented by their natural 'assets' namely their bodies, or physical sexuality. As Maternowska confirms, '[w]omen are conscious of the value of their genitalia, as reflected in these references: *byen pa m* (my goods/assets), *peyi m* (my country), and *tè m* (my land), to name a few' (Maternowska, 2006:50). Indeed, men's capacity to provide financially and women's sexuality appear to be the principle bargaining tools in most male-female relationships in Haitian society. We have seen this in women's searches for male providers for them and their families. We can also note that not only do men rely on women for the 'women's work' we discussed previously, but they also express a need for women sexually, not only in terms of physiology, but also in order to express their masculinity. This interdependence on one another, and the links between sex and money, dictate the nature of many relationships. A

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[53] Based on ethnographic conversations with Waleme

quote from one of Maternowska's male participants is particularly poignant in this regard:

> '*nou pa gen renmen ankò* (we don't have love anymore). Everything is an exchange. You pay them for sex and they pay you for sex. Men go for women, women go for men, women for women and men for men. It doesn't matter any more: you take what you can get. What does this mean? A man can't be a man. We've been reduced to animals' (cited in Maternowska, 2006:59).

This reflects a separation of sex and emotion which is associated with concepts of masculinity, as Seidler points out:

> 'As sex becomes a commodity like any other on the market that can be bought and sold, it becomes difficult for men to disentangle the relationship between sex and love. If sex becomes a matter of performance it is a way of proving ourselves as men' (Seidler, 1997:167)

He explains that this lack of association between sex and emotion in many men stems from a gendered independence in boys from an early age, when boys 'learn to separate from their inner emotional lives' and 'emotions become a sign of dependency and reflect a lack of self-control which is particularly which is particularly threatening to sustaining dominant notions of male identity' (Seidler, 1997:167). Moreover, this separation reflects a patriarchal intent to maintain authority and control over women, as Jukes notes:

> 'Affection involves tender concern for the object and anxiety lest one's destructive impulses, whether loving or sadistic, should damage her. The splitting of one's affectionate from one's sexual feelings, therefore, has complex origins. At root it is an attempt to

ensure that the object never becomes powerful enough to evoke

our unresolved dependency and possessive needs by stimulating

our desire, with all its naked force and fearful power. The man

simply withdraws his desire in the face of its inevitable frustration.'

(Jukes, 1993:157-8)

Jukes goes on to connect this separation between sex and emotion to the rape of women as a way of reflecting men's possession of women. He states that:

'this model makes it clear that rape would not be possible were it

not for the belief – and institutional support for it – that women are

the property of men. They may be used, abused, ignored or

discarded at whim. Rape is the logical outcome of a set of attitudes

about and towards women which legitimizes, in men's eyes, their

oppression and abuse.' (Jukes, 1993:171)

It is also highly indicative of Haiti's severe level of poverty and the ways in which it dictates and morphs human interactions. It points to people's individualism in a society where basic survival is most people's primary concern (Fass, 1990). As Willman and Marcelin point out, regarding the behaviours of youth in *Cité Soleil*:

'[H]ere is the idea that their desperation and marginalization

justifies an individual, egocentric stance in their world—i.e., this

extreme individualism, even at the expense of others, be they

friends or family members. Thus, "everybody is on his own" (Chak

koukouj klere pou je'w).' (Willman & Marcelin, 2010:259)

In a society influenced by gang culture, Waleme and his photographs also demonstrate how many young men replicate symbols of power and manhood, in other words, wealth and toughness, to assert their own masculinity. The male dominated gang culture, particularly significant in urban areas, emerges from the

powerlessness and disempowerment of a generation of young men that is generally deprived from education, employment, and access to many of their basic rights (Willman & Marcelin, 2010; Farmer, 2004). I argue that, in the Haitian context, the more aggressive, in terms of violence and sexual dominance, and relatively irresponsible aspects of a traditional 'machismo' masculinity offer men an alternative to the largely unattainable 'provider' masculinity. Here emerges the aforementioned second hegemonic masculinity, in sharp contrast to the first, where men can reclaim the 'manliness' they lost through economic marginalisation, poverty and social exclusion. As Mercer and Julien state:

> '"Macho" may be regarded as a form of misdirected or "negative" resistance, as it is shaped by the challenge to the hegemony of the socially dominant white male, yet it assumes a form which is in turn oppressive to black women, children and indeed black men themselves, as it can entail self-destructive acts and attitudes.'
>
> (Mercer & Julien, 1988:113)

This shift towards an alternative expression of 'manhood' affects, and is adopted by, much of male youth culture (Willman & Marcelin, 2010). Geofroy and Plummer's findings, in the Caribbean context, reveal 'youth culture to be a dynamic fully fledged culture that is quite capable of operating semi-autonomously from society at large and often in opposition to it' (Geofroy & Plummer, 2010:13).

The expression, 'machismo', is a term that conjures qualities and behaviours in men that are considered differently in different cultures. Gutmann points out that the concept of 'macho' arose out of a national crisis in identity in Mexico in the 1940s, when being 'Mexican' and being 'macho' became representative of each other (Gutmann, 1996:4488). It was a sense of inferiority which pushed to 'macho' image to exist because of the Mexican *pelado'* identity which symbolised 'a male

proletarian, vulgar and poorly educated' (Gutmann, 1996:4400). Here, it is possible to see the parallels with Haiti, and the emergence of a 'macho' influenced masculinity, emerging from a sense of inferiority and shame regarding economic poverty. Furthermore, as Franco explains:

> 'The problem of national identity was thus presented primarily as a problem of *male* identity, and it was male authors who debated its defects and psychoanalyzed the nation. In national allegories, women became the territory over which the quest for (male) national identity passed, or, at best, [...] the space of loss and of all that lies outside the male games of rivalry and revenge.' (Franco, 1989:131)

Christmas provides further evidence of the link between men's disempowerment and violence against women:

> *'It's a question that is a little complicated. The way I see it, there are many people who, when they are in a difficult situation, they convince themselves that it's either their children or their wife that is the cause of this situation, that is responsibe for it. Because when violence erupts inside a home, either on the wife or the children, we can't really know the priniciple cause of it. When you go deeper, you see it's because this person is in* mizè *['impoverished'], and most often, people who do [violence] are people whose standard of life is not good. All the people who do violence in the areas I'm telling you about, are people who you see are in extremely difficult situations [financially].'* (Christmas, 14/04/2016)

We will look in more detail at the factors that have created the 'problem of male identity' further in this chapter, but for now I draw in particular examples of Haitian manifestations of 'machismo', by looking at other behaviours and

components which are considered typical of the term, such as 'toughness' and the consumption of alcohol.

Rum, machetes and dominos

In rural areas, children can be seen performing different roles, as dicussed earlier. Girls can be seen working alongside their mothers, and boys tend to have more independence. It is also noteworthy that many men and young boys can be seen carrying machetes around. Children from resource poor families do not usually have many toys to play with – other than what they can make themselves like kites or hoops.[54] A machete, to a boy, is a basic instrument with which he can both work and create, or play. In the sense that it is essentially a boy's tool, or toy, it might also be considered a symbol of his manhood. Girls in rural areas do not so easily gravitate towards the machete as a source of status or enjoyment. They sometimes possess 'hand-me-down', used and blunt machetes from the men and boys in their household, which they use to plant beans.[55] Older boys in rural areas sometimes take part in machete fighting competitions, and will proudly show off their scars (Fusion Live, 2014).

The machete is more than a working tool in Haiti. In many ways, it is a symbol of Haitian pride, and more precisely, male Haitian pride. It is a link to the freedom-fighting ancestors, who violently battled for Haiti's independence before and during the revolution (Peck, 2014; Haitianfencing.org, n.d.). In terms of the use of the machete in men's everyday lives, apart from gun violence, much of which is gang-related and/or part of political violence (Willman & Marcelin, 2010), there

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[54] Based on ethnographic conversations and participation
[55] Based on ethnographic conversations and participation

still is a large amount of machete violence.[56] Haitian news websites regularly feature articles describing murders done by machete. The victims are varied; some are men, like one instance of a man killing his father; some are women, like two articles from December and November 2015 that describe young women being killed by 'jealous' boyfriends (Loophaiti, 2016; Guyto, 2016; Amos & Roberson, 2015). As we note the machete to be a prominent tool and weapon in Haiti, and consequently a symbol of power, it is significant that it is also a masculine tool. The fact that women are not represented by an instrument in the same way speaks to their relatively less powerful image.

Violence in rural areas, which is notably less common than in urban areas, is also commonly performed through poison or *Vodou* curses.[57] As we saw in chapter five, *Vodou* is the basis for a widely believed world view in Haiti, where many Haitians are aware of an invisible spiritual realm as well as our visible world, with both being just as real as each other. The effects of a *Vodou* curse might not be compatible with a Western world view, making it a difficult notion to discuss as having violent consequences. However, it is an integral part of Haitian people's perceptions of reality, and though the tangible consequences of such maledictions are somewhat debatable in an academic context, the intentions behind them stem from genuine violent sentiment.

The use of poison and *Vodou* to perform acts of violence are generally preferred because of their indirect nature, their perceived power, and the higher possibility of escaping retribution for the crime.

Another notable aspect of male behaviour in rural areas is the habitual consumption of '*kleren*', a locally-made rum. Though difficult to substantiate

[56] Based on ethnographic conversations and participation
[57] Based on ethnographic conversations and participation

because of a lack of studies in the area, it can be asserted, through my own ethnographic observations, that a majority of rural Haitian men drink *kleren* on a regular basis. The consumption of *kleren* is a quotidian activity for many men, as they drink it while they work as well as during their time off. A participant recalls his father's drinking habits:

> '*He would drink first thing in the morning, before he's even had anything else to eat or drink. […] He could go weeks without knowing whether his children have eaten anything, because feeding us, and finding money to feed us, that was my mother's responsibility. But because we had crops, [the fact that he didn't provide anything for us] often went unnoticed. […] He spent any money he had on* kleren*, if he had anything left [after buying* kleren*], he might give it to my mother for us [children], but he almost never had anything left.*' (Ville-France, 06/03/2016)

As Smith (2001) illustrates, throughout her study of rural Haitian life and work practices, drinking *kleren* is an integral part of agricultural labour for Haitian peasants. In the Haitian tradition of *kòve*, a practice in which people work in groups on various people's fields in order to share the load of the work, *kleren* is a vital component of the day, and many people will refuse to work if it is not provided. In many cases, it is also the only payment provided in exchange of labour (Smith, 2001). The distribution of *kleren*, during such work parties, is allocated to a designated member of the worker's group. This is one of the most important roles in the group, because unequal distribution may lead to arguments and fighting (Smith, 2001:95).

The consumption of *kleren* can also be linked to violence. Firstly, it is usually in *kleren* that some people seek revenge, using it to poison others. Such a case happened to a neighbour of mine, while I was living in a rural area in Jacmel. A

former business partner of his, seeking revenge, gave him a drink of *kleren* mixed with rat poison. My neighbour was dead within 12 hours of having consumed the drink.[58] It is a common practice, when offering a drink of *kleren* to someone, to take a sip from it first to prove it has not been poisoned. *Kleren* is also an integral part of *Vodou* ceremonies as it is consumed by participants and offered to the *Lwa* spirits.[59]

Further, the consumption of *kleren* can also be linked to domestic violence as well as the evasion of familial responsibilities. For Ville-France, his father's daily consumption of alcohol not only meant an evasion from his responsibilities, but a trigger for violence against his wife and children. It also meant that there was less money to spend on the family. Ville-France and his siblings were never sent to school, nor did they ever see the inside of a doctor's office or hospital (Ville-France, 17/02/2016).

Whether *kleren* is involved or not, it is common for men to spend money on themselves, instead of their families. One of the ladies from Ma explains:

> *'Darline: For me, that is a very difficult thing for Haitian women. Sometimes, when a woman knows her man is going to be making 10 gourdes, this man has already looked after his own business on his way home. He arrives with 5 gourdes and he says 'in the 5 gourdes, you take 3 and give me 2 gourdes', and those 3 gourdes you just have to manage with it. So you see our misery, our pain!*
>
> *Madanm Christmas: You budgeted for 10 gourdes.*
>
> *Darline: You budgeted for 10 gourdes and now you have to rethink everything for those 3 gourdes, and he's there expecting 'pan' [something to eat that costs a lot] to come out of it!*

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[58] This episode, apart from highlighting violence between men, is also symbolic of the violence of poverty. This young man was taken to the hospital and turned away because of a lack of staff.

[59] Based on ethnographic data

Molenita: But those 3 gourdes can't even give you the 'P' in 'pan'!'

When discussing who is the 'boss' at home, one participant, Jolène adds:

'Jolène: Sometimes a woman is forced to be 'chef' [to take control] because her husband might be out in the street, he's been drinking his rum, he doesn't know if his kids have eaten, if his kids have drunk. He's playing dominos, he's found his friends, he's making jokes. In that case, the woman is 'chef'. There has to be someone to be 'chef'/take control because everything can't just fall apart completely [...]

Madanm Christmas: She is forced to be the chef.

Jolène: She has no choice.' (Group interview in Ma – Ladies, 14/04/2016)

As Jolène mentioned in her analysis of men's activities 'in the street', many men spend their free time playing dominos with their friends. Dominos players can be seen on almost every street, every town square and public beach. In my time in Haiti, I noticed it was very rare to see a woman playing dominos, or engaging in any leisurely activity. Altamene, the other participant from Ma, said of the game: *'I have absolutely no idea how to play that'* (Altamene, 13/04/2016), despite the fact that I saw that as a regular activity in her household, between the boys. I also noted in my field diary of my experience in Altamene's home:

'I sat with Altamene in the dining area of her house. She had pointed proudly at the newly cemented floor. The last time I'd visited the floor had been pale dust and rocks, the same as outside. As we sat there together, discussing the different ways boys and girls are reared in her family, we looked out at the boys playing marbles in the courtyard. Four of her sons were intensely concentrated on a game. I looked on with interest, trying to figure out the rules, and watching the little girl

who stood in the shadow of the kitchen-hut. She looked at her brothers

playing. At one point, she stepped into the circle where the game was

unfolding, and was quickly scolded by her brothers. She ran back into

the shadows.' - Field Diary, 14/04/2016

Having an older brother myself, I am aware that the exclusion of girls from 'boys' games' is in no way unique to Haitian family life. However, as a child, I had my own games and activities, whereas young girls in countries like Haiti are more likely to spend most of their time assisting their mothers with housework. A realisation of this came to one of Davis' St Lucian participants:

'The participant who talked about his sister working after school while he played soccer had an "aha" moment during the interview. His initial perspective was that boys benefit from having the luxury of playing and enjoying themselves while girls are being stifled by responsibilities' (Davis et al., 2006:306)

The bigger picture: Haitian men's disempowerment on historical and national levels

Haitian men's struggles to advance economically, and to be able to fulfil the role of the 'provider' in their families, fit into a wider picture of male disempowerment in Haiti's history and present day political situation. In chapter four, we looked at Haiti's tumultuous history and identified a pattern of foreign control and undermining of Haiti's sovereignty, politically, economically and culturally. Since before its independence, Haiti has been a society divided by social classes. The financial politics of power have been a constant struggle within the racialised divisions between Haitian citizens themselves as well as with the '*blan*', 'white' or 'foreign' political and geographical presence in Haiti (Farmer, 2003).

Whether it has been in the form of the United States occupation, the perseverance of French as an official language and cultural marker, or with the influx of foreign NGOs after the 2010 earthquake, one consistent element has been the marginalisation of Haiti's economically poor, mostly dark-skinned majority. I suggest that it is the social expectations put on Haitian men to be earners and providers, colliding with this politicised environment rendering them virtually powerless that creates much of the frustration which is eventually expressed through violent acts, towards other men and towards women.

At the time of researching, Haiti was in the midst of another political crisis. After 1st round of presidential elections were marred by speculations of fraud and corruption, the 2nd round was cancelled in December, 2015. An interim president was put in place, and elections took place in December, 2016. Since my arrival in Haiti, in October 2014, there were almost daily protests in the capital Port-au-Prince (Cook, 2016; Johnston, 2016; Miroff, 2016). Throughout my stay in Haiti, the protests, which were held on different routes through the city, tainted the city with violence and unease. Many people avoided going out in the streets, particularly in the areas affected by the manifestations. This current political crisis is the latest situation of political and social turmoil in Haiti's 213 year history of independence.

The almost constantly unstable political situation, which is tied up with the economic situation and history of Haiti, and its violent repercussions, is the latest example and symptom of the marginalisation of the Haitian people. Not only does it create an environment where national economic growth is impossible, it also increases disruption and violence in the streets. The gang-violence, performed by male youth, is 'both an expression of their frustration and a tool for redressing their marginalization' (Willman & Marcellin, 2010:529). For the case of 'ordinary' Haitian men, who are not necessarily involved in violent street activity, the pressures of

male responsibilities coupled with the challenging economic environment can have grave psychological effects. Louiner, the young man with the eight year old son in Jacmel phrased it this way:

> '*I'll tell you, I sometimes even ask God for [my] death. I tell God, I don't have to go through this misery, you have two choices. Either take my life or give me work to do, because that's what I believe in, that's what I always ask for. Sometimes I complain, complain, and then finally, I feel like I've complained too much...*
>
> [...]
>
> Monchè *[my dear], when things don't feel right is when you see one week go by the same [no economic activity], a second week goes by, the same, and you try to be patient for a third week, you say, maybe God can [send me something] to get by. But the third week comes along and you don't see anything at all, and you sit and you're calculating. You're thinking, 'there's nothing coming in'. In that time, you don't even have anything to spend. You can't be happy, you are forced to be sad.*' (Louiner, 22/04/2016)

The previous chapter provided statistical realities and quantitative data regarding the extreme nature of Haiti's poverty. Certain examples, including analyses of Haiti's infrastructure and living conditions, were discussed in chapter five, that provided an idea of the lives of Haiti's economically poor population. The following chapter will focus on poverty in urban areas, where I will talk about issues surrounding water, sanitation and electricity. The effects of such extreme levels of poverty and lack of opportunity or hope cannot be underestimated. The psychological consequences are likely to be significant, and have bearing on men's

ability to cope emotionally. With a lack of psychosocial care and research in the Haitian environment, it is difficult to quantify issues surrounding mental health. However, noting the actions of men, there is a strong likelihood that certain behaviours that can be described as being 'macho', arise out of these feelings of inferiority. One entry in my field diary, which I wrote while I was, myself, in a particular emotional state, having witnessed the conditions of Haitian people's lives reflects some of this felt hopelessness:

> '*Who cares about being a good person when survival is on the line? Everybody lies, manipulates, steps on one another just to make the tiniest of progress , or none at all. Just for that other person not to make progress. Constantly killing each other, pulling one another down. Trying to get something for nothing while selling nothing for something. Survival isn't cheap.. once you've done with selling your soul, you're not through paying with your dignity to get.. what?? A miserable shameful existence, living in the mud, eating mud, feeding your kids mud, doing everything you can to try to feel a little different from the pigs in your yard, but knowing that actually they are worth more than you.*
>
> *Each and every ordinary life story is a tragic tale of devastation, loss, grief, heartbreak, repugnant life conditions, complete and full trauma. It's the norm. It's all they know exists. Death would be better. And yet, they hang on. They go from nothing to nothing, surviving on nothing. Many die. Others just feed on a spoonful of rice, once in a while. Their insides chew on themselves, their breath doesn't know the sweet smell of a full belly. It's putrid, strong, sick. But who cares? No one. Because they are each alone. They put their* tèt ansanm *[heads together], but*

their lives are separate. Yes, they owe their survival so far to one another, as manman *splits a biscuit into 6 sections to give to her 5 children and ailing mother in law. Maybe tomorrow will bring a bowl of rice, or another yam to boil, or maybe they will fill their stomachs with sugar water, again, tomorrow and forever. Maybe little Frantz, now crying naked, lying in a plastic bucket… maybe he will grow up to be a rich doctor and misery will end. But who will send little Frantz to school when we can't even afford to give him a mouthful of bread?*' - Field Diary, 20/05/2016

This chapter focused on Haitian masculinity in order to provide a wider perspective on infractions of women's rights, as discussed in the previous three chapters. First, we looked specifically at what 'Haitian' masculinities entail, focusing on three major components. These were centered around the 'provider' role, strength and sexual activity. Though these are three different themes, they are decisively connected. As I demonstrated, much of a man's claim to masculinity, in the Haitian context, revolves around his wealth. The issue of money is interconnected with the ability to provide for family members, or dependents, as well as the power to exchange money for sex. As money is also linked to a man's capacity to work, or to find work, his physical strength and his mental abilities are prioritized. What is striking in this research is the social consequences of Haiti's economic and political situations. Men, who are charged with the primary financial responsibility, are caught in a cycle of poverty because of the difficulty to find employment. I propose the idea that this challenge, left largely undefeated, creates a major effect of disempowerment on Haitian men, and can be a source of frustration, and consequently, violence, against women. Women are victimized in

this way because they represent a burden for the men responsible for them; they are of lower social value than men, as well as being considered physically weaker; and, they are, in many ways, considered men's property.

In this chapter, I provided some examples of masculinized spaces and objects by discussing men's consumption of *kleren*, the machete as a symbol of masculinity and the game of dominoes, as a symbol of masculinised leisure. I discussed issues of sexual dominance and violence, as well as a focus on men's sexuality and its association with money. The theme of violence is multidimensional as it represents not only violence against women, in the context of women's oppression, but also violence between men, and symbolic violence, which is evident in Haiti's post-colonial and economically poor society. Finally, I turned to look briefly at the economic and political situation in Haiti, to provide a background for the factors that I discussed were responsible for the disempowerment of men. I discussed the current situation of political instability and provided a brief analysis on the resulting mental health issues of Haitian men's participation in the society which places such challenging responsibilities on them.

Chapter 7

Slaveholders:
Providing context to understand women who enslave children

'Kouri pou lapli, tonbe larivyè.'
'Running from rain, you fall into a river.'

'As the road creeps up the mountain, it gets thinner and rockier, as if it is battling with its own presence there. Giant holes punch its rock surface, and it struggles to stay flat, taking on the angle of the mountain. The trees lining the road are dry, and the earth is cracked. A tired donkey with coconut-leaf baskets hanging from its sides, is led by a woman in a large straw hat.' (de Hoog, 2016a)

Having looked at the push factors which drive children into the *restavèk* system, namely the economic situation of rural families and the lack of access to schools and other facilities, we focus our attention on the pull factors which create the demand for child domestic slaves in urban areas. As we saw in chapter three, the majority of *restavèk* children are trafficked from rural to urban areas (Gina, 22/02/2015; Julien, 6/11/2014; *Limyè Lavi* 12/11/2014; Sommerfelt, 2002:40). It is therefore the conditions within towns and cities which must be analysed to assess the reasons *restavèk* children are trafficked. This chapter is divided into three main sections. Firstly, we look at the aforementioned urban conditions, within the context of poverty and structural violence, using a feminist methodological approach. Secondly, having discussed the urban environment, we look more closely at women's experiences of life in urban Haiti, and establish a basis for women's decisions to take in *restavèk* children. The third section looks further into the relationship between the slaveholder woman and the *restavèk*

child, discussing the existence and context of the cruelty implicated within this system of child slavery.

This chapter was informed by ethnographic material as well as a number of interviews with slaveholders and other women in an urban context. As we will see, many slaveholders are women who spend a large amount of the day out working, frequently involved in economic activities in markets. I therefore approached market vendors to enquire whether they had any children living in their homes that weren't their own. Many women dismissed these questions, presumably because of the sensitivity of the topic, some stating the *restavèk* practice did not exist in that area. However, some were willing to discuss it openly. Some slaveholders were approached through acquaintances, in which case a level of trust was already established because we were introduced to them by a mutual acquaintance.

Urban poverty and structural violence

Structural, post-colonial violence has been a recurring theme throughout this thesis, used to contextualise the violence that is seemingly engrained in Haitian society on a multitude of levels. It is apparent in the everyday lives of women in the countryside, as we saw in chapter five, in the lives of men throughout Haiti, as evidenced in chapter six, and it continues to be of crucial relevance in the lives of the urban population. This is particularly important in the context of this thesis, because it is this environment of sustained violence in urban areas that defines the *restavèk* system by providing a backdrop for the mistreatment and enslaving of children. Where, in rural areas, it contributes towards the push factors that lead children into the *restavèk* system, here, in urban

areas, it becomes the fabric of the lives of *restavèk* children as they bear many of its consequences.

Hunger, disease, accidents and illiteracy are part of a system of sustained violence which is felt through poverty. As physician and anthropologist, Paul Farmer states, '[i]n Haiti structural violence continues to play itself out in the daily lives and deaths of the part of the population living in poverty' (Farmer, 2004:311). It might be argued that the people born into this social system are accustomed to this type of violence, and lack of safety. This does not mean that they accept it, or are blind to it, but it can elevate one's threshold for tolerance of violence. I argue that this, in turn, might have an effect on people and their sense of normality, and may encourage people to perpetuate violence. Scheper-Hughes (1992), in her study of life and violence in the region of Bom Jesus in Brasil, states:

> '[t]he multiple and contradictory social realities of Bom Jesus and its surrounds contribute to the fleeting perceptions of the community as a ruthless, unstable, amoral place. There is a sense of almost desperate vitality and of chaos threatening to unleash itself, so that Bom Jesus sometimes feels like a place where almost anything can happen.' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992:216)

In Haiti, as in Brasil, violence might be poverty's greatest effect on the people it touches. I reflect on this in a blog post:

> *'Violence is the flower of oppression. It is the lack of alternatives. Not only is it the sole action the colonised people is forced to take, but it is the fabric of the lives of the poor. Because poverty is violence. The passive allowing of poverty to exist is a violent act.*
>
> *I am witness to this violence every day in Haiti. Hunger, the denying of education, the absence of healthcare, the total lack of sanitation. The*

theft of hope. [...] The culture of violence. Sick children. Dying mothers. Illiterate fathers. Accepting things about life, which should be unacceptable. Untimely deaths. Road accidents. Rapes. Guns, desperation, violence.

Going to the toilet in a plastic bag. Drinking water you fear could kill you. [...]. Stooping to degrading levels to make $1 to feed your family.'

(de Hoog, 2015a)

Reflecting on the mundanity of violence, Scheper-Hughes writes:

'What if the disappearances, the piling up of civilians in common graves, the anonymity and the routinization of violence and indifference, were not, in fact, an aberration? [...] What if a climate of anxious ontological insecurity about the rights of ownership of one's body was fostered by a studied, bureaucratic indifference to the lives and deaths of "marginal," criminals and other no-account people? What if the public routinization of daily mortifications and little abominations, piling up like so many corpses on the social landscape, provided the text and blueprint for what only appeared later to be aberrant, inexplicable, and extraordinary outbreaks of state violence against citizens?' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992:219-220)

Violence, thus, permeates the social environment and becomes a lens of relative 'indifference' to what would otherwise be considered abnormal. It can be identified in people's behaviours towards one another as well the conditions of lives lived in poverty, framed within the context of structural violence.

Apart from being a major push factor in the *restavèk* system, poverty is also one of the main pull factors in urban areas. This is evident when we look at the economic status of the average family with a *restavèk* child in their home and is

also identifiable in the types of tasks which the child performs, as I discuss further later in this chapter. Indeed, those who decide to take in *restavèk* children are, for the most part, '*women with little means*' (Gina, 22/02/2015).

Compared to rural areas where extreme poverty – under the US$1 a day line – affects 67 per cent of the population, it is estimated that 23 per cent of residents of urban areas are living in extreme poverty (USAID, 2010:6). The urban area of Port-au-Prince contains the largest proportion of wealthy people, with most of the elite upper-class residing there (Now Institute, 2014:372-3). However, poverty in urban areas has been described as 'deeper' than that of rural areas. This means that people's level of poverty in urban areas may fall further below the poverty line than those in rural areas, and might also be becoming poorer at a faster rate (Verner, 2008:26). As we will see, poverty in urban areas is exacerbated by the fact that almost nothing comes for free in Port-au-Prince. Survival, based on one's basic needs of water, food and sanitation, is more costly and difficult to ensure than in rural areas. This is because of the over-population of urban areas and the fact that in rural areas nature can provide some food and water at no, or little, financial cost (Now Institute, 2014:76; Cené: various dates). Several participants described their living situation using the Haitian expression '*bat dlo pou fè bè*', 'beating water to make butter' (Ketia, 15/07/2015; Somène, 18/08/2015), meaning they are working very hard each day, but not achieving anything.

The largest concentration of *restavèk* children can be found in the poorest and most highly populated areas (FAFO, 2002:30). The area of *Cité Soleil,* on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, is an example of this. The crowded suburb has the highest prevalence of *restavèk* children in the country. Nationally, 16 per cent of all children were found to be in the *restavèk* system, while within *Cité Soleil,* 40 per

cent of children were identified to be *restavèk* children (Cooper et al., 2012:4). Once labelled by the United Nations as 'the most dangerous place on earth' (Willman & Marcelin, 2010:516), it is also one of the poorest areas in Haiti, with very few services and infrastructure (Guidi, 2009; Marcelin & Page, 2010). Approximately 300,000 people reside in *Cité Soleil,* in homes mostly made of recycled materials haphazardly stuck together. Pieces of wood, hardboard, some cement, tarpaulin and corrugated iron are commonly used to create small shelters for people to live in (Maternowska, 2006:46).[60] It is an area controlled for the most part by armed gangs where the Haitian police have little authority. Historically, and in the present day, an area of concentration for politically motivated violence – a stronghold of supporters of the *fanmi lavalas* political party, as discussed in chapter four – many ordinary Haitians live in the crossfire between the clashes of protestors, gangs armed by political parties and the police and United Nations peacekeeping forces (Podur, 2012:129).

Port-au-Prince has an average population density of approximately 20,000 people per square kilometre, making it one of the most densely populated cities in the world, on a par with Paris and Mumbai (Now Institute, 2014:76). *Cité Soleil* is the most densely populated area in Port-au-Prince (Marcelin et al., 2010:6). Houses are overcrowded. For example, it is not uncommon for families of six or more to be living in a small one-roomed house. There is a significant lack of sanitation, with only 40 per cent of people having access to a latrine. Nationally, 38 per cent of people practice open defecation. Only one per cent of households have a sewerage system, and 7 per cent use septic tanks (Gelting et al., 2013). People are forced to find their own ways of maintaining hygiene and cleanliness in their living environments. Many defecate in plastic bags or buckets, and then add that to the

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[60] Based on ethnographic data and participant observation in *Cité Soleil* and other highly populated urban areas within the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area.

rest of the household waste. One participant mentioned the lack of latrines as the biggest problem in the area she lives in (Somène, 18/08/2015).

Only 11 per cent of waste is collected in Haiti (Now Institute, 2014:317) and most people discard their trash in unofficial dumping areas like open dumps, empty riverbeds, or other open spaces (Hoornweg & Bhada-Tata, 2012:73). There, it is burnt, left for the pigs to feed on, or for people to go through looking for food or anything which could be of use – plastic bottles for recycling, tin, copper, clothes etc. Port-au-Prince has a waste collection service that operates twice a day, but it is not sufficient to serve the entire city, maintaining only the wealthier business districts and main roads (SWANA, 2010:3). The waste situation in much of Haiti, and particularly un-serviced and highly populated areas like *Cité Soleil*, is a dangerous health hazard, and is largely responsible for the rapid and prevalent spread of cholera that began in 2010 (Gelting et al., 2013).

Only about 30 per cent of Haitian households are officially connected to the electric grid (Ministry for Public Works, Transportation and Communications, 2006:7). For the remainder of urban households, wires are often hooked up to energy lines in order to supply electricity illegally to people's homes. Even though this is done unofficially, it is not usually a free service, as monthly payments are made to the person who pays for the electricity, or a one-off payment is made to the person who facilitated the unofficial set-up.[61] The electricity service on the national grid, provided by *Electricité d'Haiti* (EDH), is unreliable and intermittent. Many areas are supplied with just a few hours of electricity a day, and many areas go a few days without electricity at all (Fonise, 22/07/2015; Somène, 18/08/2015; Lineda, 13/07/2015; Louisiana 15/07/2015). One participant said, '*we can go a whole week without seeing any electricity at all'* (Fonise, 22/07/2015).

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[61] Based on ethnographic data and participant observation.

Though access to water supplies is more common in urban areas than in rural areas, most of these are not free of cost. Some areas have access to water pumps which serve hundreds or thousands of people, but many other areas have no access to free clean water. Even the water available at public fountains is not necessarily filtered and therefore can be unsafe to drink. When people are unable to access water provided by the government, they buy it from private businesses. One participant, Fonise, a mother of five children, living in the *Gerald Bataille* area of Port-au-Prince, says: '*Well, water, in this area, we have to buy a bucket [5 gallons] for a [Haitian] dollar* (approx USD$0.10)' (Fonise, 22/07/2015). Another participant, Somène, living in a shanty dwelling in Port-au-Prince, said:

> '*We don't have a problem for water because the area is serviced with a pipe. But it's 3 gourdes for a bucket if the water comes [in the pipe]. If it doesn't come it's 4 or 5 gourdes (5 gourdes = USD$0.10) for a bucket'.* (Somène, 18/08/2015)

These women both discussed the difficulty they faced sparing that amount of money each day, one saying, '*If you don't have 3 gourdes to buy a bucket of water, you'll have to go without bathing*'[62] (Somène, 18/08/2015). Otherwise, people are forced to collect water from rivers and streams, and even open sewers which can be extremely dangerous, as I note in my field diary:

> '*One of the most disturbing realities you see in Port-au-Prince is people collecting water from street drains into bottles and buckets. It's a common street scene, along with people urinating on the*

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[62] It is important to understand that Haitian people place a high priority on bathing and being clean, associating cleanliness with humanity and dignity, things that the Haitian people feel they have been deprived of since slavery. Most Haitians bathe at least once or twice a day, even if they have to pay for the water to do so. Wearing clean clothes is also deemed very important as it reflects people's status. People who do not bathe and/or wear dirty-looking clothes are considered either mentally ill or extremely poor.

sidewalk, and occasionally having to step over human excrement.' -

Field diary, December 11th, 2015

This sets the context in which women in urban areas experience hardship and poverty that is crucial to our understanding of Haitian women's lives, decisions and actions in relation to the *restavèk* system. It is also important to consider women in the urban context in terms of them being 'embodied infrastructure' (Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016), as discussed in chapter five. The lack of stable infrastructure in Haitian urban areas creates a space in which people produce a means of survival based on their on physical beings. This is especially true of women who embody social production, reproduction and community management (Momsen, 2010). As Abdou Maliq Simone states, in relation to a similar demography in African cities:

> '[they] are characterized by incessantly flexible, mobile and provisional intersections of residents that operate without clearly delineated notions of how the city is to be inhabited and used. These intersections, particularly in the last two decades, have depended on the ability of residents to engage complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons and practices. These conjunctions become an infrastructure – a platform for providing for and producing life in the city.' (Abdou Maliq Simone cited in Clisby & Holdsworth, 2016:9)

Contextualising urban women's lives

Another characteristic of *Cité Soleil,* and urban areas with a similar demography, is the high proportion of female-headed households, in which the mother is the only parent present in the home (Gardella, 2006:19). As mentioned

earlier, an estimated 44 per cent of urban households are headed by a woman (Gammage, 2004:751). This is relevant because female-headed households are more likely to be poor than male-headed households (Castro, 1993:134) which refers back to the aforementioned theory of the 'feminization of poverty' discussed in chapter five. In the case of Haiti, and most of the Caribbean, in contrast with other cultural contexts like those of the Middle East and Asia, female-headed households, 'single women, especially poor single women […] often have children' (Mencher & Okongwu, 1993:7).

In the previous section, I mentioned a cycle in which women try to get pregnant in order to attempt to secure the financial support of a man. This is also the case in urban areas, where couples are less likely to be married and women more likely to have children with different fathers. *'… it's not easy because […] women have it in their heads, if they have a child with a man, he will give her money'* (Chantalle, 17/03/2015). Like in rural areas, many women in urban areas rely heavily on men, or on finding a man, to ensure their survival. Having a child is usually the way to secure this arrangement with a man (Maternowska, 2006:60). A USAID report, discussing gender in an urban setting states:

> *'The productive base is missing, as well as customary social relations, which in turn, has perverted the relationship between genders. Prostitution and pimping are telling symptoms.'* (Gardella, 2006:19)

In Maternowska's (2006) study of the uses of contraception in *Cité Soleil*, she identifies the gendered perspectives of men towards women. Her research corroborates my findings, in that women's and men's work are clearly defined. Women's domain remains in the household, doing domestic labour and caring for children. Men's work centres around 'fix-it' jobs, doing manual labour in and around the neighbourhood. Maternowska states, 'All of this work, and other

expectations are part of an understood, though rarely discussed, contract that women and men enter into when a union begins' (Maternowska, 2006:51). She also shares a response from one of her male interview participants, whose answer was representative of the rest of the participants' replies. She asked him what men expect of women, and he responded saying: 'lots of things', 'love, cooking, washing and ironing' followed by, 'and of course having a child' (Maternowska, 2006:51). Maternowska made the important point to mention that none of the men she interviewed credited women for bringing in some income, though most women in her study did. As Moser points out:

> '[a]s the modern cash economy became increasingly divorced from the subsistence economy, so women lost economic autonomy in their own right as farmers, craft-workers and traders. In this way they increasingly depended on the wages of men. […] in such societies gender distinctions are commonly rationalized by beliefs about the central importance of women's roles in childbearing, and the imputed operation of 'maternal instinct'.' (Moser, 1993:30)

This demonstrates a complex dynamic in which the shifting of power between men and women leads to the further disempowerment of both genders. As discussed in chapter five, disempowered women use sex as a bargaining tool in the hope that it will lead to a long-term financial commitment through the conception of a child. Disempowered men use women for sex, and sex as a means of oppression and perpetuation of patriarchy, and often do not, or cannot, take on the financial responsibility of any conceived child and its mother. This is tied up in pre-existing undercurrents of systemic violence, as women seek a way of coping in an environment which consistently objectifies and victimises them. As many men continue to diminish and exploit women, disempowered women continue to

accommodate societal male-imposed rules and requirements, in order to fulfil their own basic needs. This is evident in the formal job market, where women are habitually required and expected to exchange sexual intercourse for work, or for job security (Chantalle, 17/03/2015; Darline, 14/04/2016; Jolène, 14/04/2016).

The reason why women use their bodies in this way is usually to secure financial assistance, however other factors also play a part in the exploitation of their sexuality. As I discussed in chapters five and six, there is a high level of sexual harassment, exploitation and violence in Haitian society, with at least 46 per cent of women and girls reported to be victims of sexual violence (Justensen & Verner, 2007:4). All these elements contribute significantly to the disempowerment of women. It can be said that it is a self-perpetuating cycle as women's disempowerment is both a cause and a result of their sexual oppression. Women, who are generally considered weaker than men, are often victims of oppression and/or violence, and are relatively powerless to stop this. Men who attack women might do so in groups, and/or may be armed (Faedi Duramy, 2014:36). The victimhood of women, and the general perspective of them as weaker than men, further adds to their disempowerment. In other words, they are oppressed and attacked because they are considered to be weak, and they are considered to be weak because they are oppressed. The use of sexual exploitation, or rape, to oppress women is a theme that is discussed in chapter five, where I theorised rape as a weapon against women and a means of instilling fear (Amnesty International, 2008; Brownmiller, 1975) and it is relevant here in terms of the sexual oppression of women in urban areas as well. Several participants brought up the fact that women are excluded from formal employment through the mass sexual exploitation of women in the workplace, where work is mostly not available to women if they do not also offer their bodies to their male employers and/or

superiors (Chantalle, 17/03/2015; Darline, 14/04/2016; Jolène, 14/04/2016; Madanm Christmas, 14/04/2016).

One participant, Chantalle, now a self-employed beautician, acknowledged the relevance of sexual harassment in formal jobs, with reference to her work in a factory in Port-au-Prince. Her manager had requested for her to have sex with him in order to keep her job. As a result, she left that particular job, but explained that most of the other women had been faced with the same choice and in order to remain employed, were forced to comply with the managers' requests (Chantalle, 17/03/2015). Another participant, Louisiana, stated, *'There isn't really any work, a person finishes all her classes, finishes her university studies, and those who don't want to have sex with the boss won't find a job. She'll just end up sitting around'* (Louisiana, 15/07/2015).

Participants told me that this exclusion from the formal job market through sexual exploitation and discrimination is one of the reasons why most urban women operate within the informal economy, as shop keepers, market traders or street vendors. We discussed this in chapter six, where Darline mentioned, '*It means [women] can't work, and when they can't work, it means they can't look after their needs. That's why you'll see the majority of Haitian women, you'll always see they prefer [street] commerce activities*' (Darline, 14/04/2016). Chantalle also told me: '*The majority of women do commerce. That's why, in many businesses, in many jobs, you won't find many women. You'll see they are more in the street. Because a woman isn't afraid to carry a basket on her head so she can do commerce*' (Chantalle, 17/03/2015). Street commerce requires long hours spent out in the market, or walking through the streets. Many women begin at, or before, dawn and only return home at the end of the day. This is exemplified in Louisiana's statement:

'I go out early in the morning, I come home late. As soon as I get

home, I get some water, I bathe and I go to sleep. The next day, it's

the same thing all over again.' (Louisiana, 15/07/2015)

Economic activity therefore consumes the time of the household's responsible adult(s). Women involved in these types of economic activities usually have very little time to spend at home looking after their children. They also have limited time to give to performing gendered household chores, like cooking for the family, cleaning the house and doing laundry. Moreover, women's socially imposed household tasks, due to the lack of services and infrastructure, take an extremely long time to perform. Food preparation, using raw ingredients that require a long period of cooking, and often doing so on a home-made charcoal stove can take hours. Washing laundry is also a long painstaking process, as everything is done by hand. [63]

As these tasks need to be fulfilled for the proper functioning of the household, this creates the space in which a child might be recruited to work as a *restavèk*, as Chantalle points out: '*There are lots [of women] who go to get a child in the provinces, and [the child] stays with [the women's] children for them, while they go out to work*' (Chantalle, 17/03/2015). When describing what work her *restavèk* does for her, one participant, Judith responds:

'She gets up, she sweeps, mops, washes dishes, goes to get a few

buckets of water, prepares food, […] dusts, […] and when I get home

from the market she continues working with me and she comes with

me to sell and we get home at 11 or 12 – because that's when I usually

get home – and we get ready for bed.' (Judith, 27/07/2015)

Another participant, Ketia, said about her *restavèk*:

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[63] Based on ethnographic observational and participatory data.

> *'I get her to iron clothes, wash dishes, work in the house. Because*
> *water is not far for us – it's out in the yard – she doesn't have to go*
> *fetch water. If I do laundry she helps me [...]. She is always by my side,*
> *If I'm washing, she hangs the clothes up to dry for me and she does*
> *other work in the house, makes food.'* (Ketia, 15/07/2015)

The *restavèk* role, therefore, fits into the sphere of women's gendered labour as a worker to replace the woman of the household. As we have attested that most women who have *restavèk* children in their homes live in conditions of extreme poverty, it can be said that the *restavèk* system is perpetuated by poverty, particularly in situations where it is not feasible to hire a paid domestic worker. The *restavèk* system is thus linked to child placement systems in Africa, as many child domestic workers taken in 'are increasingly assigned the domestic chores that women employed in the formal sector no longer neither have time for nor want' (Kielland & Tovo, 2006:24). As one participant, an expert in the field, points out:

> *'It is said that it used to be middle-class families, quite financially*
> *comfortable and quite educated, that had children [working] in*
> *their houses. Now, it is women who have absolutely no possibility,*
> *financially, to have someone helping them [at home].'* (Gina,
> 22/02/2015)

One participant, Lineda, explained why she has a *restavèk* child in her home: '*So she is here. She is very useful to me because when I'm out and about, I leave her here with the kids so I can go out. Or if I'm in the kitchen, I tell her 'take the child so he doesn't bother me, so he doesn't burn near the fire*' (Lineda, 13/07/2015). Judith adds, '*For me to not have a child living with me I would need to pay a person to work in my house and even then, a child is always better for me because I can trust a child*

more to look after my house when I go out' (Judith, 27/07/2015). The fact that Judith mentions that she can trust a child more than an adult employee comes back to the fact that this child is a slave. As Bales states, about the enslavement of children, 'Since children are normally dependent on adults for their basic needs, and since they are often more trusting of the adults who supply these needs, they fall naturally into a situation of obedience' (Bales, 2005:146).

Families in which an adult male is present in the household are not immune to this problem. Even though the man in the household might be the designated breadwinner, most women will also be involved in their own economic activity. My findings demonstrate that, as the children and the home are part of the female sphere of responsibility, it remains in the hands of women to ensure these domestic tasks are fulfilled. This is at the core of the *restavèk* system, and, as I discuss later in this chapter, it is this relationship between the woman and the *restavèk* child that defines the situation as one of slavery. The segregated gender roles in Haitian society mean that even if a man is not involved in any economic activity, he will not assume the household responsibilities because they are considered 'women's work' (Gina, 22/02/2015; Chantalle, 17/03/2015). '*If a man is in the kitchen, he goes to the supermarket, or he sweeps the house, he will be called an effeminate man, that's what they will say'* (Gina, 22/02/2015). This is an important point because it indicates that it is therefore usually a woman who makes the decision to take in a *restavèk* child (Gina, 22/02/2015; Sabine, 19/02/2015; Delouis, 24/02/2015; Charline, 18/08/2015; Lineda, 13/07/2015; Louisiana, 15/07/2015). She perceives the need for a helper to fulfil the work required to maintain the home and to care for her children. It is therefore her, and not her male partner, if she has one, who chooses to take in a domestic servant. The *restavèk* child, in turn, will be her responsibility, too. As Gina points out:

> *'Because women in Haiti are the motor of the family. It is women who*
>
> *ask to have [restavèk] children, so, that said, it is women who choose*
>
> *to employ, not employ, to have a child to help in the house or not. It's*
>
> *not men. It is not men.'*

She adds:

> *'there is a certain group of women that ask to have [restavèk]*
>
> *children. They are usually women who work in factories, for*
>
> *example. They don't get paid a decent salary, so for the most part,*
>
> *they leave their homes very early in the morning and come home in*
>
> *the evening. And they have other children, so they need a child to*
>
> *help them.'* (Gina, 22/02/2015)

Another participant, Louisiana, states that: *'the person who decides to take in a child, it's a woman. Because there are women who always want someone else to do the work for them'* (Louisiana, 15/07/2015). Judith, who has a *restavèk* girl in her home said:

> *'I need a child and my husband sees that I need one, so he tells me I*
>
> *can go get one and I agree because I need it.*
>
> *Interviewer: Why do you need a child?*
>
> *Judith: Well, the reason I need a child is because I have other young*
>
> *children, and the child can watch my children if I have to go out to sell*
>
> *at the market or to work. She stays with my kids for me and is there to*
>
> *work for me.'* (Judith, 27/07/2015)

I was told that, surprisingly, in a minority of cases where a single-parent family is headed by a man, he will not usually recruit a *restavèk* child to work in his home, despite the fact that he is not likely to partake in the aforementioned

'women's work' (Sabine, 19/02/2015). When I asked Sabine if it ever occurred that a single father would take in a *restavèk* child, she responded:

> *'Myself, in the work I do, I have never come across such a case. Because, you know, women are more meticulous, they are more in need of a person to do this and that. Men have a much more global perspective. Women are more into the details etcetera, so they need someone to do this and that. A man won't pay attention to all the little things. Like, when you share a home with a man, he won't take care of all the little details, that is your job, as a woman.'* (Sabine, 19/02/2015)

When asked, who, in that case, performs the household chores, if it is not a *restavèk* child, she replied:

> *'It could be [the man], or sometimes, if he has a sister, she might come and help with the [domestic] tasks. If the children are old enough, they might do the work, play the role of the mother.'* (Sabine, 19/02/2015)

Slavery as a relationship: women and *restavèk* children

As we saw in chapter three, the *restavèk* system is noted for its exceptional cruelty towards the children involved. *Restavèk* children are forced to work long hours, often performing physically demanding or dangerous tasks (Sommerfelt, 2002; Sabine, 19/02/2015; Gina, 22/02/2015; Fonise, 22/07/2015; Delouis, 24/02/2015). Control, and the situation of slavery, is maintained over these children through isolation, violence and emotional abuse. As Bales asserts:

> 'the key and central attribute, the core, of slavery is the condition of potentially violent control of one person by another [...] slavery is a

social, economic, and often emotional relationship. I asserted that to understand slavery we must use that relationship as our point of inquiry, that it is the nature of that relationship that determines whether the interaction we are observing is or is not slavery.'

(Bales, 2006:2)

It might be said that the physical and psychological abuse to which the child is subjected goes beyond forms of control. It seems, in some cases, the violence inflicted on the child is not as much about punishment, or instilling obedience, but is reflective of a repressed frustration in the adult responsible.

'She makes the child in domesticity work, and not her own. Its always the same, it's integrated, I see that. "My child is superior to yours." "I am superior to yours, to you", "I am superior to you". "I went to school, you didn't go to school". Those are social falsities which are really entrenched. It's all an education. "My child is prettier than yours". Falsities really, and they are reinforced by this country's politic.' (Gina, 22/02/2015)

My research suggests that a large part of the abuse to which the child is subjected on a daily basis is done at the hands of a woman. As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, children, including *restavèk* children, are socially women's responsibility. It is therefore the woman in charge of the *restavèk* who defines how the child will be treated, as Gina points out:

'Because it is the woman who has permanent contact with this child. Because, when one recruits a child, I imagine it's not for it to play! It's for work. So, the household chores fall on the shoulders of women in a Haitian family. It is women who have direct contact, and permanent [contact] too, with these children. I imagine that

> *men [are responsible], in a certain way too, because for example,*
>
> *your wife is beating the child, and you're there and you say*
>
> *nothing... then you are accomplice in some way.'* (Gina,
>
> 22/02/2015)

Gina's comments above about the complicity of men in the abuse of *restavèk* children is noteworthy. While it is true that women are responsible for the largest part of the physical and psychological abuse towards the *restavèk* child in their care, and that the *restavèk* children's very presence in these households results from women's decision to take them in, the practice would not be possible without the complicity of men. Men are not only responsible for most of the sexual abuse of *restavèk* children (Kolbe & Hutson, 2006:868), but the *restavèk* practice itself exists because men allow it to. As we have established, Haitian society is dominated by male authority and men tend to have a large amount of control over their households and, to an extent, society itself. Therefore, for the *restavèk* system to exist and thrive, it must be permitted to do so by men. One participant, Ville-France says, '*if men were to say no to the* restavèk *system, women would have to stop it*' (Ville-France, 17/02/2016). Men's complicity is therefore a crucial component to women's ability to exercise power and abuse over *restavèk* children.

It is important to contextualise the violence inflicted on *restavèk* children by making note of the ways in which children are treated in Haiti, generally, within the context of structural violence and the mundanity of everyday violence. As I mentioned in chapter three, capital punishment is not uncommon in schools, and child labour including the Worst Forms of Child Labour[64] often occurs, particularly

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[64] ILO Convention N.182 concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO, 2012:2) "(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of

in rural areas. It is difficult, as an external observer, to determine where the line is drawn, culturally, between the different degrees of the physical punishment of children. Some Haitian parents inflict different degrees of violence on their own children as discipline (Willman & Marcellin, 2010:526). Some of these acts could be determined as abusive, depending on the background, opinion and cultural positioning of the observer. This also reflects the aforementioned environment of sustained violence, wherein the context of safety and danger must be understood in Haiti's own terms, as a culture affected by the violence of poverty and instability (Fanon, 1968; Farmer, 2004). Structural violence in the Haitian context is paralleled with Scheper-Hughes' Brazilian study, in which she states:

> 'more than half of all deaths in the *município* are of shantytown children under the age of five, the majority of them the victims of acute and chronic malnutrition. But one would have to read between the lines because the death of Alto children is so routine and so inconsequential that for more than three-fourths of recorded deaths, the cause of death is left blank on the death certificates [...]. In a highly bureaucratic society in which triplicates of ever form are required for the most banal events [...], the registration of child death is informal [...]. Their deaths, like their lives, are quite invisible.' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992:231)

However, what can be determined, especially by someone initiated in the culture of Haiti, is the difference in the violence inflicted on one's own children compared to that which is done unto a *restavèk* child. The latter demonstrates an

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children for use in armed conflict;(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;(d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.'

element of anger and rage which is not as common when it is a parent punishing her own child. Delouis says, '*in the case of women it's total viciousness*' (Delouis, 24/02/2015), to describe the treatment of *restavèk* children at the hands of women. Sabine, discussing the same thing says:

> '*To correct a child, it's with the rod. That means, the same person, if she has a child, if it does something wrong, you'll see she'll beat [her child]. But maybe, the difference you see, in the way she hits her own child – you might see it as horrible because in your country, you don't accept the rod at all – [...] but now you'll see a difference between the way she beats her own child, with the way she beats the other [restavèk]. Because when she beats the [restavèk], she beats the [restavèk] with rage. [...] she uses more violence.*' (Sabine, 19/02/2015)

Discussing the fact that Haitian women love their children, and would do anything for them, Gina adds:

> '*What is very difficult to understand, is how can you can be that way towards your child and not see the other child who needs protection, in the same way as yours does.*' (Gina, 22/02/2015)

As I mentioned above, it seems the act of violence comes from a place of frustration rather than merely an attempt to correct the child. It is this element of 'frustrated' violence towards *restavèk* children which is of interest here. Some violent behaviour can be linked to the despair and hopelessness of living in poverty (Justensen & Verner, 2007:10). The reasons behind it must be assessed by looking deeper into the minds of the perpetrators, in this case, the women responsible for these children, and considering them and their lives in the context of the poverty and environment of sustained systematic violence and oppression described

throughout this chapter. Kielland and Tovo's (2006) research of child labour and associated abuse in the African context shows that 'hardship also can produce cynicism, aggression and sometimes selfishness, and these feelings may be taken out on those even more powerless – the children' and that 'the perpetrator in most cases was a woman' (Kielland & Tovo, 2006:23). Chantalle points to women's difficult lives in Haiti to explain why some women abuse *restavèk* children:

> '*I think it's because this person [woman] is already dealing with many problems. This person is so stressed and when they are stressed like that, they take it out on a child. I think that's why they mistreat children.*' (Chantalle, 17/03/2015)

Here, understandings of the word *restavèk* and its locatedness and meanings in Haitian society, are of particular importance because it is within this environment, where children are in the care of a woman who mistreats them, and consequentially the relationship between these two people, that defines the *restavèk* system as slavery. As we saw earlier, when discussing the love mothers may feel for their children, it is difficult to formulate a judgement regarding people's feelings towards children without imposing one's own cultural conditioning onto it. What is clear however, in the case of abuse towards *restavèk* children, is the difference that can be identified between the treatment of a biological child and a *restavèk* child by the woman responsible for them. This demonstrates the differing feelings she has towards them, and perhaps the lack of love and empathy she has for the child who does not belong to her biologically (Gina, 22/02/2015; Sabine, 19/02/2015; Delouis, 24/02/2015).

However, not loving a child, or not feeling empathy towards them, does not provide sufficient reasoning to explain the level of mistreatment of *restavèk*

children. As we discussed in chapter three, to be a *restavèk* child, is to be mistreated. We saw that the term '*restavèk*' translates directly as 'staying with'. It might be thought to describe a number of different situations in which a child is living away from his/her parents. There exist many children who are benefiting from living in someone's home, and being treated fairly. Nevertheless, the word '*restavèk*' is usually reserved for children in abusive situations. It is a derogatory term and is quite a sensitive topic among Haitian people. All the women I interviewed brought up situations of abuse and violence in response to the word *restavèk*. As I mentioned earlier, some women whom I approached in the street and at markets were unwilling to discuss the phenomenon, claiming they knew nothing about it. A Haitian friend told me it was highly unlikely that they were not informed, but rather that they did not want to discuss it because of its controversial nature. Moreover, a person who has what can be classified as a *restavèk* child in her home can easily take offense at your calling it that. This might be because it reflects poorly on her more than on the child in question. The remark can be perceived as a judgement of her treatment towards him/her. The word '*restavèk*' is also considered to be an insult to the children in question. Most of the women interviewed in the 'slaveholder' category would talk about a child in their home, which fits into the description of a *restavèk* child, but would not use the word '*restavèk*' themselves.

As we discussed in chapter three, many individuals and institutions, including the Haitian government and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), like the International Organization of Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), do not use the term '*restavèk*' in an official capacity. They refer rather to children in 'domestic services' or 'children

who live in other people's homes'[65] as can be noted on Haiti's 2014 Anti-Trafficking Law (Le Moniteur, 2014), which we looked at in chapter three. These phrases widen the scope of participation of children in the system, and encompasses varying degrees of treatment from reasonable to extremely abusive. In some ways, it normalises the sometimes severe treatment of these children by placing it on a sliding scale, and failing to address the particular severity of the *restavèk* situation in local, defined and understandable terms.

The *restavèk* system, as an arrangement between members of the same family, may have once served to aid children from poor families to attain things they would not if they stayed in the care of their parents. However, as we saw in chapter three, its earliest reference in literature, in Herskovits 1930s research, alludes to the abuse these children are subjected to. Herskovits writes about '*ti moun qui rete a caille ou* – small folk who stay at your house', and highlights, 'to what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children … cannot be said, though tales of abuse of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard' (Herskovits, 1937:103). As it is understood now, as a controversial term, it describes a relatively organised and defined system of child slavery. This fact is seen by many Haitians as highly offensive. Not only is it stating that slavery exists in Haiti once more, but also that Haitians are responsible for maintaining and perpetuating it. It points to the culpability of Haitian people, and the Haitian government for allowing it to exist (Tristan, 5/11/2014). However, whatever term is used to describe it, child domestic slavery is present in Haiti. The word '*restavèk*' may not be popular among politicians, but it is the term which describes the situation as extreme enough to be paralleled with slavery. The same cannot be said

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[65] A commonly known phrase used in lieu of '*restavèk*', considered to be more politically correct.

of 'children in domestic services', 'children who live in other people's homes', or of child labour in general. Sabine explained:

> '*As long as you hear the word 'restavèk', it's not something else. All those things, do work, do the dishes, do this, do everything. This means, there is a particular treatment. It could happen, because in all rules there are exceptions, it could happen that a child is pretty much in restavèk - in this case I would call it 'a child living in someone's home' - and this child is getting an okay treatment, it is lucky, it goes to school, who is lucky, who has "succeeded"'*
>
> (Sabine, 19/02/2015)

For the purpose of this thesis, and in particular, here, for our understanding of the relationship between the slaveholder and *restavèk* child, it is important to use a term which will adequately convey the gravity of the situation and practice in order to equate it with slavery. As Bales states:

> '[Slavery] is no momentary act of violence, no crime of passion, but a systematic brutalization and exploitation that can stretch over generations. And it incorporates the most horrible crimes known – torture, rape, kidnap, murder, and the wilful destruction of the human mind and spirit. It is exploitation, injustice, and violence in their most potent forms all rolled together. The damage slavery does and has done is inestimable, and that includes the damage done to minds deeply injured by enslavement.' (Bales, 2005:6-7)

Of particular interest here is Bales' assertion that one of those minds injured by slavery is the slaveholder's itself, as he writes, '[b]y dehumanizing others in order to enslave them, slaveholders dehumanize themselves' (Bales, 2005:7). As we turn

to look at how the women who enslave children in Haiti feel, or say they feel, about what they do, it is worth keeping these words in mind. It is critical to look at their behaviour through the contextual lens I have provided here.

How women feel about what they do

Many women with *restavèk* children in their homes will put forward the idea that they have taken in the child as an act of selflessness and charity. Although many will undoubtedly state this in order to appear virtuous, others will be expressing a genuine belief they hold regarding their actions.

> *'The person knows it is a child, but it's not hers. 'So I don't care,'*
> *'It's not my child,' and this person thinks she is helping [the child].*
> *So if you meet someone who has a child in domesticity, the first*
> *thing she will tell you is, "I am helping this child". But the reality is,*
> *it is the child who is helping this person.[...] Because "at home you*
> *[the child], didn't have any food, you didn't even have a roof, and I*
> *am giving it to you! Of course you have to work very hard for it,*
> *but that's life! I am giving it to you, so you have to work for that.*
> *Actually, you are lucky!" That is how people [the women] see the*
> *situation.'* (Gina, 22/02/2015)

Ketia, who has a *restavèk* girl in her house, suggested that she originally took in the *restavèk* in order to help her. However, throughout the interview, her tone changes and she admits that, ultimately, it is the other way around:

> *'Ketia: Well, I didn't take her to help me, I took her to help her,*
> *because I got her when she was very young. Because when I got*
> *her, she couldn't do anything for me, I was doing everything for*
> *her.*

Interviewer: So if I understand it correctly, it's not her who helps

you, it's you who is helping her?

Ketia: Yes, when I got her it was like that, but now she is the one

helping me. [...]

Interviewer: Do you feel you are responsible for her psychological

health? Because sometimes there can be a child in a house and she

doesn't feel good there, she feels limited, she doesn't feel right in

relation to the other children there...

Ketia: Yes, that will always be the case for her, yes. It can happen

she feels that way, but for me, she is a child who is responsible for

my house. She is more responsible for me than I am for her

because I can come home and I'll say to her, "give me some food",

or "do this for me". That's her job. It means, she is the one who

serves us.' (Ketia, 15/07/2015)

As I mentioned in chapter five, children's rights and the effects of physical and psychological abuse are not widely known, or at least discussed, among the Haitian population. The aforementioned environment of violence can also determine the levels of danger for children. Currently, Haiti has the fourth highest rate of homicides of children globally (UNICEF, 2014:37). This sets the scene for a precarious situation with regards to children and their protection against danger and damaging treatment. Many women who mistreat *restavèk* children may not be aware of the effects on the child. Others may not feel concerned by this. Some may not even realize they are doing it.

The fact that the children end up in these women's homes may have the effect that it establishes that their situations at home with their parents were not conducive to their growth or survival. This could create a presupposition in the

minds of the women in charge of them. It has the potential to create a space in which these children can be subjected to certain types of treatment because their alternatives are assumed likely to be worse. In the case of one participant, Piercine, who took in a 16 year old boy to work as a *restavèk* in her home, she stated that she had done so because she wanted to help him. She had found him begging in downtown Port-au-Prince and claims she 'took pity' on him. Not wanting him to starve in the streets, or to be taken in by gangs, she brought him home with her. He works in the home, helps her with household chores, goes to the market and takes the kids to school. His main restrictions in Piercine's home is that he is not allowed to go out, unless it is for those specific reasons (Piercine, 21/01/2015).

Piercine lives in a poor area of Port-au-Prince called *Onavil*. She is married and has two young children, one of whom attends school[66]. She and her husband sell food products in the roadside market. They live in a one-roomed house, with a dirt floor. The only furniture is a bed which four of them sleep on, while the *restavèk* boy sleeps on the floor. There is neither water nor electricity in the area. I noted when I visited them that the tall young boy, who towered above Piercine, did not seem to be particularly mistreated through either physical, or psychological abuse. However, Piercine described to me how his situation was confined through certain rules of conduct on his behalf. The situation highlighted the fact that this boy's alternatives might truly be worse if he left the care of Piercine. This brought to light the potential space in which a woman might believe her actions to be morally acceptable due to the fact that the child's alternatives are worse.

Another participant, Lineda, who has a young *restavèk* girl in her home, discussed the child's situation before she came to her. This young girl was a

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[66] The other is of age to go to school but it was explained to me that they could only afford to send one to school. As a result, I did not ask if they sent the *restavèk* boy to school as the answer seemed obvious.

restavèk in another home and ran away, ending up in Lineda's sister's home, who then passed her on to her, as she had requested a child to help her.

> *'You know where she was before? She says to me sometimes, "auntie, they used to make me sleep in the kitchen." I say "what time did you used to go to sleep?" [...] She says it's at 11pm because she had to wait for the kitchen to be cool enough to sleep, because that's where they made her sleep. She had no access to television, but here, she can watch the television when she wants. But yesterday she told me, "auntie, the button on the television is broken". I said, "well, ok." I didn't say anything because I'm not going to beat her for a button on a television!'*

She adds:

> *'She says, sometimes when the kitchen wasn't cold enough, she would sleep outside when she felt tired. No respect for her at all. She even had to keep her school uniform in the bathroom, that's where she got dressed, and people who forgot to bring toilet paper to wipe their bottoms would do it with her uniform, her socks.'* [67] (Lineda, 13/07/2015)

It is difficult to know the extent of Lineda's treatment of the young girl working in her home, as she insists that she protects her and does not divulge a lot regarding any forms of punishment, or abuse. However, Lineda did admit that she sends the young girl (aged approximately 10-12 years old) to the market in downtown Port-au-Prince. This is significant because it is an extremely dangerous

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[67] The fact that this *restavèk* girl had the opportunity to go to school reflects the varying degrees of mistreatment these children are subjected to. Many are not sent to school, but some are. Some go to 'afternoon school' (as many schools in Haiti are divided into two sessions, morning and afternoon) so that they can work in the mornings while the children of the household go to school. Some go to school irregularly, as I mentioned in chapter three, as they have to miss days because of their responsibilities at home.

area.[68] It was also apparent that the *restavèk* girl was sleeping on the floor in the one-roomed home, while Lineda's children slept in the bed with her.

When considering the alternatives of *restavèk* children to their situation of enslavement, and the likelihood that they might run away, it is important to bear in mind certain factors. The majority, 72 per cent, of *restavèk* children in urban areas are girls (Sommerfelt, 2002:40). Girls are said to be more obedient and docile and less likely to run away (Sabine, 19/02/2015). Boys are more likely to escape their situation, most ending up living in the streets. There, they are in constant danger and will most certainly struggle to find food (Moncrieffe, 2006:41). This alternative to the *restavèk* system, as bleak as it is, can be considered a slightly better situation for these runaway boys because they are free. They may be vulnerable to attacks on the streets, but these might be less common than the physical abuse they were subjected to as *restavèk* children (Orelus, 29/01/2015). The alternative for girls, however, is different. As dangerous as life on the streets is for young boys, it is more so for girls. Girls, being considered weaker, are more likely to be targets of attacks, many of which will be sexually violent (Sabine, 19/02/2015, Orelus, 29/01/2015). Of course, the different degrees of mistreatment they are subjected to as *restavèk* children will determine the appeal which their alternatives hold for them. Sexual violence is usually a prominent part of the abuse inflicted on *restavèk* children, many girls are habitually raped (Kolbe & hutson, 2006). A man living in the house where a *restavèk* girl is present is likely to demand sex from her, even though she is the responsibility of his partner (Delouis, 24/02/2015; Cené, various dates). Certainly, sexual abuse is endemic within the *restavèk* system. In a

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[68] Downtown Port-au-Prince, or *Lavil*, is known for it's lack of safety. I was advised to avoid this area as much as possible. One informant told me about one time in particular (of several) where he witnessed shootings. In this case, near the bus station, two men were shot right in front of him.

household survey, it was found that *restavèk* children represented 36 per cent of all sexual violence victims, and 68 per cent of child victims. The rate of sexual assault on *restavèk* girls is four times greater than on non-*restavèk* girls (Kolbe & Hutson, 2006:868, 872).

The majority of *restavèk* children are taken in by a member of their family, for example an aunt or an uncle, and in which case, the uncle's wife is responsible for the child (Julien, 6/11/2014; Delouis, 24/02/2015; Sabine, 19/02/2015; Cené, various dates). However, despite this fact, this does not safeguard the child from abusive treatment. As Delouis points out, after I ask her if mothers are aware of the dangers they are placing their children in by sending them away:

> '*Mothers? They never know. If they knew… You know, children in domesticity who are subjected to the worst treatment are those who go to their own [extended] family.*' (Delouis, 24/02/2015)

She adds:

> '*Yes. Aunts, uncles, an older sister who is pregnant and sends for her younger sister, who's in the countryside, to come and help her with her baby. That child is on the rod [beaten habitually]. […] They are the ones who treat children the worst.*' (Delouis, 24/02/2015)

This could be related to family politics, grievances between adult siblings and the fact that the financial situation of child's parents is known. The child, placed in the home of his/her aunt or uncle, might be receiving punishment solely because of frustrations between family members. An example of this is Orelus, who was a former *restavèk* child who lived for a time in Port-au-Prince with his aunt, his brother's sister. He lived there with her, her children and other cousins who

had come to live with her as well. He testifies that the treatment he received was the worst out of all the children in the house. This was because his aunt had some resentment towards his father, who was poor, but also in charge of the family's land in Northern rural Haiti. There was some suppressed anger on behalf of the aunt for her brother's way of managing the land. This anger was never expressed to the boy's father, but instead, it was manifested through insults, physical abuse and neglect towards the *restavèk* boy. Moreover, other parents, the aunt's other siblings, were able to send money occasionally for the care of their children, like a school subscription for example. This meant that these children were treated better in her home because their aunt was able to benefit financially from their presence (Orelus, 29/01/2015). This example illustrates how some *restavèk* children can be subjected to worse treatment when they are in the homes of members of their extended family. This is not to say that *restavèk* children staying with strangers are necessarily treated better, but that pre-existing family politics can add an element of bitterness to the relationship, which can be expressed through abusive treatment towards the child.

When discussing the cruelty of the treatment of some women towards *restavèk* children, several participants simply say that some people are just 'cruel' (Piercine, 21/01/2015, Chantalle, 17/03/2015, Orelus, 29/01/2015). While it may be true that some women mistreat children for no other reason than unexplained cruelty, this response is too simplistic. Bales (2005) points to Baumeister's term of the 'myth of pure evil' to demonstrate that the motivations of slaveholders are usually more complex than simple definitions, or understandings, of 'evil'. Bales talks about the importance of bridging the gap between slaveholders and slaves, by bringing 'perpetrators to the realization of the evil of their actions, and victims to

an acceptance of the humanity (if not perceptions and motives) of their perpetrators' (Bales, 2005:39).

As I argue, in order to understand the issues which lead to the extreme cruelty involved in the *restavèk* system, we must consider the backgrounds of the women responsible and the conditions in which they live. I have already alluded to the sexual discrimination of women, and their consequent disempowerment. Similarly, Maternowska (2006) points to the disempowerment of the people in the deprived area of *Cité Soleil*. For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to point out that *Cité Soleil*'s conditions do not exist is isolation from the rest of Haiti (Le National, 2017). Rather, *Cité Soleil*, seemingly, has all the same problems as other urban areas throughout Haiti, though they may be accentuated and manifested on a larger scale, according to the number of people living in poverty there and their geographic concentration. The situation in *Cité Soleil*, as in much of urban Haiti, is extremely challenging and dangerous for its residents. As well as being extremely poor, the area is also controlled by rival armed gangs (Willman & Marcelin, 2010:519). Due to their social positioning and their portrayal as the weaker sex, women are most vulnerable to the dangers of life in poverty. However, we cannot separate the experiences of women from those of the men in their lives. Just as this study is linking the discrimination of women to their behaviours towards *restavèk* children, we must look further to contextualize the harmful acts performed by men and their consequences on women.

Several participants pointed to the fact that many women responsible for violence towards *restavèk* children, were once abused themselves. Gina stated:

> '*People who have been abused, abuse when it is their turn. That's how I see it. In general, women who were victims, or who have been, I don't know, sexually abused, or who were themselves restavèk*

children, will have restavèk children themselves. You don't give what you don't have [what you don't know]. In general that is what we find.. "I was abused, so I abuse, too".' (Gina, 22/02/2015)

Sabine added:

'In order for her to correct [children], it's with the rod, so because she was herself brought up with the rod. If she is to bring up children, she will bring them up with the rod. So if she was brought up with abuse, well, she will see it's the same thing for her to reproduce. It's a cycle of demise.' (Sabine, 19/02/2015)

This theory of women perpetuating behaviour which they have been exposed to in their past might explain, to an extent, the treatment of some *restavèk* children. Lineda, regarding the *restavèk* girl in her home, talks about teaching her to do things in the same way she was taught. She details the different processes of washing dishes etc:

'I wasn't brought up by my mother, directly. I was brought up by my cousin, who is also my godmother. Everything I teach her [the child] to do. Sometimes, when I'm teaching her, she sees it as the worst harm I could do to her. I teach her to wash dishes, rinse them in water twice. She says only once is necessary because it will finish quicker. But for me, that is how they taught me. Because you are a little girl, in the future when you're in your own home, it will be useful. You'll have someone at your side who you can teach this to in the same way I'm teaching you. Everything I learned, I show her the same way, too. I teach her to scrub the charcoal marks off the pot. She says to me she doesn't like to scrub the pot because it makes her arms hurt. I say to her, "I learned it this way, so I do it this way". My

cousin used to give me so much misery. She used to rub tomato

paste in my hair.' (Lineda, 13/07/2015)

In this section, Lineda repeats several times that she is teaching the young girl to do things in the same way she learnt to do them. She alludes to the fact that she is doing so to help the young girl, even making reference to the fact that she, herself, can one day be in the same position, teaching someone else. Finally she admits to the misery she was in as a child, living as a *restavèk* in her cousin's home. What is striking is her insistence on repeating and maintaining the cycle, despite recognizing the hardship of it. In the following dialogue, Lineda states that she does not feel responsible for the *restavèk* girl's mental health:

> *'Interviewer: Are you responsible for her in terms of psychological*
>
> *health? Because sometimes when children are in people's homes,*
>
> *they can suffer psychologically.*
>
> *Lineda: Because they live so terribly? They get sick, and they can't*
>
> *tell anyone?*
>
> *Interviewer: Exactly*
>
> *Lineda: ...Even breathing is difficult?*
>
> *Interviewer: Yes, Do you feel responsible for that?*
>
> *Lineda: No.'* (Lineda, 13/07/2015)

When Lineda was asked what would happen if she didn't have the *restavèk* girl to help her, she responded: '*Well, it would be me who would have to stop all my [commerce] activities*' (Lineda, 13/07/2015), pointing to the crucial importance of the help she receives through the *restavèk* child.

Having looked at the push factors which contribute to children being sent into the *restavèk* system in chapter five, namely poverty and lack of resources in

rural areas, this chapter has considered the various pull factors which create the space and the demand for *restavèk* domestic slaves. This situation exists within the gendered roles of Haitian society, wherein women are responsible for the household and children. Women's precarious situations in terms of finances, and their responsibilities as mothers, mean that they often need to spend a considerable amount of time away from their homes, pursuing commercial activities. This fact, combined with their low incomes, means that women often require free help in the home, and therefore ask for a *restavèk* child to come live with them. In terms of treatment and mistreatment of *restavèk* children, it is usually the women in charge of the household who are responsible for much of the physical and psychological abuse that the children endure. It was argued that the social positioning of women in Haiti disempowers women to a point where their lives are a constant challenge. They are stripped of opportunities for formal work through a lack of education, and through the high level of sexual harassment and exploitation in the workplace. Many are also within a cycle of reproduction in which they have children in order to secure financial assistance from a man. This contributes further to their burdens, as they often end up with a large number of children, and no financial assistance.

The above reasons create the demand for unpaid domestic help, and the maintenance of a system in which children are taken from their parents under, very often, false pretences. Additionally, I would argue that the severity of female oppression in Haiti leads to many women harbouring resentment and frustration. Women's positioning as 'lesser' than men, in regards to society, culture and at times, the law, renders them powerless to assert control over their lives and the lives of their children. As a result, this frustration and disempowerment is projected onto the less powerful *restavèk* child, whom, in many cases, the women do not see as a child with equal rights and needs to their own.

Chapter 8

Traffickers:
Women bridging the gap between supply and demand

'*Bèl dan pa vle di zanmi*'
'Beautiful teeth don't say friend'[69]

> '*The road is taken over by stone. It starts to become difficult to tell it apart from the rocky mountain soil. It is narrow and deep, winding unpredictably down the steep gradient, like a dried up riverbed, whose once violent jutting stream had punched through the stone to form its path. Water in its boisterous youth. But it was not water, for this place is dry. The closest river is in the valley below. Just follow the path trodden daily by the women of the mountaintop community. This is the road in its final stages, its old age. Forged by necessity and hundreds of years of the gentle passage of human and animal feet. Forged by sweat and un-cried tears. Human effort, human misery.*' (de Hoog, 2016a)

This chapter explores the individuals involved in the trafficking process of children into the *restavèk* system. As I have already identified the various factors which 'push' and 'pull' children into this form of child slavery, we look now to the manner in which these two forces are joined, and through whom children are placed into slavery. It has already been established that the individuals requiring *restavèk* children are, for the most part, women. We saw that these women are encumbered with responsibilities both within and outside the household. They are also frequently living in an environment of sustained violence and poverty. Due to societally imposed gender roles, and the resulting exclusion from the job market

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[69] Meaning: Just because someone is smiling at you doesn't mean they're your friend.

and positions of authority and power, they may not be able to exercise full control over their lives or those of their children. Looking at the mothers of *restavèk* children in rural areas, we saw that they, too, are constrained by gendered norms. The environment in which they live is conducive to persistent poverty, and the high average number of children per family renders many vulnerable.

In this chapter, I analyse the different ways in which these vulnerable children are connected with slaveholders, and thus enslaved. As I propose in this section, the process can take different forms. The most known trafficking process of children into the *restavèk* system is their displacement from their homes in rural areas to other people's homes in urban areas. In some cases, a child can be trafficked within an urban area (Cooper et al., 2012), but the most common and well-known scenario typical to the *restavèk* system is a rural to urban transfer.[70] It might be between families who know each-other, or within extended families, in which case the transaction is conducted directly between the two parties – the parent(s) and the slaveholder. However, my empirical research shows that there exists another common route in which children are trafficked into the *restavèk* system. This method entails a third party, a trafficker, the majority of whom are women. As such, in this chapter I consider the reasons behind this and the motivations of this group of women, explaining the identity of these female traffickers and their backgrounds.

Similarly to the mothers and slaveholders of *restavèk* children, these women are also operating within Haitian society's gender norms. However, many are in a position to assert a level of power through financial autonomy as intermediaries for agricultural produce. It is important to understand the

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[70] Based on interview data.

distinctive positioning of these women, as they have a unique status in Haitian society, having knowledge of both rural and urban areas.

The data in this chapter emerges from a number of interviews with both experts and traffickers in Haiti. Four traffickers were interviewed, each of them women, and all part of the group of *Madam Sara* agricultural produce intermediaries. Each of these women was approached in a market, as this is where it is easy to find *Madam Sara* women. Louisiana, Charline, Monique and Rositta all admitted to be implicated in the trafficking of children into the *restavèk* system. No other publication, at this time, discusses the trafficking of children in Haiti from this point of view, and this research is the first to include the voices of traffickers themselves. They were all found in different markets in Port-au-Prince, though each one lives in a different rural area.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first identifies what we know about the trafficking process, and how it has come to light, through this research, that most traffickers are women. The second section looks in more detail at the lives of *Madam Sara* women, discussing their important place in society, and details some of these women's thoughts about what they do.

The trafficking process

In considering the trafficking processes of the *restavèk* system, it is important to challenge a number of assumptions regarding the identity and motivations of the agents involved. One of the main theories I have put forward through this research is the active involvement of women in the process of trafficking children into slavery. Female complicity in human trafficking is a little discussed phenomenon, in terms of its causes and implications. It is also one that

might be much larger than we can imagine or speculate based on the emerging, but still limited figures on the global dynamics of contemporary slavery.

As we have seen in the previous sections, in Haiti, as in many other parts of the world, women are the primary caregivers of children and therefore have access to children in a way that men might not. This access may be based on trust arising from biologically essentialist assumptions of a physiological impulse in women to protect children. It is these assumptions I am challenging here, as I illuminate some of the many ways that women can be complicit in the enslavement and abuse of children. In the case of the *restavèk* system in Haiti, my findings suggest that a large number of trafficking cases take place directly between the parents and the receiving family (Gina, 22/02/2015; Julien, 6/11/2014); Gina, the director of a Haitian NGO, explains:

> '*Interviewer: How do women procure a child domestic worker?*
>
> *Gina: Any way! It's not really a situation... firstly, it's not formal, but there is a sort of formality. For example, I might have a friendship with a street vendor who comes to sell some products to me. Well, I can ask her directly. Or, it could be for example, someone that you know goes to get children in the mountains, so we can ask her. Or it can be parents who ask, for example, for people to take their children.*' (Gina, 22/02/2015)

Julien, the Haitian country director of an American anti-slavery NGO, explained that in the majority of cases, the exchange is conducted directly between the parents and the receiving family, and that it is usually done through a family connection. In these cases, he explains, the receiving family goes to a rural area – usually the area they are originally from – and finds the child. Alternatively, it is the

parents who, in good faith, seek a family to take their child. In other cases, a third party, or middle-person, is involved. In these cases, money can be exchanged between the receiving families and the middle-person, but this is usually regarded as paying for the service, rather than for the child itself (Julien, 6/11/2014). This assessment is corroborated by Gina, who says:

> '*No, they don't pay. Normally, for example, if the person goes to get a child [...], they can give them a little something for the transport [costs] etc. Or they give them food, or they might give them an amount [of money]. But it's not something that is formal. For instance, if you are friends with someone, you can ask them to help you find a child, you see, to go in their community to find a child etc. That's how it happens. It's not as if it's a sale.*' (Gina, 22/02/2015)

We can therefore assess that, where the trafficking process is not performed directly between family members or acquaintances, a third person is involved. This person fetches the child from his/her family and takes him/her to someone's home. As we will see, in the majority of cases in Haiti, this transaction is performed by a woman (Gina 22/02/2015; Sabine, 19/02/2015; Tristan, 5/11/2014). I suggest that this occurs for several reasons. Firstly, as was briefly discussed above, women have better access to children due to segregated gender roles, social conditioning and widespread assumptions that a child will be safer in the hands of a woman than a man. Secondly, and very importantly, the trade of agricultural goods from the countryside to the towns and cities is generally done by women. These women, who go from rural to urban areas on a regular basis, are locally known as *Madam Sara*, and they play a large and vital role in Haiti's informal economy as intermediaries in the internal market system (Murray & Alvarez, 1975; Stam, 2013; Mintz, 1971; Schwartz, 2015).

Madam Sara

Madam Sara (literally, 'Mrs Sara') is the name given to women who travel between rural agricultural areas and urban markets, buying, transporting and selling agricultural produce. They are named after a migratory bird, known in English as the Village Weaver (*Ploceus cucullatus*), who collects twigs and carries them to her nest in a tree which is home to hundreds of other *Madam Sara* birds. As well as their behaviour of constantly carrying twigs back and forth, like a Haitian *Madam Sara* does with agricultural produce, the 'noisy din of chatter from hundreds of busy birds' is often paralleled with the voices of Haitian women in the markets (Schwartz, 2015).

Due to the high level of unemployment – up to 70 per cent (Now Institute, 2014:590) - in the formal sector, the majority of Haiti's working-age population perform some kind of economic activity in the informal sector. In fact, it is estimated that 55 per cent of Haitians have jobs in the informal sector (IHSI, 2010:72) . The informal economy is thus responsible for 85 per cent of all economic activity in the country. The remaining 15 per cent is related to the import-export sector, as well as formal employment within government services and privately owned businesses (Gardella, 2006:18). As we saw in chapters five and seven, many women are alienated from the formal sector because of high levels of sexual exploitation in the workplace, which consequently leads women to seek other, more informal, means of earning money (Chantalle, 17/03/2015; Darline, 14/04/2016; Jolène, 14/04/2016).

Madam Saras occupy an extremely important space in the sphere of Haiti's significant informal economy. Their role, bridging the rural areas' agricultural produce to the people in the towns and cities puts them forward as an example of

the locally coined, and extremely respected title of '*poto mitan*', or 'central pillar' of Haitian society. They are known to provide agricultural produce to 80 per cent of resellers and small market vendors (Stam, 2012:31), with approximately 700,000 small farms depending on them to sell their goods (Schwartz, 2015b). *Madam Saras*' crucial role illustrates how women can represent 'embodied infrastructure' in their societies, as discussed in chapters five and seven, where '[w]omen's bodies, through their use, consumption and circulation provide for the condition making social life and culture possible, although they remain an unknown infrastructure of the elaboration of that social life and culture' (Irigaray, 1977:171). However, despite their enormous importance, their work is known to be arduous, taxing and hazardous. As women, working independently and in an informal manner, they are often victims of robberies, assault and rape (Stam, 2013). This can be seen as being part of women's experience more broadly within the context of systemic violence in Haitian society.

Madam Saras usually live in rural areas, and perform the buying side of their business in surrounding agricultural zones. These might be close, or they might have to travel a significant distance – usually on foot in rural areas – to access the farmers from whom they buy their produce. Once their goods are purchased, *Madam Saras* travel, on foot, by moto-taxi or on the back of a mule, horse or donkey, to a bus depot. There, they pay for a large truck to transport their bags of produce to the city (Stam, 2013). These colourful trucks, heaped with bags on their roofs are a common sight on countryside roads. A number of women, the *Madam Saras,* can be seen sitting on sacks in the back, or on the roof.

The bus journeys can be long, uncomfortable and dangerous. As previously explained, 80 per cent of roads in Haiti are not paved (Now Institute, 2014:256). The roads in rural Haiti are, for the most part, no more than dirt tracks. Where

paved roads exist, traffic often travels at high speed, seldom adhering to any speed limits and road accidents are common[71] (Haiti Libre, 29/12/2015). News articles often relay the events of large numbers of people killed in bus accidents. Because of the precarity of the travelling conditions on the trucks utilised by *Madam Saras*, they are often victims of these accidents (Le Nouvelliste, 15/08/2015).

Once they arrive in the cities, usually late at night, the *Madam Saras* seek out places to sleep in the markets or streets nearby. They will sometimes have to spend several days in the city before they can sell all their produce to resellers and market vendors (Stam, 2013). The process of buying from *Madam Saras* can take place in the middle of the night, around 3 or 4 am, as vendors buy for the day ahead. These market areas are hubs of constant activity. One such market, in the *Petionville* area of Port-au-Prince called *Tèt Dlo* market is an area with buying and selling activity happening 24 hours a day. During the night, *Madam Saras* sell their produce to market vendors, and during the day the market vendors sit at their stalls, waiting for and selling to consumers.

> '*The market never sleeps. It emits noise, music, shouting and the beeping of vehicles, the revving of motorbike engines, all night long. Sometimes you hear a spontaneous choir singing Christian music at 4am! And the Madam Sara arrive with their huge bags of produce, and heated debating and bargaining begins, continues until the early hours.*' [72] Field Diary, February 25th, 2015

Though no conclusive statements can be made regarding the complete female domination of this role of 'garden to market' intermediary, most evidence, as well as findings from my own ethnographic data, suggest that this position is almost always occupied by a woman (Stam, 2013; Schwartz, 2015). The very

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[71] Based on ethnographic observation and participation through extensive travel in rural Haiti.
[72] Based on observations of the *Tèt Dlo* market in Petionville.

word '*madam*' in *Kreyòl* means 'Mrs', therefore this title can only ever be used to describe a woman. It is also important to refer back to the very discrete gender roles in Haitian society. As I described in chapter five, regarding rural families when discussing the mothers of *restavèk* children, men are assigned the role of planters while women are responsible for gathering the produce and selling it. This fact has been realised through a historical process in which men's acquiring of land after the 1804 revolution led to their concentration on agricultural work, combined with various wars and military regimes which steered women towards 'marketing' work (Mintz, 1971:256). This is reflective of how gender roles can be influenced by established dynamics of power, as Sweetman (2008) states, 'women's livelihood strategies are shaped not only by social expectations of what women should do in families and wider society, but by gender inequality which means they have less power and control over essential resources than men' (Sweetman, 2008:2-3). It also exemplifies Momsen's theory of women's productive and reproductive roles:

> 'Reproduction may be distinguished from production on the basis of the law of value. Reproductive labour has use-value and furnishes family subsistence needs, while productive labour generates exchange-values, usually cash income. Empirically this separation is very difficult to make as, within the domestic sphere in which most women work, both categories of tasks are interrelated and enmeshed in a totality of female chores.' (Momsen, 2010:47)

Madam Sara women are thus implicated in productive and reproductive gendered roles, as well as the role of community management, through their intermediary activities, mentioned in chapter five. Talking about pre-colonial African societies,

which are inextricably historically linked to Haiti, as discussed in chapter four, Griffiths states:

> 'The spheres of economic activity in pre-colonial society did not mirror the public/private split we are familiar with in the capitalist industrial model. The economic lives of women within the household, the local market and the external economy were integrated as well as varied. Women ran households, took responsibility for extended families as well as overseeing trading activities and some of them also ran community associations and cults. All this allowed African women more scope for generating wealth from a variety of sources and it afforded them greater opportunities for exercising authority outside the home.' (Griffiths, 2011:137)

The activities of *Madam Saras* are part of a 'livelihood systems framework' (Crown & Sebstad, 1989), wherein the use of available resources and opportunities are mobilised for the survival of households and individuals. These resources can be:

> 'physical assets such as property, human assets such as time and skills, social assets, and collective assets like common property [...]. Opportunities include kin and friendship networks, institutional mechanisms, organizational and group membership, and partnership relations. The mix of livelihoods strategies thus includes labor market involvement; savings, accumulation, and investment; borrowing; innovation and adaptation of different technologies for production; social networking; changes in consumption patterns; and income, labor, and asset pooling. Households and individuals adjust this mix according to the season,

locale, and climate, as well as their age, life cycle, educational level,

and time-specific tasks.' (Crown & Sebstad, 1989:241)

The dynamic nature of *Madam Sara* women's activities, and their use of resources and opportunities, particularly those of female-centred market networks, exemplifies their use of livelihood systems to attempt to fulfil their gendered responsibilities, namely the spheres of the household and children.

The position and participation of women within trade networks in Haiti, and the emergence and role of *Madam Sara* women can also be looked at in relation to pre-colonial African societies in which women were often involved in 'local, national and regional economic systems' (Griffiths, 2011: 136). *Madam Saras* work of buying and selling affords them ranging levels of success and economic rewards. Some merely make enough profit to remain in business, while others profit enough to place them on a higher level of income than the national average. This, in turn, affects women's status, as they often become more economically independent than their male counterparts. As Schwartz (2015) states:

'Women in rural Haiti do not work in gardens on behalf of men. Quite the contrary, rural Haitian women may sometimes work gardens on their own and their children's behalf, but when a man is present, the obligation to plant and weed falls to him.' (Schwartz, 2015c)

Schwartz goes on to portray a matriarchal society, dominated by women, in which older women control younger women, and are often granted physical protection from male members of their families. This power, as Schwartz identifies it, stems from women's economic activity in rural areas, and their domination of the 'itinerant trade on which Haiti's domestic economy depends' (Schwartz, 2015). In other words, women's role as *Madam Sara* intermediaries offers them status and

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power over men as well as other women. However, Schwartz fails to contextualise women's lives within the wider framework of gendered oppression, by pointing solely to these women's economic profits within the informal economy, detaching them from their socially constructed obligations, namely those of the domestic sphere and motherhood. As Moser states:

> 'Western male ideology has been of critical importance in emphasizing the exclusive role of the biological mother in nurturing infants and children. This has reinforced the concept of maternal deprivation and promoted the domestic science movement as a vocation justifying the unemployment of women to serve men. Domestic ideology has reinforced the identification of the domestic sphere and the house as the woman's place. Even when they have a waged job outside the home, women's primary occupation is as a wife and mother.' (Moser, 1993:30)

The structural basis for gendered roles often co-exist with an environment of structural violence through which they are enforced, as '[v]iolence is part of the performance of gendered identities' (Merry, cited in True, 2012:24). The aforementioned presence of structural and symbolic as well as post-colonial violence in Haitian society means that women, even within this category, are operating within the confines and circumstances of violence. This can take the form of sexual violence as well as the environmental violence described above, in terms of danger and lack of infrastructure. Thus, in the following section, we look in more detail at the ways in which *Madam Sara* women can be involved in the trafficking of children into the *restavèk* system.

Madam Sara child traffickers

Apart from transporting agricultural produce from rural to urban areas, some *Madam Saras* can be involved in the trafficking of children, along the same routes (Tristan, 5/11/2014; Monique, 15/07/2015; Louisiana, 15/07/2015; Charline, 18/08/2015). Louisiana, Monique, Charline and Rositta are four *Madam Saras* who each agreed to talk about their involvement in trafficking children from rural to urban areas. Though they were approached in different parts of the city, and are unlikely to know one another, they shared similar accounts of the process involved in recruiting and trafficking children into the *restavèk* system. As we will see below, these women display awareness of the intentional nature of their trafficking activities, as they actively try to convince parents to give them their children. They also admit to using the fact that they are women to facilitate access to children. These accounts are significant and unique in that there exists little to no information about the implication of *Madam Sara* women in the trafficking of children into the *restavèk* system, and here, we see the intentional nature behind it.

One participant, Monique, a *Madam Sara*, confirms that men are a minority in the group of people who perform this transaction. She explains how women have an advantage in this process:

> '*That which makes it easier, a woman has a way she can go to the parent of the child, she can approach them, she talks... She [the parent] would have to be a criminal to not give her child to her! And since she [the parent] thinks she wants to help her with the child, it is easier to approach her to talk to her about it.*'

She specifies:

>*'Yes it's easier for a mother to listen to a woman, who is the same as her, because she will see she's also a mother. This means she wants to help her, she doesn't want her to fall in a hole.'*

She continues, explaining why men are not as involved in the process:

>*'A man is more likely to say, "I have a child in my family, I can bring her for you", but he will never go to a house in his neighbourhood to look for that. He'll say "I'll bring a child from my family, or I have a child who I can see her parents can't [afford to look after her], I'll bring her for you". He never goes asking other people.'*

She also explains how women form connections with their neighbours more effectively than men:

>*'a woman spends more time at home than a man, she is able to get to know the area, her neighbours better than a man.'* (Monique, 15/07/2015)

When asked whether they would be more likely to trust their children with a man or a woman, many participants in the 'mothers' category of my research agreed it would be a woman (Chantalle, 17/03/2015; Fonise, 22/07/2015). Chantalle stated:

>*'I would rather tolerate a woman to look after my child [...] because she knows everything she needs to do for the child, to bathe him/her, dress him/her, all that. But a man might not be so harsh on a child, but when it's a woman she can do nastiness to the child.'* (Chantalle, 17/03/2015)

Looking at this group of women in the context of the *restavèk* practice, it can be asserted that these women provide a bridge between the rural and urban geographically separated spheres of the lives of children who become victim to the *restavèk* system. It is important to mention at this juncture that there is no

evidence as to the number, or percentage, of *Madam Sara* women who are, or would be given the opportunity, involved in the trafficking of children. Due to the significant moral weight that such a transaction bears, it is essential that a differentiation is marked between the *Madam Saras* who are involved in child trafficking and those who are not. That being said, a lack of data in this area means that it is impossible to know how widespread the trafficking of children into the *restavèk* practice is within this group of women. Talking about measuring the prevalence of human trafficking on a global scale, Bales points out that it is 'extremely difficult to bring into focus' because 'the victims of trafficking are more likely to be hidden or unreachable than, for example, the victims of burglary, or even murder' (Bales, 2005:154). There might also be a varying degree to which *Madam Sara* women are involved in the process. Some will do it on a regular basis, while others might only ever traffic one child in their lives. Some might do it as a profiting part of their business, while others might only do it on occasion as a favour to a friend, for example (Monique, 15/07/2015; Louisiana, 15/07/2015; Charline, 18/08/2015).

It is difficult to assess what leads a *Madam Sara* to traffic children into the *restavèk* system, and what might prevent her from doing so. One evident motivation is financial gain. Just as an entrepreneur, or more specifically a trader, can observe a requirement that can be met and profited from, so a *Madam Sara,* who has a presence in both rural and urban domains, can identify this opportunity and ascertain a way to profit from it. It could also be that she has a particular understanding of the needs and challenges experienced by both the urban and the rural poor, that she sees herself in a unique position to assist one or both parties. With regards to the moral standing of the trafficking process, *Madam Saras*, residing in the countryside for the most part, may not be beneficiaries of

awareness-raising endeavours to educate people about children's rights. Many are not aware of the laws surrounding the protection of children, or if they are, they might attest to their non-application, and therefore their impunity.

> *'Well, if there's a law to protect children, I know it's not applied, I've not heard of it'.* (Charline, 18/08/2015)

Rositta, a *Madam Sara* who admits to supplying children to people to work as *restavèk* children, explains the recruitment process in an interview. She states that 'friends' – which she later changes to 'strangers' – approach her and ask her to find a child for them because they need a *restavèk*. Rositta travels to a rural area and finds a family that is seemingly struggling with too many children and too few resources.

> *'Well, when I arrive in a house and I find parents who have seven, eight, nine children, I start to talk with the mother, as woman, the same as me. I tell her I have a friend who needs a child to help in her home who said that if I find one to come with him/her. What would you think to giving me one of your children? And I tell her this person will pay for the child's schooling, he/she will be able to eat and drink. He/she will be better off there than at home. The mother can ask me "is she a good person?". I say yes to her just so she will agree give me her child even though sometimes I don't even know the person the child will be going to live with. But to secure the parents' trust, I'll say anything at all.'*
> (Rositta, 15/07/2015)

Monique made a similar statement regarding her recruiting technique:

> *'How do I find the child? I just look around my area, and I find a parent that has seven, eight or nine children and doesn't have the means to*

look after all of them. And I approach her, I say, "You have all these

children, I have a friend in Port-au-Prince who's asked me for a child.

Would you be able to give me one of them so I can bring it for her?" If

the person agrees, she'll just say yes, and if she doesn't agree she'll just

say no. But most of the time they say yes because it's too much

responsibility, you know, there's no work, they can't take care of the

children really.' (Monique, 15/07/2015)

The statement above, by Rositta proves her motivation to acquire a child for her own personal gain, admitting that she is willing to lie to the child's mother about the safety of the child in order to get her to agree. Monique, for her part, also admits:

'I go to her [the parent] and I lay down the facts for her. If she says

"yes", I don't have to try to convince her. But if she says "no", I'll find

something to say to convince her. [...] I could say, "Well, you have all

these children but you can't look after them. And the woman [in

Port-au-Prince], she's a good person. She wants to help you with the

child, it's not to put her through misery". You find something to say

so that the parent will agree for you to go with the child.' (Monique,

15/07/2015)

These recruiters prove their active involvement in, and knowledge about, the trafficking process through the efforts they go to, and the bargaining skills they use to obtain the children. It might be said that their main priority in this stage of the process is the attainment of the child, and not, as they have demonstrated in the statements above, to help the child, and its rural family.

The particular motivations of a *Madam Sara* trader, or intermediary, in her role as child-trafficker, might be considered financial when the activity is

incorporated as part of her business. Depending on the individual in question, the frequency of this type of transaction in her dealings, and the nature of her relationship with the potential host, money may or may not change hands. As Charline states:

> *'Well, some people pay me, some people don't give me money, but what they have, they give me. Like rice, beans, oil, clothes, sandals etcetera.'*
>
> (Charline, 18/08/2015)

Monique adds:

> *'Well, I don't really benefit from it. For example, if I have a friend that's in Port-au-Prince, she says to me: "Monique, can you bring me a child?" I go to the town I live in in the provinces, and I see a child whose parents aren't able to look after them, or one that doesn't really have parents, or who's been abandoned. I can take that child and give it to someone, but there's no real benefit for me.* [...] *There are some people who, when they bring a child, they do get money, food or clothes. They give them other things. But I do it for a friend who's asked me to bring a child for her. I don't get anything in return.'*
>
> (Monique, 15/07/2015)

The *Madam Saras* interviewed were quick to point out that any money exchanged is a fee for the service rendered rather than to be considered a payment for the child itself.

> *'Well, you don't bring [the child] for money, but like when you bring him/her, [the host] might give you money. You paid for transport for the child. But it's not for money. She chooses to give you something but you don't give him/her for money because you're not selling the child.'* (Charline, 18/08/2015)

In this way, she separates the child as a commodity different from her other tradable goods which are themselves part of a finely tuned and organised system of loans, capital and varying margins of profit (Murray & Alvarez, 1975; Stam, 2013; Mintz, 1971).

Both Charline and Monique are very aware of the risks to *restavèk* children. Charline explained:

> '*The restavèk system is when you take a child from his/her parent's home to bring them to the home of a stranger to live with them. They call that "restavèk". Some people live well together with the child while others mistreat them. That is what the restavèk system is to me.*' (Charline, 18/08/2015)

Monique stated:

> '*Sometimes I leave my town to go to Port-au-Prince, and I see these sorts of cases. I see children that tell you they are not being treated well. These children get up very early, and they do a series of jobs that are not for their age. It's as if they are doing forced labour. The person who takes in the child will mistreat them because it's not her child. Her child, she puts him in a good school, and the child in her home, either she puts them in an afternoon school, or she doesn't send them to school at all.*' (Monique, 15/07/2015)

Another *Madam Sara*, Louisiana, who has been observing the practice for many years, said:

> '*Someone can take in a child to live with them, just because she doesn't want her own child to work very hard. They take in the child like that because it's to exploit them, they beat*

> *them to exploit them. [...] It means, this person shows you,*
>
> *it's [the child's] health they need.'*

She added:

> '*This means, the child of this person can sit around, do their*
>
> *nails, shave their body, and the child living with them is*
>
> *worked into the ground, they make it go through misery, work*
>
> *all night, all day long.*' (Louisiana, 15/07/2015)

When asked about the regularity of her involvement in this activity, Charline says that some months she does not get asked for any children but in other months she might '*come with three, four or five children'* (Charline, 18/08/2015).

The female aspect of the trafficking process is noteworthy. Charline uses the fact she is a woman to relate to the mothers, to convince them to trust her with their child. She says, '*I speak to the woman and the woman goes to speak to her husband'*. She explains that as women, they can understand each other better and '*the woman will provide a quicker route'* (Charline, 18/08/2015). Charline assured me that she maintains contact with the parents after she has placed the child in his/her new situation. She says:

> '*I always stay in contact with the parents. Some parents stay in touch*
>
> *with me, but there are parents who have given you their child, it's as if*
>
> *they have abandoned him/her. Yourself, you [referring to herself]*
>
> *have left the child, you can go and see him/her, but his/her parents*
>
> *might never even ask you if you've seen or haven't seen their child'*
>
> (Charline, 18/08/2015)

This last quote from Charline brings us full circle, back to the parents of victims of the *restavèk* system, bringing into question again cultural attitudes towards children, and the circumstances of parents which push them into this situation.

Monique also stated that she remains involved in the transaction after it is finished, by keeping in touch with the child.

> '*Sometimes when you come with the child, you bring the parent along too so they can see where the child is. And every month they plan to visit their child. But there are others who don't know anything about the child anymore. It's as if you bought the child from them. In those cases, the person in the house where the child is can do whatever they like, they can do things they are not supposed to do.* [...] *I can't say I'm finished with the child because the person who took the child from their parents has a big responsibility on their shoulders. Every time you call on the phone, you always ask for [the child]. And if you ever visit Port-au-Prince, you can go and see them.* [...] *If when I get there I see they aren't looking after the child in the way I had thought, I don't see it as important to leave the child go through that misery there. I would rather they go through misery at home with their mother and father. I can't leave them go through misery in someone else's home.*'
>
> (Monique, 15/07/2015)

Monique's statements above divulge that she feels a certain sense of responsibility over the child which she has placed into the *restavèk* system. She maintains some contact with the child and the receiving family, and is prepared to intervene if the situation looks too harmful for the child. She, being aware of the child's home situation and background, is able to assess whether the situation is particularly harmful to the child in relation to where they have come from. She might be acting this way because she feels genuine empathy for the child. Alternatively, or in addition, she might be acting out of a sense of duty to the parents who have trusted her. Otherwise, there might be an element of not wanting to appear immoral to the

interviewer, and therefore stressing her good intentions. It is difficult to ascertain. However, what is evident is that the return of the child, if this in fact occurs, is done long after the original transaction, in which she may have benefitted financially or otherwise.

The existence of women's implication in trafficking is not isolated to Haiti as global figures begin to illustrate a pattern of female agency in human trafficking in different parts of the world. Although insufficient research in the area means that we do not yet have a wide picture of what global systems of human trafficking look like, an increasing amount of statistics and anecdotal evidence shows that women can play a significant role in the recruitment and trafficking of people and/or children into modern slavery. In chapter one, I mentioned a 2008 IOM report that found that up to 75 per cent of the traffickers identified in the East African region were female (IOM, 2008:56). Although further details are not provided as to the nature of the trafficking, the identity of the victims and the forms of slavery, the facts alone are striking. In the United Kingdom, an increasing amount of information is emerging regarding the identities of traffickers in the forced prostitution industry. A number of journalistic articles and documentaries depict networks of female traffickers – many of which are former victims themselves – who recruit other women to work in the forced sex industry using their gender to establish trust between them and the victims, as a Guardian article states, '[m]any of the women and girls who are vulnerable to trafficking rarely believe another woman would abuse them' (Bindel, 2013). There has been evidence of women recruiting and trafficking other women in Nigeria, with promises of employment in the United Kingdom, through which victims are enslaved in forced prostitution (Kleeman, 2011, 2013). A 2009 report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

(UNODC) found that 'a disproportionate number of women are involved in human trafficking, not only as victims [...], but also as traffickers [...]. Female offenders have a more prominent role in present-day slavery than in most other forms of crime' (UNODC, 2009:6). Although the report states that information about the gender of convicted traffickers is lacking in many parts of the world, the countries for which information was provided showed that women's involvement in trafficking ranged from 10 to 50 per cent, figures which are particularly startling if viewed in comparison to other crimes perpetrated by women that show much lower numbers (UNODC, 2009:46).

The above global statistics, as well as my findings in Haiti, demonstrate the significant scale of female involvement in human trafficking worldwide. Much of the information provided regionally by non-governmental reports and media documentaries and articles discuss the involvement of women in recruiting other women for purposes of forced prostitution. However, further investigation could prove the role of women in the trafficking of children throughout the world, based on similar factors as the ones provided in this thesis regarding Haiti.

In this chapter, we have looked at the various ways in which a child might be trafficked into the *restavèk* system. I assessed that the intermediary who traffics children into slavery is usually a woman, and many are part of a group called *Madam Sara*, and that the trafficking of children runs parallel to Haiti's informal economy and the transport of agricultural goods from rural to urban areas. It is *Madam Sara* women's acute awareness of the situations of families in the rural areas from which they originate that puts them in a unique position to be able to acquire children for placement in the *restavèk* system. They are also often able to use their gender, by speaking 'woman to woman' with the children's mothers, to establish a trusting

connection which will render the mother more likely to leave her child in the *Madam Sara*'s custody.

The women involved in child trafficking are operating within the same social networks and hierarchies as the other two groups of women described in this chapter. Each have their own active role within the *restavèk* system, with differing incentives, financial situations and levels of power and agency, but ultimately, they are all Haitian women, and therefore existing in similar spheres. Their particular role, and agency, in the *restavèk* system may be established according to their own geographical or economic situation, but the reasons behind their choices may all stem from a similar source. This is why it is important, not only to analyse these different roles as unique and apart from each other, but also to look at them in conjunction and identify what they have in common, and the experiences they share.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

'Si bèf te konn fòs yo, yo pa tap kite moun mennen yo labatwa'
'If cows knew their strength, they would not be butchered'

'The road stops here in its final resting place, on the crest of the
mountain. There it is framed by other mountains and the sea,
glistening below. It is peaceful there. No sound of traffic. Just the
sound of the breeze in the leaves of the coconut trees. The
occasional cry of a goat and singing of a bird. An eagle glides
silently above, looking down at the road, then follows the wind
over the valley. Here the road remembers its beginnings… Wide
and tarmacked, covered in motorbikes and cars, lined with
street vendors and pedestrians. It prefers it up here, touching
the sky, serving as the rough terrain for the lives of its people.'
(de Hoog, 2016a)

Child slavery is a global phenomenon, part of a large network of modern slavery and human trafficking worldwide. As a relatively young academic field, much of the existing research on modern slavery still lacks thorough analysis, and there still exist many gaps in what is known about the dynamics and causes of this severe exploitation of human rights. In order to provide long-term solutions to this global problem, it is crucial to analyse local systems of slavery, to identify their principle factors and the environments that allow them to exist. In addressing the root causes of these practices, solutions can be implemented and sustained in a way that can guarantee the eradication of slavery. It is for this reason that the research undertaken for this thesis is of significant value. Through this research, we can pinpoint the precise factors which render children vulnerable to child

slavery, and we can begin to conceptualise ways in which this situation might be addressed and the risks reduced.

In the case of child slavery in Haiti, as I found, the exploitation of children is inextricably linked to the oppression of women, as women are not only responsible for a large part of the abuse towards *restavèk* children - as a result of largely misdirected frustration - but also victimised by the factors which render this practice possible. My research found that women are intrinsic to the *restavèk* system, not only complicit in the enslavement of children, but also its principle perpetrators. These findings are striking due to the commonly held assumptions that women are biologically wired to protect children. In writing this thesis, I therefore set out to understand the factors which contribute to women's decisions to either send their children into slavery, to traffic children or to enslave them. In so doing, I examined the highly gendered environments Haitian women live in and analysed the lives of both men and women to identify the root causes of the *restavèk* practice. I found that women in Haiti are, for the most part, oppressed and limited. They are assigned gendered responsibilities towards children and households, however, they are not awarded a level of authority and power that allows them to fulfil the requirements of these two spheres. Women are marginalised from most formal economic activity and mostly live in an environment of gender based and structural violence, whether in their own homes, or in the public sphere. I suggest that it is these conditions that push women to send their children away, due to the fact that they cannot care for them, and that create the space, or the perceived need, for women to take in *restavèk* children. I also argue that this environment of oppression and structural violence is the reason why many women mistreat *restavèk* children as a way to express feelings of

rage and frustration on a group that is less powerful than them. The invisibility of *restavèk* children in Haitian society allows this abuse to happen.

In pointing the finger at women's oppression, it is logical to consider the position of men, the factors which lead men to subjugate women and the context in which they do so. My research suggests that much of the treatment of women at the hands of Haitian men stems from a historical, racial, social and economic disempowerment as men are largely marginalised and turn to cultural concepts of masculinity to assert power. Much of the violence men direct at women, I suggest, is rooted in Haiti's environment of structural, post-colonial violence, the legacies of slavery and the harsh realities of extreme poverty.

Section one of this thesis focused on the historical and contextual background of the *restavèk* system. Here, I explored the roots of the *restavèk* system and placed it within a global network of modern slavery. I identified similar patterns of child slavery in countries with historical links to Haiti and hypothesised on the origins of these practices. In discussing the academic and legal definitions of slavery and child slavery, I then compared these criteria to the circumstances of the *restavèk* system in order to establish it as slavery. I showed how the events in Haiti's history paved a future of poverty for the majority of its people. The historical system of plantation slavery and the subsequent powerful revolution gave birth to the nation of Haiti, marking its beginnings with violence and racial social hierarchical conceptions. By looking at the period from Haiti's independence to the present day, we saw that outside influences have continued to have a significant impact on Haiti's autonomy and as a result, its economic and political stability. Natural disasters, like hurricanes and the humanitarian crisis following the 2010 earthquake have merely accentuated the already existing

inequality and severe poverty and hardship of the people. This context is not only important to understand because it illuminates the historical reasons as to why Haiti is so economically poor, it also speaks to the culture of the Haitian people and their notions of equality and humanity as social prerogatives, in many respects.

Section two provided gender analyses of women and men's lives in Haiti. Looking at rural families, where most *restavèk* children come from, I discussed the factors that push children into slavery and found many of these to exist within a gendered contextual background that is pivotal in the economic and social impoverishment of society. This was framed in a feminist framework which provided a wider context to women's oppression, and the existence of patriarchal structures throughout the world. I explored gendered roles in Haitian society, underscoring how women are largely responsible for the care of children and the household. Women are also systematically awarded a secondary place in relation to men and are often subjected to gender-based violence and abuse. As the consequences trickle down to affect children, who are primarily the responsibility of their mothers, this creates a situation in which the *restavèk* system is considered a solution to children's hunger and lack of access to education.

Considering women's oppression from the perspective of Haitian men helped to facilitate an understanding of a theoretical framework for men's behaviours and concepts of masculinity. I thus discussed what masculinity entails, from a Haitian as well as a global perspective and identified common characteristics between men from different cultures. Here, I focused on men's sense of themselves as men in the Haitian context, and how their failure to live up to the expectations placed on them renders many disempowered and marginalised. This was discussed in relation to notions of 'hegemonic masculinity'

(Connell, 2005) and how men's inability to feel successful in their roles as providers leads many to act out with authority, and often violence, against women who are considered the weaker group. Both of the gender analyses of men and women were framed in a context of structural violence which thematically runs throughout this thesis as it permeates the Haitian social environment. Thus we see how the polarization of men and women in terms of gendered roles and responsibilities leads to high levels of violence, to low economic means and ultimately to the vulnerability of children to being sent into the *restavèk* system.

Section three of this thesis focused in the female perpetrators of trafficking and enslaving children in Haiti. Whereas the previous section identified 'push' factors, predominantly on rural areas, that lead to children being sent into the *restavèk* system, this section focused on the pull factors of the urban environments where *restavèk* children end up. Here again, we looked at women's gendered roles in society and saw how, in the context of urban Haiti, this creates a space in which women feel they need to take in a *restavèk* child in order to help them fulfil their responsibilities. The dependency of women on men, who, for a large part are either not present or unable to support their families adequately, means that many women are living in extreme poverty in urban areas. Women who spend large amounts of their time out earning money, either through formal factory work, or informal street commerce, for instance, often require an unpaid helper to fulfil their responsibilities in their households and towards their children. As I explained, however, there is a stronger element of violence in the relationship between the slaveholding woman and the *restavèk* child, and we analysed women's behaviour towards these children, in comparison with non-*restavèk* children. My findings suggest that women's challenging lives in the

context of gendered oppression, lack of access to basic needs, high levels of sexual violence and exploitation and domestic violence lead women to 'lash out' in violence against *restavèk* children, expressing, what I deemed as a frustrated rage. It is also in the dynamics of this relationship that the situation of slavery occurs. Just as slavery is understood to be primarily a relationship between two people (Bales, 2005), it is this abusive and exploitative relationship between the female slaveholder and the child that defines the *restavèk* situation.

My empirical research revealed that not only is the process of enslavement in the *restavèk* system conducted by a woman, the trafficking process, in cases where a third party is involved, is also predominantly undertaken by a woman. This is closely linked to the transport of agricultural goods from rural to urban areas, the informal market economy and a group of agricultural intermediaries known locally as *Madam Saras*. My interview data with several participants who are *Madam Saras* evidenced that these traffickers habitually use their status as women, and assumptions that they are therefore more trustworthy with the care of children, to convince mothers to give them their children. We also discussed the motivations of female traffickers and found that although many insisted that no financial compensation was offered to them by the slaveholders, most benefitted from some form of payment, whether in kind or merely covering the cost of transportation of the child. Examining the profile of *Madam Saras*, I illustrated how these women are also operating within the same framework of gendered oppression as the other groups of women looked at in this study. Although *Madam Saras* are often referred to as the '*poto mitan*', 'central pillar', of the informal economy in Haiti, as they are a vital component in the transport of food from the provinces to the towns, their lives and activities are exposed to the same dangers as other Haitian women.

This thesis offers a unique and important contribution to the field of gender studies and modern slavery studies by focusing on the involvement of women in the trafficking and enslaving of children. Through a thorough ethnography of Haiti, I expose some of the important factors which lead to the vulnerability of children to being sent into domestic slavery. I examine the conditions of the *restavèk* system of slavery through a gender lens, looking at the ways in which women are complicit in the practice and the conditions which lead them to be so. Although the ethnographic material and interview data are specific to the Haitian context, there are many parallels which can be drawn between the Haitian *restavèk* system and other child slavery practices throughout the world. Indeed, some of the factors which contribute to the *restavèk* system might also be present in other geographical areas and societies. Moreover, the findings of this thesis, suggesting that women's oppression and lack of power in a violent and patriarchal society lead to the vulnerability of children and their subsequent enslavement, can be extrapolated and applied to other societies throughout the world where child slavery exists. Further research in other geographical areas might find similar connections between the subjugation of women and child slavery, and ultimately offer practical solutions to eradicate various child slavery practices with a focus on long-term sustainability.

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- Mr Louisman / Mr Delange / Pascal

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