Exercising Exit, Voice and Loyalty: A Gender Perspective on Transnationalism in Haiti

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ABSTRACT

This article explores gendered patterns of migration and transnationalism in Haiti. A combination of factors has prompted extensive rural–urban migration and emigration over the last three decades: violence, repression, economic collapse and the implementation of neo-liberal reforms have left many Haitians with few options other than to seek a new life elsewhere. Although many Haitians abroad naturalize and take citizenship in host countries, emigration does not mean that ties to their homeland are severed. Indeed, a substantial number of Haitians remain intimately connected to Haiti, visiting, sending remittances and gifts, investing in land and exercising political voice in Haiti and in their country of residence. This article focuses on the gender dimension of Haitian migration and transnationalism drawing on Hirschman's typology of exit, voice and loyalty. These options are uniquely gendered. Although most analyses of transnational citizenship focus on men, women and women's movements in Haiti have also benefited from transnational organizing and the transnational links forged over the past three decades. Through migration, women have participated in changing the financial architecture and political landscape of Haiti. Expressions of voice and loyalty by women are challenging traditional gender roles in Haiti and contributing to an emerging transnationalism that has profound effects on Haitians and their communities at home and abroad.

INTRODUCTION

For many people, migration is a response to a set of economic, social and political forces that compels them and their families to seek opportunity and freedom elsewhere. It can be a desperate act or one of liberation and renewal. Migration to cities and across national borders can also be seen as a feature of globalization that is intimately linked to the greater integration of markets and economies. Migration patterns follow distinct trends and build on a web of social capital that enables individuals and households to relocate. Although migration can be a costly and wrenching process, it is

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not one that necessarily severs all contact with the home country. Many migrants continue to maintain close ties with family members left behind, sending back remittances and goods and engaging in the reciprocal exchange of cultures, ideas and financial resources that impact upon both the host culture and the sending communities. Work by Basch et al. (1994), Glick Schiller et al. (1995), Grasmuck and Grosfoguel (1997), Hamilton and Chinchilla (1991) and Laguerre (1998) suggests that although migration is not costless, it is increasingly a force that wrests agency from processes of globalization, changing economic and social institutions and redefining the political landscape in sending and receiving communities and nations.

This article draws on Albert Hirschman's (1970) typology of 'exit', 'voice' and 'loyalty' to explore the gender contours of Haitian migration and transnationalism. Hirschman developed this typology to explore 'repairable lapses' on the part of economic actors and explain how inefficiency and poor performance may be tolerated by a market system that is not purely competitive and immediately self-correcting. Hirschman defines exit and voice as options that can be used to police or correct defective or inefficient behaviour. This analysis is directed at firms, managers, employees and consumers — but can easily be translated to other realms. Hirschman considers the case of a firm or an organization in which performance deteriorates and the quality of the product or service offered declines. Some customers may simply stop purchasing or consuming the product or service: this is the exit option. As a result, revenues drop, membership declines and managers are compelled to seek ways of correcting the deterioration in service provision and quality. When the firm's customers, or the organization's membership, express their dissatisfaction to management or to an authority to which management is subordinate, they exercise voice. Once again, management is likely to begin to search for and implement remedial action. The final response in this typology is loyalty. In Hirschman's world view the presence of loyalty makes exit a less likely option. Loyal behaviour is motivated by a fear of exit and responds to the cost or penalty felt by those who might seek exit as an option. In Hirschman's words: 'The individual feels that leaving a certain group carries a high price with it, even though no specific sanction is imposed by the group' (Hirschman, 1970: 98). In defining loyalty, Hirschman notes:

> Loyalist behavior may, however, be motivated in a less conventional way. In deciding whether the time has come to leave an organization, members, *especially the more influential ones*, will sometimes be held back not so much by the moral and material sufferings that they would themselves have to go through as a result of exit, but by anticipation that the *organization to which they belong would go from bad to worse if they left*. (ibid., italics in original)

This typology can easily be adapted to view the tensions and conflicts that produce migration and the loyalties that sustain familial and community bonds over great distances. Shifting the focus from firms to nations, consumers to individuals, and membership of organizations to membership of

households, communities and political movements, we can define migration as exit; loyalty as remaining in the country or continuing to nourish ties to the country; and voice as seeking political solutions to the factors that compel exit. However, these decisions or choices are not mutually exclusive. The migrant may choose to exercise all options sequentially or simultaneously. For some migrants abroad, exit, voice and loyalty are concurrent options and strategies. While remaining abroad, migrants can express voice by organizing to protect their interests as migrants in the host-country and to influence international political discourse or leverage political outcomes in their home country. Similarly, migrants continue to demonstrate loyalty to their family members and relatives, or to the hope of their eventual return, sending remittances, investing in land and engaging in transnational enterprises. Finally, the exercise of exit and loyalty has also created the conditions for voice in home and host countries.

The exercise of transnational citizenship and political voice is increasingly a topic of interest in the literature on migration and transnationalism (Fitzgerald, 2001; Goldring, 1999; Portes, 1999; Smith, 1994). The governments of sending nations have begun to recognize the importance of their expatriate communities as entrepreneurs, consumers of home-produced exports and as political representation abroad or potential advocates of foreign policy positions by host-country governments towards the home country. However, as Pessar and Mahler (2001) and Goldring (2001) also note, the exercise of voice is often seen to be a male prerogative. Jones-Correa (1998) emphasizes that among Latin American immigrants men have a more outward political perspective than women and are more likely than women to become engaged in transnational political activism. Similarly, Guarnizo and Portes (2001) find that gender exercises a dominant effect in determining the nature and extent of the political activities of migrants in the home and host countries. It would seem, therefore, that without a gendered and transnational optic, women's concerns, activism and political voice as migrants and transmigrants may be ignored or subordinated to definitions of transnational citizenship and scholarship that emphasize the role of male migrants in transnational organizations and political agency by men.

ENGENDERING MIGRATION

The growing body of research in the social sciences on gender and globalization explores a variety of different characteristics of 'globalism', examining the causes and consequences of the greater integration of markets, peoples and ideas in the latter part of the twentieth century (Moghadam, 1994; Mohanty, 1997; Peters and Wolper, 1995; Rowbotham and Mitter, 1994; Sahgal and Davis, 1992; WLDI, 1993). Sassen (1996) partitions the recent literature on the feminization of globalization into three distinct

chronological phases that describe the history of gendering in the global economy. The first phase she identifies draws attention to the subsidies that women provide to male waged labour through their household production and subsistence farming and can be summarized in the work of Boserup (1970) and Deere (1976). The second phase is described by the extensive literature on the internationalization of manufacturing production and the feminization of the proletariat. The third phase is associated with the process of transformation of women's subjectivities and identities as they are expressed in women's notions of membership and inclusion or exclusion from enclaves, groups or associations that are in flux or are being redefined by a process of internationalization. Sassen highlights the example of the role that migration plays in these transformations: 'Among the richest and most promising is the new feminist scholarship on women immigrants, which focuses, for example, on how international migration alters gender patterns and how the formation of transnational households can empower women' (Sassen, 1996: 3).

Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994, 1999) also emphasizes an analysis of migration that recognizes how key institutions that affect or shape the migration decision are distinctively gendered. Similarly, work by Mahler (1999) and Pessar (1999) echoes the importance of an analysis of migration and transnationalism that considers how roles and responsibilities differ for men and women as migrants and how the experience of migration is challenging the configuration of these roles in the home and host country. Although scholars such as Guarnizo and Portes (2001) contend that transnational political action is socially bounded across national borders and appears to reproduce pre-existing power asymmetries, Pessar (1999) stresses a more nuanced interpretation of transnationalism where migration can simultaneously reinforce and challenge patriarchy in its multiple forms.

Theories of migration, identity politics and transnationalism are as much in flux as the people whose movements are being considered. However, there are certain characteristics in the literature that emphasize particular experiences of displacement and relocation. Grasmuck and Grosfoguel (1997: 342) point out that despite the complexity of the subject matter there is a dominant emphasis on the male experience that relegates women to a secondary position:

> While there have been important exceptions, many theoretical accounts of different immigrant trajectories in America remain essentially stories of men... This bias is problematic because gender dynamics can be highly influential in affecting the social outcomes of immigrant communities by interaction with the structure of opportunities that local environments provide. The fate of female migrants is not always the mirror image of their male counterparts especially when high rates of family disruption accompany the process.

The failure to incorporate a gendered focus in the analysis of migration and transnationalism, in combination with a disproportionate emphasis on the migrant as the protagonist, ignores the experiences of those who remain in the home country. Those who stay may have also shared in the migration

decision. Furthermore, those who stay often bear the burden of increased workloads, and shoulder the responsibility of repaying debts incurred in order to send the migrant abroad.

Drawing on work by Pessar (1999) and Mahler (1999) this article contends that migration, whether national or international, prompts qualitative shifts in the realm of the personal and the political, changing the role that women play as providers and care-givers and constructing new identities for women in sending and receiving communities. In some cases these transformations are positive and these new identities are empowered. In other cases, migration and displacement have reinforced traditional roles and responsibilities and contributed to the further impoverishment of women. In the following sections I provide a brief history of the Duvalier dynasty, violence, political repression and economic collapse as the preconditions for exit from Haiti. Subsequently, I examine each of the three categories of exit, loyalty and voice, highlighting the role that women have played in the exercise of each. While migration is not costless, and the transformations engendered by exit are not painless, gender roles and responsibilities are in flux in Haiti and some are being challenged as a result of the simultaneous exercise of exit, voice and loyalty. What follows is an exposition of exit, voice and loyalty in the Haitian context linking these choices and outcomes to the history of repression, violence, economic collapse and the ongoing struggle to define a democratic state.

HAITI: A BRIEF HISTORY OF REPRESSION, ECONOMIC COLLAPSE AND FLIGHT

The history of internal and international migration in Haiti is one characterized by a repressive state, the indiscriminate exercise of violence, precipitous economic decline and rising poverty (Portes and Stepick, 1986; Preeg, 1996). By the late 1980s, the combination of an oppressive state, the collapse of domestic agriculture and rising levels of poverty spurred a massive exodus. Although many of the migrant flows in Haiti have been internal, a substantial number of those in flight from rural areas or from state oppression have set their sights on the United States, Canada and the Bahamas.[1] The first wave of Haitian immigrants to the US in the 1960s were distinct from those who arrived in the latter part of the twentieth

1. Cross-border migration is not a new phenomenon. The historic relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic laid down a network of cross-border alliances rooted in the emerging post-colonial sugar trade. Seasonal migration between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has been etched into the patterns of agricultural labour for over 400 years (Gavigan, 1997; IOM/FLACSO 2003; Justice Economique, 1999). However, the principal international destinations for the majority of Haitians fleeing state repression and poverty in the latter part of the twentieth century have been the United States and Canada.

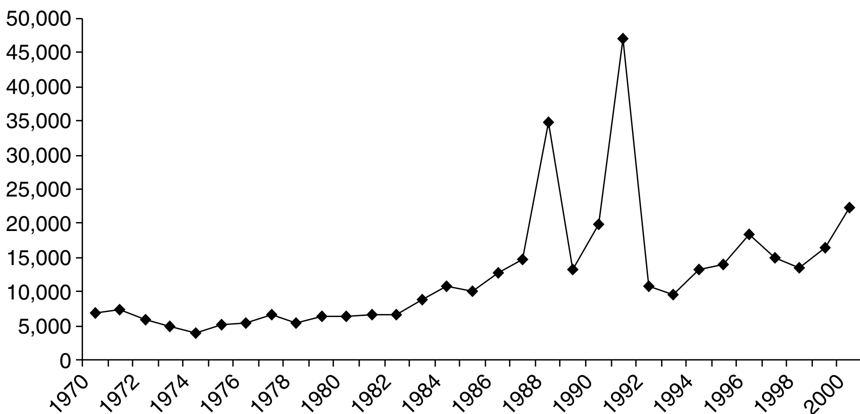
century. More than a third of those fleeing the Duvalier regimes were professional or white collar (Laguerre, 1998). Subsequently, the majority of those arriving have been impoverished rural migrants with little education, a substantial number of whom arrive in boats in South Florida seeking political asylum (Grasmuck and Grosfoguel, 1997).

The second Duvalier regime began to crumble in the early 1980s in response to a mobilized citizenry that took to the streets. New coalitions of power began to form and the military, which had been largely subject to the dictates of the Duvalier family, rose to take power. The *Conseil National de Gouvernement* that took over in February 1986 was a military junta that contained both civilians and high-ranking military personnel unaccustomed to executive office. The rise to power was shaky and tentative, but it was only a matter of time before the *Conseil* reinvented itself in the image of the authoritarianism that it had experienced at the hands of Papa and Baby Doc.

By 1988, the numbers of documented Haitian immigrants admitted to the US had more than doubled (see Figure 1). The numbers of undocumented Haitian immigrants also rose: it is estimated that almost 100,000 undocumented Haitian immigrants entered the US during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Indeed, boats intercepted 25,551 Haitians attempting to land on US shores between 1981 and 1991, returning these potential migrants to Port-au-Prince (Gavigan, 1997; INS data).

In Haiti, the popular movement grew during the 1980s fuelled by economic and logistical support from the diaspora community and propelled by the solidarity generated through the shared experience of widespread repression. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, an ex-Salesian father and a representative of the *tilegliz*, a grassroots Catholic movement, emerged at the forefront of the

Figure 1. Documented Haitian Immigrants Admitted to the United States



Source: INS (1970–2001).

political uprising. Aristide captured the popular vote and won a landslide victory with two-thirds of all votes cast, becoming the first democratically elected president in February 1991. The numbers of migrants leaving Haitian shores dropped dramatically under the first Aristide government; Gavigan (1997) reports that fewer than 1,200 Haitians attempted to migrate in 1990.

The Cédras regime installed itself in September of 1991, assuming power in a series of swift retaliations against the Aristide government and the *lavalas* movement that supported him. The ruthless imposition of power and the continued human rights violations under the Cédras regime prompted the Organization of American States to declare an embargo calling for the imposition of stringent economic sanctions that restricted trade and financial flows and froze the assets of key members of the coup leadership (Chomsky, 1999). Both Mexico and Venezuela cut off supplies of oil to Haiti, bringing Port-au-Prince to a virtual standstill and prompting long electricity blackouts as power generation almost ground to a halt.

Haiti experienced a dramatic deterioration in economic and social conditions during the embargo period (IMF, 1995; Lundahl and Silié, 1998). Multilateral and bilateral donors suspended disbursements in 1991, exports declined and balance of payments deficits grew substantially. Real GDP declined by 28 per cent over the period 1991–94. The trade and payments embargo imposed upon Haiti in May 1994 shut down industry and paralysed the economy. Per capita GDP fell almost 6 per cent per year between 1991 and 1994. Foreign direct investment dried up and capital flight skyrocketed. Investment contracted from 11 per cent of GDP in 1991 to approximately 2 per cent in 1994. Savings turned sharply negative, falling from –1.6 per cent of GDP in 1991 to –5.2 per cent in 1994 (IMF, 1995).

Throughout the coup and embargo period, migration continued apace, becoming the central preoccupation of US policy toward Haiti under the Clinton administration. Between 1991 and 1997 approximately 220,000 Haitians, or almost 3.5 per cent of the total population of Haiti, migrated to the United States (INS, 1999). Sanctions were applied in an attempt to force the Cédras regime to its knees and facilitate the return of Aristide. When this failed, Clinton ordered the invasion of Haiti. The motivation for this invasion was couched in terms of the need to staunch the flow of Haitian migrants to US shores. In his 1994 speech, Clinton claimed that over US$ 200 million had been spent to support Haitian refugees in Guantanamo and the US, and that the goals of the invasion were to restore democracy and end the refugee crisis: 'Three hundred thousand more Haitians, 5 per cent of their entire population, are in hiding in their own country. If we don't act, they could be the next wave of refugees at our door. We will continue to face the threat of mass exodus of refugees and its constant threat to stability in our region and control of our borders' (*New York Times* 16 September 1994, cited in Chomsky, 1999).

As a result of the US invasion, Aristide was returned to power on 15 October 1994 after 1,111 days in exile in Venezuela and Washington DC.

During his exile, Aristide signed an agreement with the Paris Club of international creditors, which many feel committed Haiti to a neo-liberal future. This agreement set the seal on the reform package that was embraced in the following years (McGowan, 1997; Stotzky, 1997; Weisbrot, 1997). Despite these measures, and some might even say because of them, emigration from Haiti continued. Poverty was not addressed, and the country's fragile democracy continued to be beleaguered by violence, culminating in Aristide's forced removal from power in February 2004.

EXIT: INTERNAL AND CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION

> 'Some people get to America and some people die. Me, I'll take either one. I'm just not taking Haiti anymore' (A young male Haitian migrant quoted in Finkel, 2000: 50).

Boserup (1970) identifies a series of gender-specific push- and pull-factors such as the availability of economic opportunities that impel men and women to migrate, and socio-cultural factors that sanction or limit their mobility. These socio-cultural factors play an important role in shaping the migration patterns and trends of men and women, and the scholarship that interprets these trends. Indeed, the literature on gender and migration is replete with examples of male migrants determining when and how to migrate, and women and children being swept along in the process, or brought to the host country once the male migrants have settled (Lee, 1966; Mincer, 1978). Mincer (1978) developed a theory of the 'tied mover' or 'tied stayer' where the migration decision rests on a determination of the net family costs and benefits of migration; those who stay or move do so based on the joint calculus of family as opposed to private or individual benefit. It was assumed that women were disproportionately 'tied movers' accompanying spouses and facing reduced labour market options as a result of their joint migration decision (Baker and Benjamin, 1997; Jacobsen and Levin, 1997). Such analyses subordinate women's roles in the migration decision and contribute to their invisibility as migrants who exercise both agency and choice.

The literature on migration in Haiti tends to emphasize similar dichotomies of power and agency for male and female migrants. There are a variety of explanations for the general belief that women do not initiate migration in Haiti and are not leaders in the migration process. Firstly, scholarship which does not consider that women might be protagonists in the migration decision is unlikely to find that they are. Secondly, the analysis of migration is beset by problems of inadequate data and imperfect record-keeping by nation states. Thirdly, the processes and filtering mechanisms through which women seek exit and obtain entry into host countries are uniquely gendered, de-emphasizing women's agency and magnifying their dependency. It appears that the system through which women pass as they seek and

obtain entry to host nations is not impartial in the way that women migrants are registered and subsequently admitted as immigrants.

Broadly speaking there are two trends reported in the literature that characterize population movements in Haiti: rising rural–urban migration and massive out-migration to the US, Canada and the Caribbean. These population flows are differently composed of men and women and have affected men and women in distinct forms. Internal migration in Haiti is dominated by women (twice as many women as men migrate from rural to urban areas), whereas cross-border migration is disproportionately a male phenomenon (Akman, 1992; Laguerre, 1998). Men are much more likely to migrate seasonally or semi-permanently to the Dominican Republic, seeking employment on plantations and farms harvesting sugar cane and bananas (CARE, 1997a, 1997b).[2] Women tend to migrate to urban areas looking for work as domestic employees or in export processing zones.[3]

The portrayal of internal migration as distinct from that of out-migration fails to emphasize commonalities in the impact on sending households: the net effect on household formation is to contribute to rising rates of female-headed and female-maintained households throughout Haiti. Estimates in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) suggest that 48 per cent of urban and 33 per cent of rural households are headed by women (DHS, 1994). According to census data for 1981, approximately 44 per cent of all urban households were female-headed and 26 per cent of all rural households were female-headed in that year (IHSI, 1982). The percentage of female-headed households thus increased dramatically in rural areas between 1981 and 1994. Internal and international labour migration in Haiti has led women to play an increasingly prominent role in agriculture — a sector where returns are declining and yields are falling. In 1981, women made up 30 per cent of the agricultural labour force (IHSI, 1982); by 1999, this figure had risen to a little over 37 per cent (Charmes, 2000). The few available data indicate that poverty is being feminized in rural areas (Anglade, 1986; Correia, 1998; Gammage and Jumelle, 2000). Although the feminization of poverty and agricultural production places increased burdens upon women as workers and care-providers, it has also given rise to a new political consciousness as women emerge at the forefront of political

2. There is evidence that these patterns are changing from new studies which seek to explore the gender dimensions of migration. A recent study of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic reports, ‘We are entering a new process, that of the feminization of Haitian migration’ (IOM/FLACSO, 2003).

3. Khoo et al. (1985) observe a similar dynamic in their study of rural–urban migration. They note that the causes and consequences of female migration appear to be different from those of male migration because of the different economic and social roles that women fulfil. They also find distinct patterns of age- and sex-selective migration with women disproportionately migrating to the cities in Latin America, Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

movements in the countryside and the city (Bell, 2001; Charles, 1990, 1995, 2000; Racine, 1999).

A scholarship that fails to emphasize the commonalities of the impact of internal and international migration in Haiti upon shifting gender roles and responsibilities and household formation, contributes to a de-emphasis of the role of women in the migration process. Some studies of international migration, however, do consider gendered patterns and processes. Laguerre (1998) contends that international migration is gender differentiated at different points in time. Laguerre outlines a cycle of migration using an analysis of the links between Haitian households and subsidiary households in New York city. The initial phase in Laguerre's migration cycle is characterized by the out-migration of a working-age male. The successful migrant establishes a subsidiary household in the host country, finding employment and beginning to send remittances back to the core household in Haiti. The flow of remittances can then be used to secure the migration of other household members. As the migrants establish themselves in the host country, those who are able to obtain documents do so and are likely to bring other household members over under family reunification programmes. According to Laguerre, the initial phases of out-migration are disproportionately male, and the later phases of documented migration are dominated by women (Laguerre, 1998).[4] Finkel's harrowing account of a boat full of aspiring migrants to the US emphasizes that the majority of those willing to take the risk and set sail for US shores were men (Finkel, 2000). Of the forty-six people aboard the boat, only five were women. The boat was intercepted at sea after only two days of sailing. All on board were suffering from dehydration and exhaustion, several were in a critical condition and had to be hospitalized. All the migrants were placed in a detention centre on Great Inagua Island in the Bahamas. None of the potential migrants qualified for refugee status and all were returned to Port-au-Prince (ibid.).

The processes and filtering mechanisms by which women seek exit and through which they obtain documented and undocumented entry to the host country are also uniquely gendered. The fact that more Haitian men than women attempt undocumented passage to the US may be indicative of the risks involved in the emigration decision, the comparatively high cost of migration, and those socio-cultural expectations about women's role as care-givers and nurturers that restrict their mobility and relocation. Similarly, the data that we have on documented entry and asylum petitions in the US obscure the role of women as agents and actors who exercise volition

4. This finding parallels the Mexican experience which reveals distinct gendered trends in migration patterns and flows with male migrants dominating undocumented flows and women being disproportionately represented among new legal immigrants (Bustamante et al., 1998).

in the migration decision, or whose political activity has exposed them to risk and persecution in their home country. The fact that the majority of women migrants enter the United States on reunification visas or accompanying a male partner has contributed to their invisibility and the archetype of the adjunctive wife/daughter or dependant swept along in a process largely without agency. The US 2000 census reports that women comprise approximately 50 per cent of the foreign-born population resident in the US and a little more than 55 per cent of all immigrants admitted in 1999. In 1999, women made up 56 per cent of all Haitian immigrants admitted into the US. Table 1 shows that slightly more male than female migrants from all countries are single when they immigrate to the US,[5] whereas women who immigrate to the US are more likely to be (or to have been) married.[6]

At the beginning of the fiscal year 1999, there were 14,823 Haitians with asylum cases pending with the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS, 1999), of whom slightly less than 40 per cent were women. Data on asylum granted indicate that men appear to outnumber women as applicants for and recipients of asylum in the US (Human Rights Watch, 1997; see also Table 2). According to Marleine Bastien, director of *Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami*, a Haitian rights advocacy group in Miami:

> The system itself is biased against women applicants for asylum — largely because of the stereotype that women are not political activists. This is compounded by the fact that many of women's political activities in Haiti were a natural extension of their caring and household responsibilities: preparing food for the Lavalas movement, organizing in the market place, bringing together other women in the fields. Where women were excluded from the decision-making process by the movement, they were not deemed to be political activists by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the United States. Nonetheless they were targeted as political activists in Haiti and repressed, murdered and tortured for their political involvement. (Interview, 3 April 2002)

Evidence presented by Human Rights Watch (1997) would also support Marleine Bastien's claim that women are less likely to apply for and receive asylum in the US. In February 1994, the US Embassy's refugee co-ordinator

Table 1. Immigrants to the United States in 1999, by Marital Status and Sex (%)

	Total	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Unknown
Male	44.9	51.3	41.1	13.3	33.6	30.6	43.7
Female	55.1	48.6	58.8	86.6	66.3	69.4	53.6

Source: INS (1999: Table 13).

5. Unfortunately, a gender breakdown of visa categories and civil status is not available for each country. These figures are aggregates for all migrants entering the United States.
6. The categories of civil status used in the Table are difficult to apply to immigrants from countries such as Haiti where unions are complex and accompaniment can take many forms (Lowenthal, 1984).

Table 2. Asylum Granted by Gender, 1991–2000 (%)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Men	100.00	81.71	78.01	77.60	70.71	69.19	61.43	60.06	60.63	68.35
Women	0.00	18.29	21.99	22.40	29.29	30.81	38.57	39.94	39.38	31.65

Source: Author's calculations using raw data from the Department of Justice (Washington, DC).

in Port-au-Prince estimated that only 25 per cent of the principal applicants for asylum were women. Human Rights Watch documented the case of a Haitian woman who was granted asylum by the US Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) in May 1993. The BIA ruled that, after being gang-raped by three soldiers who broke into her home and identified her as an Aristide supporter, she had demonstrated a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of her political opinion because she had 'suffered grievous harm in direct retaliation for her support of and activities on behalf of Aristide' (Human Rights Watch, 1997). This case set an unheard-of precedent, furthering the cause of women's human rights and their rights as migrants seeking asylum in the United States. Human Rights Watch notes: 'This is the first BIA decision that explicitly recognizes rape as a form of grievous harm that could be imposed in retaliation for political activities. In May 1995, BIA formally designated the case as a binding precedent for future asylum adjudication and thus officially acknowledged that women may suffer persecution in the form of rape' (ibid.: 2).

Because of the inadequacy of the data on Haitian immigration to major host nations such as the US and Canada, and given the absence of a comprehensive household survey in Haiti, it is difficult to say categorically who is migrating and when they leave. Furthermore, the gendered nature of the process by which individuals seek and obtain entry to host nations, and through which their entry is officially recorded, obscures the role that women play as protagonists in the migration decision. It is clear from the fragments of information that are available, however, that women are exercising the option of exit and leaving rural communities to go to the cities or emigrating from Haiti in the hope of gaining residence abroad.

LOYALTY: SENDING REMITTANCES HOME AND CHANGING THE FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

While there are many motivations for migration, among these the goal of obtaining employment and being able to send remittances back to the home country features prominently in the life stories of Haitian migrants (Finkel, 2000; Glick-Schiller and Fouron, 1999; Lundahl, 1992). For the sending family, remittances are often the hoped-for product of an extremely costly investment. Lundahl (1992: 396) notes that 'there should be no doubt that

emigration has become one of the most important, perhaps even *the* most important social insurance mechanism in contemporary Haiti'. Estimates of the amount of remittances that enter the Haitian economy vary substantially, between US$ 400 million and US$ 810 million (IDB, 2001; Laguerre, 1998; Orozco, 2002; World Bank News, 1997). The remittances are sent through a variety of channels and mechanisms using transfer companies that have been established by Haitian Americans in the US, such as ZIN in Boston, HATREXCO and CAM in New York, and Boby Express in Miami; or through banks such as Western Union,[7] the Banque Haitienne de Développement, and FONKOZE; or through courier companies.

These financial flows can be seen as an expression of loyalty to family members and friends and to the preservation of a hope that the migrant might one day return home. Glick-Schiller and Fouron (1999) report the case of Yvette, a fifty-five year-old Haitian immigrant to the US who had spent thirteen years living outside of Haiti. Yvette sent remittances back home regularly to family and friends, supporting a broad network of people in Haiti. Although Yvette had taken US citizenship, she planned to retire to Haiti: taking citizenship was not an attempt to sever relations with Haiti, but to guarantee that she might return with a steady and secure income from her Social Security contributions that would support her in her retirement in Haiti. Similarly, Kerner (1991) quotes another Haitian woman resident in the US:

> My husband is dead, it's been 8 years since he died, and I'm taking care of bills here and in Haiti... I'll give you an example: If I quit my job now, what would I do for the bills here and in Haiti? Because once the month starts, in 15 days, they start watching the mail to see when I am sending the money. Well, I can tell you, if I leave my job, my whole family would die, because I'm the one keeping them afloat. (Kerner, 1991: 4, cited in Basch et al., 1994: 164).

Remittances clearly provide insurance for poor households to withstand income shocks. As an insurance mechanism they also appear to be more important for female-headed and female-maintained households in sending and receiving communities. A recent survey of 1,166 households in the West and Central Plateau region reports that 6 per cent of female-headed households receive remittances as compared with 4 per cent of male-headed households (see Table 3). These remittances make up approximately 43 per cent of total household income for female-headed households and 29 per cent of total household income for male-headed households receiving remittances.[8] Although the receipt of remittances is low in this rural sample (approximately 5 per cent of all households reported receiving cash

7. Currently Western Union has over 70 agents operating in more than 208 separate locations in Haiti (http://www.westernunion.com/caribbean/index, accessed January 2004).
8. The average annual receipt of remittances was 13,459 *gourdes* for female-headed households and 6,726 *gourdes* for male-headed households. In 1996, the official exchange rate was US$1 = 15 *gourdes*. The unofficial rate was higher, fluctuating at around US$1 = 240 *gourdes*.

Table 3. Characteristics of Households Receiving Remittances and Gifts in the West and Central Plateau

Characteristics	**Male-Headed Households (%)**	**Female-Headed Households (%)**	**Difference of Means** $H_0 : \overline{x_m} - \overline{x_f} = 0$ $H_1 : \overline{x_m} - \overline{x_f} < 0$
Receiving remittances	4.10	6.25	$t = -1.57$, H_1:0.05
Remittances as a percentage of total household income	29.18	43.21	$t = -1.83$, H_1:0.03
Receiving gifts	26.42	60.71	$t = -11.64$, H_1:0.00
Gifts as a percentage of total household income	4.61	19.19	$t = -11.46$, H_1:0.00
Current or past migrants	26.50	26.41	$t = -0.03$, H_1:0.51
Poor[a]	74.58	80.42	$t = -2.13$, H_1:0.02
Extremely poor[a]	58.80	67.66	$t = -2.82$, H_1:0.002

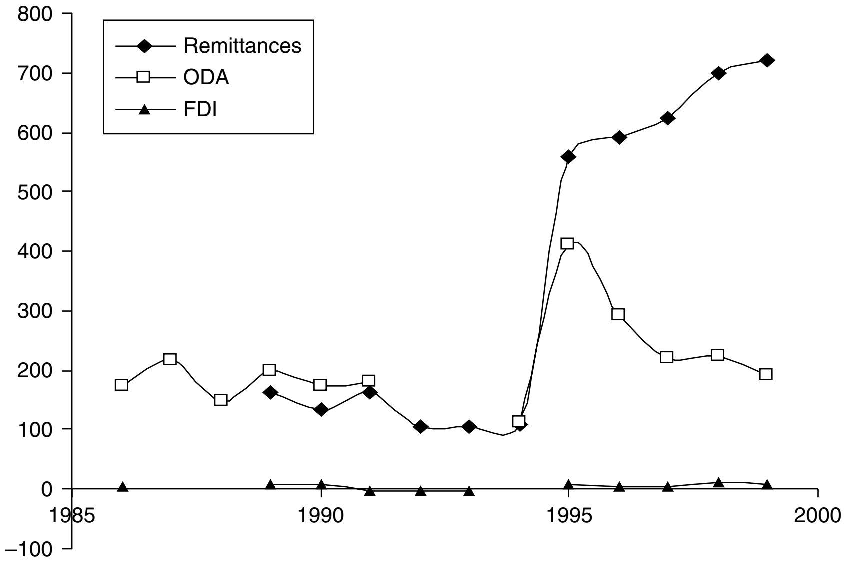
Note: [a] Poverty and extreme poverty are defined at 3,321 *gourdes* and 2,384 *gourdes* per person per year respectively, using the World Bank definitions applied in Wiens and Sobrado (1998).
Source: Author's analysis of ADRA Household Survey (1995).

remittances) 36 per cent of all households reported receiving gifts as regular contributions from family members and extended kin no longer in the household or the community. Gifts disproportionately accrued to female-headed households in this sample, with just over 61 per cent of all female-headed households receiving gifts. These gifts were estimated as being equivalent to 19 per cent of the total household income for female-headed households. For male-headed households, gifts were valued at less than 5 per cent of total household income. Although not all gifts are transnational, the majority of these gifts originated from members of extended family networks and fictive kin[9] with ties to migrants in the city and abroad.

Although the evidence suggests that the majority of households in receipt of remittances in Haiti are urban, international migrants are increasingly from rural areas. Data from the 1990 and 2000 US Census indicate that, over time, fewer Haitian immigrants to the US have a high school degree and that the proportion of those with more than a high school degree is also declining (Catanese, 1999; US Census, 2000). This is consistent with a greater proportion of rural migrants among those seeking and gaining entry into the US. In 1994, a rural survey financed by CARE in the north-west of Haiti[10] found that almost 25 per cent of the survey respondents reported receiving remittances from family members who had emigrated

9. Fictive kin are extrahousehold 'family' members bound by virtue of constructed ritual or social ties such as co-parents, god-parents, or patrons. Typically the association is expressed in terms of a familial relationship — *marèn* (godmother), *komè* (co-mother).
10. The survey was conducted in Anse Rouge, Baie de Henne, Basin Bleu, Port de Paiz, Mole Sant Nicolas, Jean Rabel and Bombardopolis.

Figure 2. Capital Inflows to Haiti



Sources: IHSI (1998); IMF (1985–99, 1999a, 1999b); World Bank (1999).

(CARE, 1997a).[11] These relatives sent average annual remittances of a little over 1,900 *gourdes* or US$ 119 (ibid.). This figure corresponds to a little over half of the average annual income reported for households surveyed in the northwest. Female-headed households and households headed by married women with absent husbands received substantially more remittances in cash and kind than male-headed households (ibid.). For many households, the ability to capture remittances is key to diversifying income and lifting these households out of poverty (CARE, 1997b; Gammage and Jumelle, 2000).

Remittances to Haiti are changing the landscape of capital flows, securing household incomes, funding home-town associations and grassroots organizations and changing financial and social institutions. Figure 2 reveals that between 1989 and 1991, estimated remittances were on a par with official development assistance. Subsequent estimates of remittance inflows indicate that remittances may be more than threefold the foreign currency receipts from overseas aid and from exports (fob) (Orozco, 2002; World Bank, 2002). NGOs such as FONKOZE and national financial organizations such as the Banque Haïtienne de Développement have created innovative and low cost mechanisms for capturing and channelling migrant remittances to their family

11. This figure declined between 1994 and 1996 from 25 per cent to 19 per cent (CARE, 1997b).

members. FONKOZE is an economic alliance of peasant organizations, women's collectives, co-operatives, religious groups and credit unions. It has an explicit social and political mission to promote democratic and transparent governance, upholding the rights of its citizenry and according full participation of civil society organizations. As part of its banking and financial services, FONKOZE transfers remittances from the US to Haiti through the City National Bank of New Jersey. FONKOZE has eighteen branch offices in every department in Haiti that provide savings accounts, currency exchanges, literacy training and business development funds and services. It maintains a free-phone number to allow Haitians to deposit money and recipients to collect their remittances in their home department; it charges a flat fee of US$ 10 for this service irrespective of the quantity of funds transferred, but requires the beneficiaries of remitting migrants to open an account with a minimum deposit of US$ 4. By 2000, FONKOZE was providing 12,899 savings accounts for those who previously had no bank account, many of them in rural areas. Funds are usually available the same day, or within twenty-four hours of receipt of the remittances in the City National Bank of New Jersey. Women and men remit through FONKOZE in roughly equal proportions, sending an average of between US$ 150 and US$ 200 a month. Sister parishes and small businesses also use the FONKOZE remittance service: parishes in New York, New Jersey and Florida typically send between US$ 500 and US$ 1,000 a month and transnational businesses, mostly owned by Haitians, send between US$ 1,000 and US$ 1,500 a month.[12]

In contrast, the Banque Haïtienne de Développement (BHD) is a commercial, for-profit bank and a mortgage agency with 51 per cent of its capital owned by co-operatives and credit unions in Haiti.[13] The BHD provides a similar transfer service to remitters charging 10 per cent of the total transfer in fees, of which 5 per cent remains with the collecting branch and 5 per cent goes to the distributing branch. Randolph Voyard of the BHD estimates that of the total amount remitted to Haiti, 20 per cent is channelled through national banks, 50 per cent goes through commercial transfer houses such as Western Union, and the rest goes through NGOs, informal channels and personal couriers.[14]

As remittance flows increase, new opportunities are opening for the impoverished sectors as well as for the private sector, creating a burgeoning formal and informal financial apparatus that transfers, exchanges and deposits dollar remittances. Currently, there are ten locally incorporated banks (Promobank, Unibank, Banque de l'Union Haitienne, Sogebank, Socabank, Inter-Continental, Capital Bank and the very small Banque Industrielle et Commerciale d'Haiti) and two foreign banks (Bank of

12. Interview with the customer service of FONKOZE in the United States, 5 March 2002.
13. No individual can own more than 10 per cent of the bank's capital.
14. Randolph Voyard, presentation at an Inter American Development Bank conference on the productive use of remittances (March 2001).

Nova Scotia and Citibank) in operation in Haiti. There are also two state banks (Banque Populaire Haitienne and Banque Nationale de Credit), a private development finance institution (SOFIDES), and two mortgage banks (BCI and Sogebel). Seven of these Haitian banks list a further thirteen separate US banks as their correspondent organizations for the transfer of funds to Haiti, creating a lattice of financial institutions in Haiti that channel remittances to family and friends of migrants.

Remittances do more than subsidize consumption (Woodson and Schrag-James, 1997; World Bank, 1998a, 1998b). Those households in receipt of remittances in the West and Central Plateau region of Haiti were more likely to operate a microenterprise or undertake petty trade. FONKOZE reports that remittances are often used for small business transactions and to purchase assets for micro-enterprises.[15] Women form approximately 85 per cent of the total portfolio of beneficiaries of the small loan programme operated by FONKOZE. Many of these women are *ti marchand* or small merchants whose businesses have grown through the receipt of remittance capital. These women refer friends and family to the FONKOZE remittance service in the US to transfer some of their earnings and make transnational investments. Increasingly, the *ti marchand* supported through small credit loans from FONKOZE are transnational both in their receipt of remittances and through their purchase of goods and inventory in the Dominican Republic, Miami, Panamá and the Bahamas.[16]

Although few data are available on men and women who remit to Haiti, it is obvious that both do so frequently and that the amounts sent are not inconsequential. DeWind (1987) found that slightly more than 90 per cent of a sample of 497 Haitians in New York sent remittances to Haiti.[17]

Table 4. Annual Remittances Sent by Haitians in New York, 1987, US Dollars

	Men	**Women**
Head of Household	1,479.18	1,698.91
Non-Household Head	1,185.86	1,056.95
Total	1,308.65	1,522.77

Source: Reproduced from DeWind (1987).

15. This finding is similar to that by Woodruff and Zenteno (2001) who conclude from their analysis of over 6000 small firms in urban Mexico that remittances made up more than 20 per cent of the capital invested in microenterprises.
16. Interview with Anne Hastings, FONKOZE Haiti (6 March 2002).
17. It is interesting to note that this report was commissioned by Citibank, clearly as a precursor to entering the remittance arena in Haiti and capturing some of the profits from remittance transfers.

Furthermore, DeWind reported in the same study that Haitian women sent larger amounts of money than Haitian men, with women heading female-headed households sending the largest amounts of remittances (see Table 4). That these remittance flows may be more important for female-headed and female-maintained households emphasizes the importance of a gender analysis that describes the distinct roles and characteristics of men and women engaged in transnational activities and the households receiving remittances. The fact that female heads of household send substantially more remittances to Haiti may reflect traditional gender preferences and gender roles in household maintenance documented widely in the development literature. A growing body of literature confirms that resources in the hands of women are more likely to be channelled towards household expenditures that secure the welfare and well-being of other family members (Thomas, 1990, 1997). That these preferences and responsibilities for household maintenance persist over distance and time may be a testament to the enduring nature of gender relations where women are primarily responsible for household maintenance and provisioning in Haiti.

VOICE: MIGRATION AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Migration and transnationalism are redefining the polity in Haiti, as the impact of the diaspora has consequences for those elites at the privileged core attempting to govern, manage or profit from the diaspora. The Haitian diaspora is redefining the political role and representation of migrants in both the US and Canada, conferring leverage upon them and providing opportunities for organization in support of democratizing forces in Haiti. New alliances are being built between North America and Haiti, providing an emerging political platform for cross-border organizing, challenging a narrow locational definition of the nation state, providing funds and generating new power bases for political movements in the host and home country (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1999). Women are emerging as key protagonists in the diaspora movement and among grassroots as well as elite organizations struggling for democracy in Haiti (Charles, 1990, 1994).

A factor that has contributed greatly to the prominent role played by Haitian organizations abroad in the political struggle for democracy is the formal extension of the borders of the nation-state to include transmigrant populations (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Itzigsohn, 2000). In 1991, President Aristide designated the Haitian diaspora the Tenth Department of Haiti adding to the nine departments within the national boundaries. Haitian migrants were thus able to retain a formal right to vote, lobby, demonstrate, run for political office and fund political campaigns. Glick Schiller et al. (1995: 58) describe the implication of this development: 'By including Haitians in whatever country that they have settled as part of the Haitian nation-state Aristide contributed to a new construction of the postcolonial

nation-state. In this construction of Haiti as a borderless state, Haitian territory becomes a social space that may exist within legal boundaries of many nation states'. In this act, migrants were constituted as part of the polity, formalizing the role that they would play in defining the emerging democracy and leveraging political outcomes in Haiti and in the host country.

Without a doubt, migration and transnational processes have had significant impacts upon women's political consciousness and organizing in Haiti. Although internal migration may be different in character from out-migration, it has played a significant role in forming and reforming the political identities of women in Haiti. The net effect of a rural–urban exodus of women has been the feminization of an urban proletariat that has been at the forefront of the democracy movement in Haiti (Charles, 1995, 2000; Racine, 1999). Similarly, the feminization of agriculture and the displacement of male income earners from the countryside has changed economic roles and may also have contributed to the emergence of rural women as a political force in Haiti. Rural peasant women played a crucial role in the *Mouvman Peyizan Papay* (MPP) movement (N'Zengou-Tayo, 1998): where in 1980 there was one autonomous MPP women's group, in 1991 there were 400 (Charles, 1995). This grassroots organizing effort has mobilized rural workers to lobby for agricultural and economic interests, equitable distribution of resources, equal rights, family planning, and political power.

Internal labour migration has given rise to the feminization of an urban proletariat in the assembly industry. Assembly manufacture became a focal point for political activism to improve terms and conditions of employment, inspiring creative north–south alliances formed by coalitions of activists, labour unions and concerned consumers (Anner, 1998; NLC, 1996). These alliances have become a conduit for information about working conditions in the US and Haiti, and provide an opportunity for politicization in both realms. Transnational activism around the terms and conditions of employment in the assembly sector in Haiti has been vocal and strident. In the US, the National Labor Committee (NLC) has provided a focal point for this organization, concentrating efforts on the Walt Disney Company in Haiti: 'Haitian workers sewing Pocahontas and Mickey Mouse pajamas and other garments for export to the US are forced to endure starvation wages, are robbed of benefits and routinely face inhuman production speed-ups, forced overtime, filthy working conditions and gross sexual abuse' (NLC, 1996: 1).

Grassroots organizations such as *Batay Ouvriye* were able to successfully negotiate improvements in working conditions in a number of plants, most noticeably at Megatex, a major contractor with the Disney corporation (Campaign for Labor Rights, 1998). Unfortunately, the Disney corporation eventually closed down its production in Haiti, stating that: 'sales of the [...] products manufactured in these facilities [had] declined sharply' (*Chicago Tribune*, cited in Anner, 1998: 18). Although this result was not what had been hoped for, the campaign and the grassroots support among Haitian workers in the assembly sector has had a lasting effect on the institutions

that oversee employment conditions. Pressure from the coalition of workers and overseas activists prompted a response by the private sector to address poor working conditions in their factories.[18] The Assembly Industry of Haiti (IDAH) in conjunction with the Haitian Manufacturers' Association (ADIH) developed a code of ethics and business conduct that attempted to address the allegations levelled against the industry and required their membership to comply with labour laws governing hiring practices, minimum wage statutes, benefits rights, the right to organize and the maintenance of adequate health and safety standards (Rourk et al., 1998). Significant concerns remain about incentives to fulfil these mandates, and there is little evidence that the terms and conditions of employment in this sector have actually improved (Justice Economique, 1998). The privatization of state cement factories has called attention to violations of worker rights (ibid.). Yet the cross-border alliances continue to thrive and the role of national and international NGOs in defining a campaign of solidarity and channelling funds to grassroots organizations remains an important feature of globalization that shapes the political terrain in which capitalist labour relations are defined in Haiti.

The diaspora of Haitians throughout the Caribbean and North America, and the distinct choices made by men and women migrants, have moulded the contours of the political map in Haiti. The growth of NGOs within the diaspora, such as the National Coalition for Haitian Rights, the Haitian Dialogue, the Haitian American Network, the National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians, the Union of Patriotic Haitian Women in New York, the *Asosiyasyon Fanm Ayisyen* in Boston and Miami, and the Rally of Haitian Women in Canada, are important examples. These organizations provide services to Haitian immigrants in their host countries and channel funds and support to partner organizations in Haiti. Groups such as the *Lambi* Fund of Haiti, which supports women entrepreneurs and women's grassroots organizations, and *Solidarite Fanm Ayisyen* (SOFA), have representation in Haiti and the US. Both the *Lambi* Fund and SOFA have worked hard to address women's needs and concerns and raise their profile on the national agenda.

The role of women and women's NGOs in particular has been a salient factor in the formation of contemporary Haitian civil society and the moves toward democratization. Middle class women first organized for women's civil rights with *La Ligue Feminine d'Action Sociale* (Women's League for Social Action) in 1934, to campaign for higher education access and voting rights. In 1950, they obtained the right to vote. During the Duvalier period, this organization and other elements within the Haitian women's movement

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18. Groups such as the *Central Autonome des Travailleurs Haitiens* (CATH), *Batay Ouvriye* and *Plateforme Haïtienne de Plaidoyer pour un Développement Alternatif* (PAPDA) were active in this alliance (Justice Economique, 1998).

were targeted by repressive forces of the *tonton macoute* and were forced underground. Many of the leaders of the women's movement went into exile, while the remaining activists channelled their efforts through charitable groups in an attempt to avoid persecution. In exile these women did not cease to be politically active. The North American and European Haitian diaspora provided an unprecedented and prominent space for political organizing and, in the 1960s and 1970s, the diaspora proved to be extremely important for women's consciousness-raising. The influence of the North American second-wave feminist movement, as well as the experience of racism in European and American life, helped to shape the dimensions of a feminist consciousness among Haitian immigrants that was disseminated directly and indirectly back to Haiti (Charles, 1995; Laguerre, 1998). There are strong links, for example, between Haitian women organizing in North America and the fall of Duvalier and the move toward democracy (Charles, 1995).

Diaspora immigrants returning to Haiti were prominent participants in the social movements for democratic change in the 1980s. On 3 April 1986, 30,000 women marched in Port-au-Prince championing the cause of democracy and showing solidarity with the popular democratic movement. These organizations received substantial support from diaspora groups as well as from newly formed national NGOs such as ENFOFANM, *Kay Fanm* and the *Centre de Promotion de Femmes Ouvrieres*. The ruthless efforts of the Duvalier and later the Cédras regimes to effectively depoliticize the Haiti majority by repressing and assaulting representatives of all organizations for democratic change, had the reverse effect. As a result of being targeted as threatening subjects, Haitian women (and Haitian citizens generally) were instead politicized in an unprecedented fashion. Ironically, after generations of silence and invisibility as non-political subjects, it was the repression meted out by the Duvalier and Cédras governments that raised feminist consciousness.

Human rights abuses against women increased sharply under the Cédras Regime (1991–94) and rape, which had been infrequently reported, became much more common (Fuller, 1999; Rey, 1999; UNICEF, 1996). Several indigenous human rights groups began to offer refuge and direct assistance to victims of abuse and one national group (Kay Fanm) opened a safe-house for women. In March 1993, despite intimidation by the state, women's human rights groups bravely organized a three-day conference on violence against women — *Premier Rencontre Nationale sur la Violence Faite aux Femmes* (Bell, 2001; Fuller, 1999). After the return of Aristide, increased pressures from this movement advocated the creation of a Women's Government Ministry, and a special Commission on Violence Against Women mandated, among other things, to hold the Cédras regime personnel accountable for its many abuses against women.

The role of the diaspora community was significant in supporting the movement to address violence against women in Haiti. In September 1994, testimony given by victims and witnesses at a 'popular tribunal' in Montreal

provided bleak but important witness for a targeted campaign of mass rape and terror implicating the highest levels of the military junta in Haiti (Rey, 1999). Affidavits presented at the tribunal and later filed with the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington were particularly important in providing testimony that would elevate concerns about violence against women in Haiti to a prominent position on the national and international agenda (Human Rights Watch, 1995; Ministère Nationale de la Justice de la République d'Haiti, 1997). Partly in reaction to the government's continued failure to implement recommendations from the special Commission, women's organizations held an International Tribunal Against Violence Against Women in Haiti in November 1997, at which international human rights groups, local women's organizations and representatives of the Haitian Ministry converged to investigate, hear testimony and make legislative recommendations regarding women's human rights abuses.

The panel of judges at the Tribunal was drawn from international experts and representatives of Haitian human rights groups and made unprecedented recommendations. The panel called for the government to work with a coalition of women's organizations to prepare a law for the elimination of all forms of violence against women. It also recommended: legalizing abortion in cases of rape, incest and danger to the woman's health; decriminalizing adultery and introducing it into the civil code as a foundation for divorce proceedings; amending the Civil Code to recognize common-law marriage; establishing a police unit composed of women officers to receive complaints and conduct investigations on anti-woman violence; measures to protect plaintiffs and witnesses in trials; establishing shelters for women who are victims of violence or other problems; and adoption by schools of programmes that incorporate principles of non-sexist education, and education on human rights, where the rights of women are recognized as human rights (Fuller, 1999).

While the transnational dimension has proven to be critical to the advancement of the cause of Haitian feminism and human rights in Haiti, the spaces created and exploded by immigration also produce a variety of oppositional consciousness for women that makes the process and the place of diaspora very important to understand. How someone leaves, with what resources, from what class, and under what circumstances shapes their role in the diaspora, their relationship to the home country, and the political and economic leverage that they are likely to exercise. Tensions between transnational coalitions and indigenous organizations may be articulated in positions on current policy in the host country, or in ongoing dialogues between donor groups, diaspora organizations and civil society in Haiti. The Haitian American Community Action Network was inaugurated in February 1997 at St Jerome's Church in Flatbush, New York, and brought together over 300 Haitians, Haitian-Americans and NGOs from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Chicago, California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania

and Florida. The conference was described as an effort to develop common ground, and to strengthen Haitians' ability to improve their communities and gain a more powerful voice in the decisions that affect their lives in the US. For a number of the attending organizations, this implied a substantial shift in orientation away from a diaspora organization focused primarily on the welfare of Haitians in Haiti, to an organization that also actively embraced a focus on the welfare of Haitians as citizens and residents of the US. As diaspora organizations refine their political strategies within the host countries and concentrate upon incorporating their members into the polity of the host countries, such tensions naturally emerge:

> For a long time, we have been on the outside, playing Haitian politics ... We're behind, but it is not too late. (Tatiana Wah, Chairwoman, Haitian American Alliance, in *New York Times*, 1998)
>
> We have a community that in the past has lived on the margins. Now we are starting to focus on our lives here and how everything affects us. (Netlyn Bernard-Samedy, in *New York Times*, 1998)

Despite the success in managing dual nationalities and engaging in bi-local political activism, some migrants and transmigrants may never feel entirely welcome in the host country. The focus of their political activism maintains ties to the home country and brings with it many contradictions. For some the disapora movement and its focus may be insufficiently honed to achieve real gains in Haiti. Myriam Merlet, a feminist activist and academician in Haiti, reports:

> I chose to be a Haitian woman. I couldn't see myself being forever a nigger in the United States, an immigrant in Canada, or a stranger in Europe. I felt the need to be part of something. This couldn't be the black cause in the United States or the immigration cause in Canada. It could only be the cause of the Haitian people. Thus, I decided to return to Haiti. (Myriam Merlet, interviewed in Bell, 2001: 217)

Migration and the contradictions thrown up by the migrant experience provide a fertile ground for reflection on aspects of those ethnic and national traditions that collide with or reinforce gender stereotypes and archetypes of agency and submission. The exercise of voice through exit, and as an expression of loyalty, is clearly a powerful and contradictory force. Voice has been taken by Haitian women exercising their diasporic citizenship and significant change has flourished in Haiti as a result. Immigration law has been challenged in host nations, and the rule of law in Haiti has been expanded and refined to embrace gender concerns. A Women's Ministry has been inaugurated and police and judicial procedures have been modified to identify and prosecute gender-based violence. Yet, tensions remain: the Tenth Department is still not recognized constitutionally, and those Haitians who take the citizenship of foreign nations cannot vote simultaneously in their home and host country. The relationship between the diaspora and the domestic polity is frequently uneasy and conflictual. Democracy has yet to triumph in Haiti and the removal of Aristide leaves the interim government embattled and the country beset by violence.

CONCLUSION

Migration as exit is a response to economic collapse, and a force that has shaped the dictates of policy in Haiti over the last two decades. The Haitian diaspora has also changed the political landscape within the host countries. The recourse to exit and the particular impact of exit upon women in Haiti are manifest in gendered patterns of migration, impoverishment and changing household structure. Exit has affected women in many ways. It has changed the composition of households and contributed to the rise of female-headed and female-maintained households in rural and urban areas; it has also contributed to the feminization of agriculture at a time when the returns to agriculture are decreasing. Consequently, women are emerging at the forefront of a national movement to secure land rights and redistribute wealth to the countryside. Loyalty expressed through the sending of remittances is changing the financial architecture in Haiti, spurring initiatives to supply financial services to those previously unprovided for, and prompting the engagement of international banks in the profitable business of transferring remittances from the diaspora community to recipients in Haiti. Remittances offer a minimal safety net to poor households that have no other opportunities to earn foreign exchange. The remission and receipt of remittances is uniquely gendered: remittances appear to be more important for female-headed households. Although both men and women send remittances, there is evidence that women may face greater incentives to remit — revealing, perhaps the constellation of pressures and the weight of socialization that enforce traditionally gendered roles of care provision and household maintenance. Yet while traditional roles are reinforced in some arena, they are challenged in others. Migration and transnationalism have redefined the locus of political activism among women in Haiti offering new channels for voice and giving rise to a new discourse on human rights and violence. While the exodus of men and women from the countryside and urban areas is not costless, benefits have been reaped by individuals and communities. Coalitions of activists have been galvanized in the diaspora and within Haiti into an activism that contributes to building an emerging, if beleaguered, democracy. These transnational actors and activists remain committed to furthering the advancement of human rights in Haiti and Haitian rights in the diaspora.

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