The Hidden Epidemic: Violence against Women in Haiti

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GLOSSARY

CEDAW	United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CHREPROF	Centre Haïtien de Recherches et d'Actions pour la Promotion Féminine (Haitian Center for Research and Action toward the Advancement of Women)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DHS	Demographic Health Surveys
EMMUS	Enquête Mortalité, Morbidité et Utilisation des Services (Survey on Morbidity, Mortality and Use of Services)
FHM	Family Health Ministries
HRW	Human Rights Watch
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MSF	Médicins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
MSPP	Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population (Ministry of Public Health and Population)
OAS	Organization of American States
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

PREFACE

In the summer of 2009, I spent two months in Léogâne, Haiti, a coastal community to the west of the country's capital, Port-au-Prince. I worked in a clinic called *Misyon Sante Fanmi Ayisyen*, or Family Health Ministries, that deals with women's reproductive health issues. My role in the clinic was to interview women about their greatest needs in the community, barriers to accessing health care, and future services they wanted to see so that FHM could better cater to the community needs. Throughout my fieldwork, I often wondered what the social status of women was in relation to men, for I have always been interested in gender positions of different cultures. Originally, I assumed women in Haiti were subjugated, because it is a low-income country; however, I rarely encountered an incident of male domination. Because my experience was largely characterized by interactions with females, they had a stronger presence in Haiti for me. Not only was I surrounded by women in the FHM clinic, but also the guesthouse in which I lived was headed by a woman. It was almost always females who worked at local convenience stores or as vendors on the streets. In addition, the principal of a nursing school that I often visited in Léogâne was an inspiring woman named Hilda. She was in charge of managing the nursing education of numerous students, many of whom were females, and organizing fairs to provide health education for the community. After encountering several strong female figures, I realized I needed to reevaluate my assumption about Haitian women.

In the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake, I noticed that violence against women was frequently mentioned in the media as one of the gravest consequences. Such circumstance worried me, because I knew the girls and women, who used to clean and cook at the guesthouse and more importantly whom I befriended, were living in tent cities since Léogâne stood at the

epicenter of the disaster. I researched whether violence against women was a newly arisen phenomenon and discovered that it was occurring even before the disaster, especially during times of political turmoil. This surprised me, because violence against women was not an issue that I had come across at all during my stay in Haiti. I wondered whether it was overshadowed by other seemingly more pressing problems, such as economic devastation or government corruption, or its stigmatizing nature prevented it from being brought up.

When Duke University's Franklin Humanities Institute initiated the Haiti Lab in the fall of 2010, it gave me an ideal opportunity to further investigate violence against women. The Haiti Lab, which promotes collaboration in Haiti-related research projects among undergraduates and faculty, non-faculty members, and graduate students with expert knowledge, created an independent study called "Rebuilding Women's Rights." In this course, I examined the prevalence of and risk factors for violence against women in Haiti. It laid the groundwork for my thesis through which I intended to analyze the context and the magnitude of the situation as a way of better comprehending a fragment of life as a woman in Haiti.

It often saddens me that most representations of Haiti focus on tragedy, whether it is political chaos, natural disasters, prevalence of disease or extreme poverty, for it perpetuates its image as a country of never-ending troubles. Although by writing on violence against women, I unintentionally contribute to associating the country with yet another problem, I hope to emphasize the idea that Haitian women are essential members of society, not merely victims, and that the problem of violence has specific characteristics and potential for strategic redress. Women's struggle for improved conditions has brought some progress, although slow and gradual, to their status in Haiti. Violence is one aspect of their situation in Haiti and by no means is it the only element that defines women's lives.
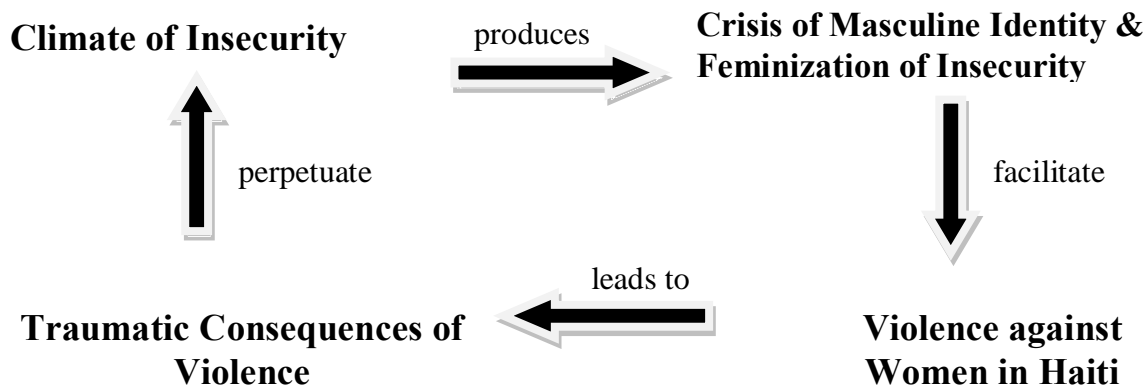
INTRODUCTION

Climate of Insecurity   produces →   **Crisis of Masculine Identity & Feminization of Insecurity**

↑ perpetuate   facilitate ↓

Traumatic Consequences of Violence   ← leads to   **Violence against Women in Haiti**

Figure 1: Cyclical relationship between violence against women and Haiti's climate of insecurity

Gender-based violence has emerged as a grave problem in post-earthquake settlement camps, because the disaster has exacerbated insecure living situations. It stripped women of housing and food securities and protection from crime as they were lumped into unsanitary, crowded areas alongside strangers. These conditions have exacerbated vulnerabilities to sexual abuse and forced many to perform sexual favors in exchange for basic necessities (Amnesty International, 2011). However, violence against women under such precarious circumstances is not new in Haiti. Although not to the extent prompted by the earthquake, insecure living conditions existed even before the disaster. In this paper, following MIT's medical and psychiatric anthropologist Erica James, I call this environment the climate of insecurity. It is defined as a context that makes daily survival uncertain and thus brings fear to life, as James says "ontological insecurity forms the ground of subjectivity when ruptures of routine social institutions are permanent" (2010, 133). In this context occurs violence against women in Haiti.

Figure 1 diagrams the structure of my argument, illustrating that Haiti's climate of insecurity is a violent environment composed of economic, social, and political instabilities, for

it imposes extremely challenging living conditions that give day-to-day life a vicious potentiality. As I explain later, this context produces the crisis of masculine identity and the feminization of insecurity that make women vulnerable, thereby facilitating violence against them. This problem in turn leads to traumatic consequences that perpetuate the climate by fostering an environment of insecurity and fear on the part of the victim. Thus, the climate of insecurity and violence against women are in a cyclical relationship in which one drives the other.

Because of the climate of insecurity, violence against women in Haiti presents an unconventional portrait. By unconventional, I mean that its characteristics run counter to the usual circumstance of violence in which the poorest and least educated members of the population form the majority of victims (Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana, 1612, 2002; Farmer, 1996). On the contrary, in Haiti not only do the poor suffer from violence, but so do educated and wealthy women, who are at least as vulnerable as their uneducated and destitute counterparts. As both uneducated and educated, poor and wealthy, and unemployed and employed women encounter abuse at the hands of men, it becomes difficult to determine what elements put women at greatest risk.

This unconventional scenario arises from the products of the climate of insecurity. Although it generates fear and uncertainty of survival for both genders, the climate affects men and women in varying manners. One impact on men is the crisis of masculine identity. The climate produces fear of not being able to carry out various social expectations of being a man, mainly being the breadwinner of the household to support the family, for they are thwarted by larger societal factors (Maternowska, 2006). This situation jeopardizes masculine identity and results in a crisis. Men respond by attempting to assert domination over women and use violence

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in the process. Thus, men who are most threatened are most likely to use violence, and this situation engenders vulnerabilities for many women. For females, the climate produces a feminization of insecurity. In Haitian society, many households are matrifocal, meaning that the domestic sphere revolves around the mothers, because men, who may be in de facto polygamous relationships and have duties towards multiple households, may be absent. Rather than empowering a woman, this phenomenon deepens the extent of insecurities as she becomes responsible for the survival of her family in addition to coping with the challenges in her own life. Such obligation in the midst of extreme poverty and rampant unemployment leads to the feminization of insecurity.

In Chapter One, I define violence against women and present the case of Haiti through several studies and surveys that have assessed prevalence rates and demographic factors giving an insight into risk factors. My frequently counterintuitive findings illustrate how the situation in Haiti does not fit the conventional framework of violence and how it differs from other Caribbean regions. In Chapter Two, I explore in detail the elements within Haiti's climate of insecurity that yield violence against women. These elements are classified into three categories: economic, social, and political. In Chapter Three, I discuss how the climate differentially impacts men and women, contributing to some singular aspects of violence against women in Haiti. In Chapter Four, I describe the traumatic consequences of violence that perpetuate the climate of insecurity for female victims. Facing violence magnifies the fear and insecurity in their lives because of the stigma and shame associated with being victimized. Finally, I conclude the paper by asserting that the climate of insecurity and violence against women in Haiti are intertwined in a reciprocally self-perpetuating relationship.

CHAPTER 1: A PORTRAIT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

I. Definition of Violence against Women

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations, 1994). Article 2 of the Declaration states that violence against women constitutes, but is not solely limited to, the following acts:

> a) "Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
>
> b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
>
> c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs." (Ibid.)

As applied to the situation in Haiti, we observe that violence against women occurs on all three of the described levels: physical, sexual and psychological. These categories of violence are not necessarily mutually exclusive, because the perpetrator may commit more than one type within the same incident. In this paper, there is an emphasis on sexual violence, because it has found to be the most common form of gender-based violence in Haiti. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that sexual violence can occur in conjunction with physical and/or psychological violence. Moreover, sexual violence not only brings about sexual harm but also

psychological harm, as the victim experiences trauma as a consequence, in addition to physical harm ranging from traumatic injury to sexually transmitted diseases.

I refer to violence against women in Haiti as an epidemic, because it has been occurring and continues to occur at a high rate, comparable to the rates in conflict zones despite the fact that Haiti is not at war. I describe violence against women as a hidden epidemic for a few reasons. First, rape, a form of sexual violence, has not always been condemned as an undesirable phenomenon. It was made illegal by the Haitian government only recently under the 2005 Decree on Sexual Assault. Before this criminalization, it was classified simply as a crime against morals, which acknowledges damage done to the victim's honor but disregarded the sexual, physical and/or psychological harm inflicted. Moreover, Haitian courts have considered the rape of a woman who is not a virgin to be less important on the grounds that her honor was not violated (Fuller, 1999). Due to the lack of recognized severity of the act, it is possible that many perpetrators got away with their crimes, and victims' suffering went largely unnoticed in society.

Secondly, many cases of violence are not reported, because women fear retaliation by their perpetrators, do not want to be stigmatized as victims of violence, or do not know to whom to turn for help, since police officers are known to be ineffective and indifferent towards the issue (HRW, 1994). The post-earthquake circumstance has received more recognition as the media began to draw international attention to violence against women in Haiti. Nevertheless, numerous cases still remain hidden for the same reasons and the epidemic exists in silence.

II. Vulnerabilities to Violence

Before investigating why violence against women occurs at a high rate in Haiti, it is necessary to understand the magnitude of the issue. This section describes characteristics that

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make women vulnerable to violence by presenting correlations between violence and various demographic elements. It first delineates the prevalence of violence and at-risk groups. Many study results from Haiti defy the conventional picture of violence against women in other LAC nations. As previously noted, it is expected that the poorest and least educated women are most vulnerable; however, the associations among education, wealth, employment status, and risk of violence are not so straightforward in Haiti. This makes the issue complicated and contradictory, and suggests simply educating and providing financial resources for women may not be the most appropriate way to combat gender-based violence in Haiti.

a. Prevalence of violence

Studies from various years by Haitian governmental agencies and research organizations have shown different results on rates of violence against women, ranging from one-third to significantly greater than half. A 2006 study by the Inter-American Development Bank in Haiti found that a third of women and girls reported having faced physical or sexual violence (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2010). In 1990, CHREPROF found 37% of its study participants to be victims of sexual violence only (Fuller, 1999). An appalling statistic reported by the World Bank shows that approximately 70% of all Haitian women have experienced some form of violence in their life (World Bank, 2002, viii).

Research on domestic violence produces more consistent results, demonstrating that between a fourth and a third of women have faced violence at home. The DHS administered by USAID investigated domestic violence[1] in nine different countries,[2] including Haiti, and reported

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[1] Domestic violence in this study encompassed physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Although domestic violence usually focuses on violence by a male partner, it can also refer to violence by other members in the household.

the following: in 2000, 32.5% of Haitian women surveyed between 15 and 49 years old faced domestic violence, and 28.8% of married women were beaten by a spouse/partner[3] (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). The EMMUS conducted by the MSPP examining domestic violence against women between 15 and 45 years old found similar results. The 2000 version of the survey reported that 30% of the female participants faced violence by their spouse/partner since age 15 (MSPP, 2000). In 2005-2006, 27% reported experiencing domestic violence, and in 2007, it was reported by 25% (MSPP, 2007 & CEDAW, 2008).

Such results show that percentages of participants reporting domestic violence declined over the years. One explanation may relate to the 2005 Penal Code revision. In this revision, rape was recognized as a major crime deserving of imprisonment ranging from 10 years to life, and this punishment may have created a small deterrent to the perpetrators of violence. It is also possible that fewer women wanted to report violence by their male partners since the consequences for such action became more severe. Nevertheless, these differences in percentages are not too significant, implying that perhaps the existing judicial reforms have not been enough to ensure security for women against violence at home.

To establish some comparisons, prevalence of domestic violence against women appears only slightly higher in Haiti than in the United States and some Caribbean nations. In 2000, the rate of violence by an intimate partner in the US was 25.5%, which is not substantially higher than in Haiti (CDC, 2003). Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, the 2000 DHS reported that 23.9% of the women surveyed faced a form of domestic violence, and 22.3% of married women were beaten by their husbands/partners (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Such comparisons

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[2] The nine countries selected are the following: Cambodia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Haiti, India, Nicaragua, Peru, and Zambia.

[3] "Beaten" encompassed being hit, slapped, kicked, or physically hurt ever and/or during pregnancy.

demonstrate that Haitian society is not necessarily more violent towards women; however, its less developed conditions may create more difficulties for victims. In juxtaposing violence against women in Haiti with the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, the World Bank emphasized the need to distinguish Haiti's case from that of the other two nations because of its especially low development indicators (2002, viii).[4] The state of these indicators contributes to an environment that make everyday survival challenging in Haiti. This circumstance is further discussed in Chapter Two.

Vulnerable groups: pregnant women & *restaveks*

Pregnant women face greater vulnerabilities to violence than the general female population. A 2003 study conducted among 200 pregnant women seeking prenatal care at health dispensaries in a rural region of Artibonite Valley found that 44% faced gender-based violence[5] in the last 6 months preceding the study. During the overall duration of pregnancy, 77.8% encountered violence by an intimate partner (Small, 2008). Such alarmingly high numbers emphasize the need for extra protection for pregnant women. A pregnant woman is more vulnerable to violence, because her ability to defend herself in circumstances of abuse may be reduced due to the physical discomfort of carrying a child. In addition, the male partner's increased stress over the impending birth contributes to violence during pregnancy. Although the exact causes of heightened stress are unclear and require more research, the man may take out his frustration from stress in the form of violence (PAHO, n.d., para 3).

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[4] Development indicators in this report include illiteracy, maternal mortality, adult mortality, and others.

[5] Violence in this study was classified into two types: intimate partner violence and non-partner violence.

A pregnant woman is most likely to face violence by an intimate partner than any other types of perpetrators. In the last 6 months preceding the Artibonite Valley study, the proportion of women who encountered intimate partner violence was twice as high as the proportion who encountered non-partner violence (Small, 2008).[6] This phenomenon suggests that a woman's pregnancy may put greater strain on the relationship between partners. It is possible that marital dissatisfaction intensifies as the woman becomes more focused on the well-being of the baby than other household duties. It is also possible that a pregnant woman may be more dependent on her partner to provide economic support for her and her child-to-be-born. Such dependency leads her to tolerate violence and the male partner to exploit the situation.

Another vulnerable group is the female *restaveks*, or children from poor, rural areas arranged to move to urban areas in order to work for a family who will take them in and feed them in return. As families are often unable to care for their own children due to dire economic situations, the *restavek* phenomenon is not uncommon in Haiti. A 2004-2005 study in Port-au-Prince investigating human rights violations revealed that female *resataveks* are 4.5 times more likely to face violence than non-*restavek* girls (Kolbe & Hutson, 2006). Because they are dependent on their host families to feed and shelter them, *restaveks* most likely put up with numerous accounts of household abuses. Given the circumstances of these two especially vulnerable groups, dependency appears to be a risk factor for violence against women, because it allows the perpetrator to exploit the relationship of hierarchy.

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[6] This has problematic implications, because violence by an intimate partner against a pregnant woman has more damaging consequences than that by a non-partner. In the Artibonite Valley study, victims of intimate partner violence showed greater of psychological distress than victims of violence by other family members or non-partners (Small, 2008).

b. Types of violence

Several studies have shown sexual abuse to be the most prevalent form of gender-based violence in Haiti. Sexual abuse encompasses any sexual activity or attempt at sexual activity performed against the woman's will. Sexual violence is especially problematic, because it carries consequences that other forms of violence do not: unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages in the future, and sexually transmitted infections. Unfortunately, not only is it the most common form of violence, but also in comparison to other Caribbean countries—the Dominican Republic and Jamaica—sexual violence seems to happen at a greater frequency in Haiti.

Table 1: Forced sex by intimate male partner (Contreras, Bott, Guedes & Dartnall, 2010)

Country	% ever experienced	% experienced in the last 12 months
DR (2007)	5	4
Haiti (2005)	11	11
Jamaica (2008-9)	8	3

This table compiled by the Sexual Violence Research Initiative shows that the rate of forced sex ever experienced by women in Haiti (11%) is more than twice as high as the rate in the Dominican Republic (5%). The proportion of those who experienced sexual violence in the last 12 months is almost three times as high in Haiti (11%) as it is in the Dominican Republic (4%), and almost four times higher than in Jamaica (3%) (Ibid.). It demonstrates that violence in Haiti is indeed a case of its own as its rate of sexual violence is not so comparable to the rates of its Caribbean neighbors. This may indicate that because Haiti is less developed than the other two, challenging living conditions cause more stress and frustration among men who cope by committing sexual violence more frequently.

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Graph 1: Distribution of cases of violence by types among married women (Kishor & Johnson, 2004)
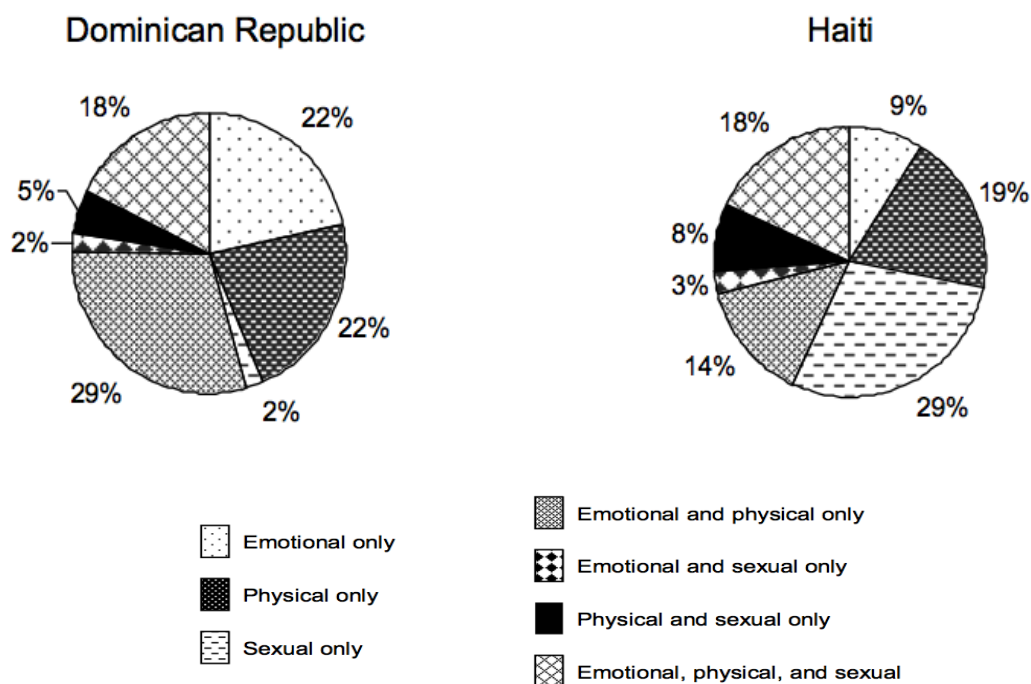
Other reports have also noted that sexual violence occurs at a greater frequency in Haiti. The 2000 DHS deemed sexual violence as the most common form of violence in Haiti among married women. Not only was it most common, but also its proportion was higher than the proportion in any other country investigated. Graph 1 demonstrates that sexual violence only accounted for 29% of violence reported in Haiti. The next most prevalent form of violence was physical violence only, accounting for 19%. On the other hand, in the Dominican Republic, just sexual violence accounted for only 2% of violence. The most common form in this country was a combination of emotional and physical violence (29%), followed by physical violence only (22%), and emotional violence only (22%) (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Even when all percentages involving sexual violence are added up, Haiti shows significantly greater rate of sexual violence. For Haiti, all percentages involving sexual violence add up to 58% (29+3+8+18), whereas in the Dominican Republic they amount to 27% (2+2+5+18). These statistics are not surprising given

that Haitian women were found to be more than twice as likely to face sexual violence as women in the Dominican Republic (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara 2008). Even in the other two Latin American countries reported in the DHS, Colombia and Nicaragua, physical violence only was the most common form, occupying 59% and 43%, respectively, and sexual violence only occupied a small proportion, 4% and 2%, respectively (Kishor & Johnson, 2004).

What accounts for sexual violence being the most prevalent form of violence against women in Haiti? One explanation is the acceptance of wife beating within families. The 2005-2006 DHS found a positive correlation between sexual violence and acceptance of wife beating (Hindin, Kishir & Ansara, 2008). In Haiti, there may be a greater acceptance of wife beating than in many other LAC countries. The CHREPROF study from 1996 found that 80% of male participants believed violence against women was justified in certain circumstances, such as when the wife leaves the house without letting the husband know where she is going or does not obey the husband's commands (Rey, 1999, 80). Perceiving women as "abusable objects," men generally acknowledged that it was within their masculine rights to subject women to violence (Ibid.). Since the majority of males believe wife beating is within their rights to carry out whenever they deem it necessary, such principle may lead them to perpetrate sexual violence against women without much reservation.

The manner of describing sexual relations also sheds light on the prevalence of sexual violence in Haiti. The CHREPROF study noticed violent expressions, such as crushing, hitting, and beating, being used by males to discuss sexual intercourse (Fuller, 1999). Catherine Maternowska, a reproductive health researcher of University of California, San Francisco, who studied reproductive health issues in Cité Soleil,[7] confirms men's use of violent expressions to

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[7] Cité Soleil is the poorest, least developed, and known to be the most violent community in Haiti.

describe sex: *kraze yon fanm* (to crush, demolish, or break a woman), *frape* (to hit or hurl), *sakaje* (to sack or plunder), and *voye bwa tèt kale* (to club non-stop), *chire* (to rip), and *koupe* (to cut) (2006, 63). Such aggressive words indicate that what a man sees simply as sexual intercourse may actually constitute sexual abuse against women.

Another explanation is that men associate powerfulness and masculinity with sexual activity. Maternowska argues that from a young age, Haitian boys are expected to fulfill their heterosexual role as *filè-s* (flirts). When men do not overtly express their sexuality, "[they] are thought of as handicapped or deficient, they are teased by people of both sexes and all ages, even children, and taunted with names like *djèjè* (imbecile) and *masisi* (homosexual), the latter being considered an abomination that qualifies a person among the ranks of the insane" (Maternowska, 2006, 48). The social pressure to fulfill expectations of sexuality, which becomes internalized as an indispensable component of masculine identity, may lead many Haitian men to consider sexual aggression against women normal. In fact, it would be abnormal for men to not behave in such manner towards women. Thus, boys and men are consequently led to believe that being overtly sexual is necessary to assume masculinity and assert their presence in society.

This widespread acceptance of wife beating and sexual aggression influences how women interpret gender-based violence. Studies reported that some women accept wife beating as well. In a 2006 study by the Haitian Ministry for the Status of Women and Women's Rights, 33% of women believed that a man has the right to beat his wife/partner. This acceptance was most common among the uneducated (36%), those with more children (38%), those living in rural areas (34%), and those who were single (32%). In the 2000 EMMUS, up to 48% of victims felt violence against women was justified (MSPP, 2000). Women who accept these beliefs are

less likely to recognize and report violence than women who do not hold such beliefs, allowing wife beating and sexual violence to continue (Contreras, Bott, Guedes & Dartnall, 2010, 49).

The acceptance of wife beating also contributes to the generational effect of domestic violence. The 2005-2006 DHS found that witnessing interparental violence is a significant risk factor. Women who had witnessed their fathers hitting their mothers were more than twice as likely to report experiencing physical or sexual violence (38%) than women who had not (17.1%) (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008). The 2000 DHS, too, revealed that women who answered "Yes" to their father beating their mother were 1.96 times more likely to have experienced spousal violence than those who answered "No" (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). This generational effect of violence indicates that women who grow up watching their fathers beat their mothers are socialized to accept spousal violence a part of marital life. Given that a significant portion of Haitian women accept violence as a justifiable punishment, changing the beliefs of both men and women is essential to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence in Haiti.

c. Perpetrators of violence

Although male partners commit a large portion of violence against women, the perpetrators of violence against women also include non-intimate partners in the household. Some studies even found that women are more likely to be abused by someone other than their husband/partner. According to the 2005-2006 EMMUS, 44% of victims faced domestic violence by an aggressor(s) other than their husband/partner, whereas 28% faced spousal violence (MSPP, 2007). In the 2000 EMMUS, 46% faced domestic violence by a non-intimate partner, and 32% faced abuse by a husband/partner (MSPP, 2000). This highlights the pervasive nature of violence against women in Haiti, for they are at risk of violence by other members of the households in

addition to by their husbands/partners. On a side note, it is possible that the *restavek* phenomenon may account for some discrepancies between intimate partner and non-partner violence. Because violence against *restaveks* is always perpetrated by a non-partner household member, the study results may be skewed by their inclusion in the studies.

d. Age

Young age is a risk factor for encountering violence in nearly all the studies. Young girls may appear as easier targets for violence than older women since they are less likely to know how to and to be able to resist aggression by men. Multiple reports have emphasized the extent to which young girls are at a significant risk of facing violence and that risk diminishes gradually with age. Assessing the characteristics of several reported violence cases has shown that about half of the victims are under the age of 18. For example, 40% of the 500 rape cases treated by MSF between January 2005 and June 2007 were under the age of 18 (MSF, 2007). Between November 1994 and June 1999, of 2400 cases of sexual violence and aggression registered under the Haitian Ministry for the Status of Women and Women's Rights, 62.5% were committed against girls between 6 and 15 years (Amnesty International, 2008b).

Such figures demonstrate that a great proportion, if not the majority, of women begin facing gender-based violence at a young age. This may contribute to greater acceptance of wife beating within Haitian households. Since girls are exposed to violence against women early on in their lives, they grow up believing that it is just the way things are in society.

In addition to the woman's age, the age of the spouse and the age at which one marries influence the likelihood of violence. The 2005-2006 DHS demonstrated a trend in which the proportion of women who experienced violence declined with the current age of their

husbands/partners. In other words, women were more likely to experience violence earlier on in their relationships when their partners were younger than when their partners became older (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008). The 2000 DHS also found that women who entered marriage at younger ages were more likely to face violence (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). It is possible that women married at younger ages are more likely to be dependent on their partners for financial support. Because they cannot be supported, families may marry off their daughters at young ages to ease the burden of looking after multiple children. Thus, parallel to the *restavek* situation, young girls' dependency on their husbands/partners may make them more vulnerable to violence. It is also possible that men see young girls as children to be reprimanded and taught correctly instead of as wives/partners, thereby exercising more wife beating.

e. Education level

It is expected that women who are more educated would face violence less frequently than women who are less educated, because they are more aware of their rights and have access to resources to protect themselves. In Haiti, such association between education and frequency of violence does not always hold. In fact, studies on domestic violence showed that more educated women were at greater risk of violence than their less educated counterparts (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008; Kishor & Johnson, 2004). This result is startling, because it suggests being less educated may make women less vulnerable to violence. Thus, education does not automatically shield women from violence. Such counterintuitive association can be explained by the crisis of masculinity in Haiti. A husband may be threatened by the wife's high level of education, and so he exercises violence to assert power and to demonstrate that he is not inferior. This crisis is an

inferiority complex; men who perceive themselves to be less powerful[8] than their wives, may use violence to uphold their masculine identity (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). This concept of the crisis of masculine identity is further discussed in Chapter Three.

Other studies found that reaching a certain level of education does make one less vulnerable to violence. The 2000 EMMUS reported that although primary education does not provide protection from violence, secondary education somewhat does. A higher percentage of women who had primary education faced violence (39.1%) than those with secondary education (23.5%) (MSPP, 2007). Such finding can be interpreted as the deficiency of primary education in conferring protection from violence. A certain level of education needs to be reached in order for the protective effect of education to take place. Women who receive secondary education or higher may be less likely to face violence, because they have a better grasp on how to handle situations of violence, to exercise their rights, and to protect themselves. Thus, education serves as both risk and protection, because educational achievement of a woman carries an increased risk of violence until a high enough level is attained "for protective effects to predominate" (Jewkes, 2002, 1425).

Regarding the males' education, women with more educated partners are more vulnerable to violence than those with less educated partners. The 2000 DHS reported that 21.7% of women with husbands who were not educated, 31.3% with husbands who received primary education, and 32.7% with husbands who received secondary or higher education faced violence. In other words, men who are educated, whether it is primary or secondary schooling, were more likely to use violence against their wives/female partners than men who were not educated. In the Dominican Republic, the direction of the correlation between husband's education and violence

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[8] Powerful in this context means having resources of knowledge and material wealth.

was opposite that of Haiti. Women with not educated partners were more likely to face violence than women with educated partners (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). These statistics from Haiti present a complicated picture, demonstrating higher education for men and women cannot be an exclusive solution to combating violence. Even men who may be educated about the rights of women and aware of gender issues do not seem discouraged from committing violence against women. In fact, they use violence at an even greater rate than men who are not educated.

Women's education level in relation to their partners' also presents an interesting picture. Although education does not necessarily decrease women's risk of violence, having less education than their male partners was a risk factor for facing domestic violence. In the 2000 DHS, women who were less educated than their husbands/partners faced violence at a rate of 34.5%, whereas women who had more education than their husbands did at a rate of 28.6% (Kishor & Johnson, 2004).[9] It is possible that more educated women are more aware of ways to protect themselves from violence. Another explanation is that they may be less economically dependent on their husbands/partners because they have better jobs than their husbands/partners. In fact, the less educated males may be dependent on their female partners to support the household. Such dependency can restrain males from perpetrating violence for the fear of disrupting the relationships from which they benefit financially. At the same time, women who are more educated than their partners, too, are vulnerable to violence, because the males may experience an inferiority complex from being less educated than their female partners. As a result, they use violent measures to display their masculine power. Thus, education alone is not likely to rectify the problem of violence against women.

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[9] When both partners had no education, 21.7% of women faced violence.

Instead, strategies to promote egalitarian standing between partners should be emphasized, for this was found to have a significant protective effect. Women who had the same level of education as their husbands/partners faced the lowest rate of violence (18.5%), facing violence half as frequently as women with husbands were more educated than they were (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). In the 2005-2006 DHS, women who had the same education level as their husbands/partners were 2.27 less more likely to experience violence than women with less education than their husbands (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008). These findings highlight the protective effect of equal education that stems from fostering egalitarian relationships that have been shown to lead to greater marital satisfaction (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006, 21). When both partners are at an equal educational level, it facilitates egalitarian relationships producing less inferiority complex and more marital satisfaction. In such unions, men feel less threatened by their female partners, and so the likelihood of the crisis of masculine identity is reduced.

f. Employment

Similar to education, it is ambiguous whether employment reduces women's vulnerability to violence since studies have reached different conclusions. In the 2005-2006 EMMUS, not-working (28.4%), employed for money (25.2%), and employed but not for money (25.0%) groups all experienced relatively similar levels of violence (MSPP, 2007). Although the employed faced slightly lower rates of violence, the difference appears insignificant. On the other hand, the 2000 DHS found that women who worked for pay actually faced a higher rate of violence (30.5%) than women who did not work (26.0%) (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Lastly, the 2000 EMMUS demonstrated that those employed for money experienced a definitively lower

rate of violence (25.7%) than those who are not working (38.7%) and those who are employed but not for money (32.4%) (MSPP, 2000).

These diverging conclusions suggest being financially independent does not necessarily reduce a woman's risk of domestic violence by her husband/partner. It is possible that a woman with paid employment may be forced to work because her dire family situation requires it. Since unemployment rate is high in Haiti, a jobless man may feel emasculated by his female partner who is working for pay. He may view the situation as a threat to his masculinity since a woman with paid employment is somewhat economically independent and this independence goes against the masculine ideal of providing for women.

At the same time, if a woman has enough money from employment, she may be able to find resources to protect herself from violence. This phenomenon may be parallel to the situation regarding education. Although the protective effect is not seen with primary education, it evolves from secondary education or higher. The protective effect of paid employment may not take place until a woman earns a certain level of income. Like equal education between partners, having equal standing in employment status may be the best way to reduce vulnerability to violence since it can diminish the threat that a man experiences in the presence of an employed female while simultaneously providing her with resources to protect herself.

g. Family structure: number of children and marital status

Risk of violence varies with individual household circumstances in terms of the number of children, the presence of other family members other than the husband/ partner, and marital status. Both the 2000 and 2005-2006 DHS found that the number of living children was associated with an increased risk since women with 5 or more children faced the greatest rate of

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violence (Kishor & Johnson, 2004; Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008). Contradictorily, the 2000 DHS also showed that women with no children faced violence at a greater rate than women with 1 to 4 children, although the differences were not too significant (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). This implies that having a certain number of children can act as a buffer against the level of violence against women in the household. Nevertheless, when the number of children is too big, it places a great strain on the family as resources for everyone becomes scarce. Men in households with many children may take out their frustration by perpetrating violence more frequently.

Another explanation is that women with 5 or more children may put up with more domestic violence than women with a fewer number of children. Maternowska found in Cité Soleil that having financial support from a partner takes precedence over anything else. One Haitian woman whom she interviewed remarked: "If a man leaves a woman with two or three kids, it can be more difficult for her than if she is beaten and the next day gets 50 cents from him. [For many women] the beating is not defined as violence because it's worse to be without a source of economic support" (62). This demonstrates that poor women with many children are willing to tolerate abuse by their husbands/partners for the sake of obtaining economic support. The fact that women do not consider spousal abuse as violence in comparison to the lack of financial support sheds light on the terrible economic state that restricts women's agency to break away from violence. This emphasizes the climate of insecurity experienced by women.

Regarding marital status, women who were divorced, separated, or in a relationship in which their partners did not live with them were more vulnerable to violence than married/living with a man and single/never married women (Kishor & Johnson, 2004; MSPP, 2000; MSPP, 2007). The 2000 EMMUS reported that more than half of the women in broken unions faced domestic violence at some point in their lives, in comparison to a third of women who were

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living with a man and a quarter of single women facing domestic violence (MSPP, 2000). It is possible that marital dissatisfaction led to ruptures in the relationships, and in the process women faced a high level of violence by their dissatisfied partners.

To account for why women in relationships in which their partners did not live with them were at greater risk of facing violence, stability of unions needs to be considered. A relationship in which the male does not live with the woman, as in the case of *menaj* or *remen*, is less stable than if the couple lives together, as in the case of *marye* or *place* (Appendix A). If the man does not live with the woman, he is likely to be polygamous (Fitzgerald et al., 2000, 499). One study found that women whose partners have other sex partners were more vulnerable to sexual abuse than women whose partners were not polygamous (Smith Fawzi et al., 2005, 682). Polygamy increases the likelihood of violence against women, because he is responsible for more households and thus experiences greater economic strain. In addition, a man involved with multiple women may value less his relationship with a woman with whom he does not live and use violence more frequently without reservation.

The duration of relationship is another important element to consider in analyzing the risk factors for violence. A 2005 study on experiences with forced sex among rural women showed a positive correlation between the length of time in a relationship and prevalence of violence. Women who were in relationships of over 4 years were 1.8 times more likely to have experienced forced sex than women who were in relationships of 4 or fewer years (Smith Fawzi et al., 2005). In the 2000 DHS, women who were married for between 5 to 9 years were at greater risk of facing domestic violence than those who were married for 0 to 4 years (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). These findings demonstrate that a longer relationship does not necessarily signify stability. One explanation may be a woman chooses to stay in a relationship out of

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economic necessity despite being abused by her partner. The study found that if the woman ever had to have sex to provide for her children, she was at a 3.5 times increased risk of experiencing forced sex (Smith Fawzi et al., 2005).[10] As economic desperation restricts her option of breaking out of the abusive relationship, the woman may continue to put up violence over the years.

On the other hand, the 2000 DHS reported that those who were married for over 15 years showed a lower prevalence of violence than those married between 5 to 9 years (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Perhaps there is a threshold for stability, meaning after a certain number of years pass by, a relationship is more likely to be stable and mutually beneficial to both partners. This state of conditions is likely to lessen the degree of violence wielded by the male partner.

h. Household wealth

The relationship between household wealth and violence against women presents another counterintuitive result. The poorest women are not necessarily at greatest risk in Haiti. In fact, the 2005-2006 DHS reports that women in the richest 20% faced a slightly higher rate of violence (21.7%) than women in the middle 40% (20.5%), and the poorest 40% were least likely to face violence (17.2%) (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008).[11] Such phenomena demonstrate that having financial resources does not necessarily protect women from violence. It may be that in the poorest households, the male is more dependent on earnings by the female since the majority

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[10] Studies from rural Haiti demonstrate that many women enter into a series of sexual relationships out of economic necessity. In exchange for provision of food and housing, a woman engages in a sexual relationship with a male and has more children with him. This type of relationship often dissolves within a few years, and the woman is left with additional children and the need to find a new source of economic support (Fitzgerald et al., 2000, 499). This makes the woman desperate and willing to be involved with any male who can provide for her and her children regardless of abusive circumstances.

[11] In the Dominican Republic, this correlation between wealth and rate of violence was reverse of what it was in Haiti; the rate of violence was highest among the poorest 40% (21.5%) and lowest among the richest 20% (8.9%) (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008).

of households that suffer from the extreme poverty are female-headed (World Bank, 2006). As mentioned before, a male dependent upon a female partner's income most likely refrains from perpetrating violence frequently for the fear of rupturing the union. On the other hand, in the richest households, the female may be more dependent on the earnings by the male, thereby making her more vulnerable to violence.

In some studies, women in the middle wealth quintile actually faced the greatest rate of violence (MSPP, 2007; Kishor & Johnson, 2004). The relationship between socioeconomic status and prevalence of violence takes the shape of an inverted U in which the greatest reporting of violence occurs in the middle quintile and lowest in the lowest and highest quintile (Kishor & Johnson, 2004, 41). This shows that wealth, like education and employment, does not always provide protection from violence. In fact, it acts as a risk factor in certain circumstances. Being in the middle wealth quintile may not provide enough resources for women to shield themselves from violence. Until they reach the highest quintile, the protective effect may not predominate. These findings once again highlight that the case of violence against women in Haiti does not present a straightforward picture.

i. Urban vs. rural

Studies have reported diverging conclusions on whether urban or rural women are more likely to face violence. The 2005-2006 DHS reported victims of violence were more likely to be from an urban setting (23.1%) than from a rural area (17.1%) (Hindin, Kishor & Johnson, 2008). This may reflect an issue with reporting, because it is possible that reporting violence is easier in urban than rural areas. Regardless, this result was not consistent with the 2000 DHS that found no difference in the prevalence of violence experienced by urban and rural women. Nevertheless,

when dealing with current experience—spousal violence in the past 12 months—rural women were more likely to have faced violence (23.3%) than urban women (17.5%) (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). One possible explanation is that there is less appropriate infrastructure for persecuting perpetrators of violence in rural zones. Thus, if men perceive that they can get away with committing violence against women, they may be less discouraged from doing so.

The rural/urban discrepancy may also relate to issues with poverty and inequality. Generally less inequality is found in rural areas than in urban, whereas the former faces greater prevalence of poverty and hunger (World Bank, 2006, 17-18). Less inequality in rural areas may serve as a protective factor from violence, explaining why women in urban areas face more violence. At the same time, the extent of poverty in rural areas leads to greater economic strain within households, causing women to be more vulnerable to violence by their partners.

j. Decision-making process

As previously mentioned, creating egalitarian relationships may be the best way to reduce violence against women as studies have shown joint decision-making led to the lowest level of domestic violence. Both the 2000 and 2005-2006 DHS reported that women were least likely to report violence when household decisions, such as major purchases, were made jointly with their husbands/partners. Making decisions alone constituted the greatest risk factor. Women who made decisions alone reported violence almost twice as frequently as women whose husband or someone else made decisions (Hindin, Kishor & Ansara, 2008; Kishor & Johnson, 2004).

It is possible that a woman who makes a household decision on her own may be somewhat financially dependent even though she lives with a man. This increases her vulnerability to violence by her husband/partner, because he may be threatened by her decision

making and earning power. This again indicates the crisis of masculinity. A husband's domination is associated with greater frequency of violence when his resources, such as income and education, are lacking (Yllö, 1984, 308). When "lacking" males feel emasculated by their female partners in terms of household decision-making, they may use violent measures to demonstrate their power. Thus, it is crucial to create an egalitarian environment in which partners jointly make decisions in order to reduce the threat of emasculation on the part of the male.

Various elements that make women vulnerable to violence demonstrate that it is a complex and contradictory situation. It is not certain whether one factor predisposes women to violence more than another. For example, where education may provide resources to protect oneself from violence, in some cases being educated makes a woman more vulnerable since her husband/partner may feel threatened by the female's educational empowerment. Similarly for employment, women with paid employment may reduce dependency on her male partner, thereby protecting her from violence. At the same time, this can contribute to more violence since the man may be threatened by an economically dependent woman. Analyses of studies suggest that rather than educational and financial resources, equality in relationships provides a significant amount of protection from violence, for egalitarian standing prevents one partner from being threatened by the other.

CHAPTER 2: HAITI'S CLIMATE OF INSECURITY

I. Definition of the Climate of Insecurity

Violence against women in Haiti cannot be understood without closely investigating the context in which it occurs, for it is inextricably tied to societal elements. I call this environment the climate of insecurity, which brings great challenges to daily survival due to economic instability, lack of social development, and political turmoil. The conditions of this climate make life fearful and uncertain, because one does not know what suffering or obstacles to survival will be experienced next. I coined this term based on Erica James, who extensively discusses *ensekirite*, or insecurity, to describe the setting in which violence in Haiti occurs. Marked by "the state of episodic emergency and instability that is sparked by political and criminal violence," an environment of *ensekirite* makes the general population a *viktim*, or victim (James, 2010b, 107). As victims, people live in a "pervasive climate of fear and nervousness" (Ibid., 2004, 128). Thus, Haiti's climate of insecurity is violent, because it inflicts harm in the form of fear and uncertainty. Given such conditions, Haiti is in a state of negative peace. Although the country is not at war, violence and insecurity prevent life from being peaceful.

II. Components of the Climate of Insecurity

a. Economic insecurity

One of the least developed areas in the world, the Republic of Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere with a population over 9.5 million. Haiti's GDP per capita is $1,200, which ranks 205th in the world out of 229; its current GDP real growth rate is –5.1%, the fourth lowest in the world (CIA, 2011). Approximately 80% of the population lives under the poverty

line of less than $2.00 per day, and 54% under extreme poverty of less than $1.25 per day (The New York Times, 2011). Such degree of poverty leaves a vast majority in *grangou*, or hunger, also referred to as "Clorox." The rationale behind this term is that if an individual swallows Clorox, it eats away his or her intestines, just as *grangou* in Haiti corrodes the stomachs of its population (Becker, Bergan & Schuller, 2009). Living in such poverty and hunger makes everyday survival uncertain, because one does not know whether he or she will be alive in the next moment. For instance, a woman named Frisline from the documentary "Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy" recounted the story of someone in her community who fainted in the middle of church service due to hunger and was carried to the hospital (Ibid.). As people face the brutal conditions of poverty, life becomes defined by insecurity.

Large-scale poverty and hunger in Haiti stem from the lack of available jobs, as over 70% of the population is unemployed (Clark, 2006, 299) [12]. Although two-thirds of Haitians depend on the agricultural sector, mostly subsistence farming on a small scale, this occupation is precarious. It bears vulnerabilities to devastating natural disasters, especially flooding from hurricanes, and is exacerbated by widespread deforestation (The New York Times, 2011). Such instability reveals that the population cannot rely on farming jobs as a profitable source of income. Thus, unemployment and lack of a steady source of money continue as urgent problems in Haiti. From my interviews with women in the FHM clinic, I noticed that the most difficult demographic factor[13] to gather was income level. When asked how much money their family

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[12] Although unemployment is a significant problem in Haiti, this statistic probably refers the percentage of the population that is not formally employed. A great proportion of the population, especially women, is actually self-employed as merchants or street vendors.

[13] Before conducting the interviews, I collected several demographic information on each women, including age, marital status, educational level, household income level, number of people in the household, number of pregnancies, number of children currently alive, number of children enrolled in school, and place of residence.

earns per month on average, more than half answered that they do not work. The rest responded they neither know nor control their income, or merely stated their occupations as a farmer, vendor/seller, or trade merchant. Only three participants gave numerical answers: 1,000 Gourdes, 3,000 Gourdes, and 16,000 Gourdes.[14] These figures, which are supposed to cover the expenses for the entire family, translate to US$25, US$75, and US$400 per month, respectively. These responses emphasize the uncertain and insecure economic conditions of each household, for the majority of the population do not know when or how they will earn money next.

In my interviews, most women chose "improved economy or jobs" as the greatest community need. Without a steady source of income, they lamented their inability to pay for transportation to go to a clinic, health care fees, or childcare needs. Such restrictions consequently worsen their and their children's health status. The translator with whom I worked that summer, too, cited lack of available jobs as the gravest problem in Haiti, remarking that even when people graduate from schools, they are unable to find jobs. She posed the question, if educated people cannot be employed, how can the majority of the population who are uneducated find ways to earn money? This demonstrates how the scarcity of employment opportunities drives poverty and makes daily life a struggle.

The struggle for security and survival may be a significant contributor to high rates of crime and violence. According to the World Bank, there is a negative relationship between rates of murder and GDP per capita (2007, vi). Haiti, which has the lowest GDP per capita in the Caribbean, shows one of the highest rates of murder in this region (Appendix C). It is possible that when life is insecure due to extreme conditions of poverty and hunger, it leads to greater frustration on the part of the population, thereby driving up the prevalence of violent crime.

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[14] Gourdes is the Haitian currency. US$1 is equivalent to about 40 Gourdes.

b. Social insecurity

Graph 2: Human Development Index Trends (UNDP, 2010)
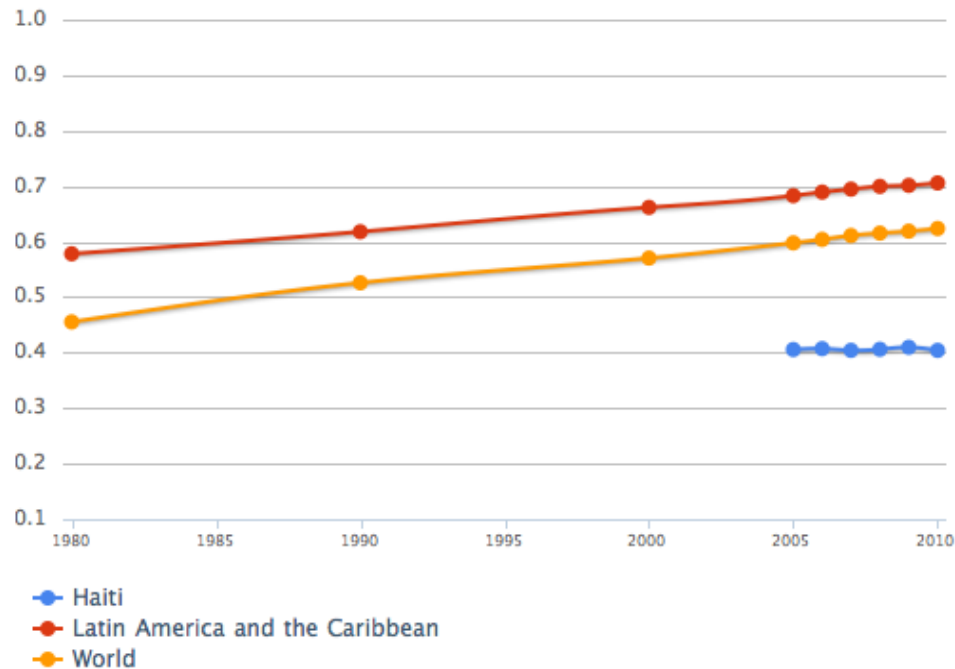
Lack of social development is a significant contributor to the climate of insecurity in Haiti, which ranks very low in essentially all development indicators. It has the eighth highest Gini index[15] out of 134 countries reported, highlighting the degree of inequality between the country's elite and poor (CIA, 2011). It also currently ranks 145th in Human Development Index (HDI) out of 169. HDI[16] is a composite measure that takes into consideration factors such as education, life expectancy, and per-capita GDP. As demonstrated by Graph 2, Haiti's HDI is

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[15] The Gini index measures inequality in income distribution.

[16] HDI is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, education, and living standards. These three dimensions are assessed by four indicators. Health is measured in terms of life expectancy; education in terms of mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling; and living standards in terms of gross national income per capita (UNDP, 2010).

significantly lower than not only the world average but also the LAC average. In fact, it has the lowest HDI in the Caribbean region (Appendix B). In terms of Gender Inequality Index[17], from a scale of 0 to 1, with 0 being the least unequal and 1 being the most unequal, Haiti has a score of 0.739 (UNDP, 2010). In light of multiple disasters recently, life expectancy was 29.93 years in October of 2010, the lowest in the world at that time. Although it has currently picked up to 62.2 years, this ranks 183rd out of 223 nations reported (CIA, 2011). These numerical measures give an insight into the dire living conditions and the lack of development in Haiti.

Table 2: Comparison of demographic variable in Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and LAC average (World Bank, 2002)

Indicator	Dominican Rep		Haiti		Jamaica		LAC average	
	Men	Women	**Men**	**Women**	Men	Women	Men	Women
Illiteracy (%)	17	17	**50**	**54**	18	10	11	13
Maternal mortality rate		220		**600**		110		
Total fertility rate		2.9		**4.3**		2.6		
Contraceptive prevalence rate		64		**18**		65		59
Adult mortality rate	153	96	**432**	**339**	117	53	216	116

In "A Review of Gender Issues in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica," the World Bank claimed that Jamaica and the Dominican Republic share similar gender trends and indicators, as demonstrated by their comparable economic and social progress. On the other hand, Haiti was "in a category all its own" (World Bank, 2002, 3). The table above demonstrates that in all categories, Haiti shows the worst indicators, in comparison to not only its neighboring Caribbean countries, but also the rest of LAC. It has the highest rate of illiteracy, maternal

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[17] GII is a composite index measuring loss in achievements in three dimensions of human development—reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market—due to gender inequality. The lowest index is 0.174 in Netherlands; the highest is 0.853 in Yemen.

mortality, total fertility, and adult mortality, and the lowest rate of contraceptive prevalence. These social and health indicators illustrate the challenges to obtaining a healthy and secure life within Haiti's climate of insecurity. A high rate of illiteracy, which is linked to economic insecurity, suggests that a great proportion of the population do not have the means to attend school. In the long run, illiteracy may equal being unable to find a job that provides a steady source of income.

High rates of maternal mortality and adult mortality indicate the poor health status of the population. There are many contributing factors to adult mortality rate, including diseases, hunger, malnutrition, and crimes. Regardless of the cause, high adult mortality rate is a quintessential indicator of the climate of insecurity since it demonstrates the prevalence of death and the difficulty of survival. High maternal mortality rate sheds light on the lack of sanitary birth practices and/or the scarcity of medical personnel to help with the delivery of babies. In my interviews with women in Léogâne, many brought up the issue of maternal mortality. They said especially in the countryside, it is extremely difficult to find doctors or midwives, and therefore pregnant women die easily from giving birth. Hence, having safe deliveries with trained attendants was chosen as the most desired service from the clinic.

The absence of safe and hygienic deliveries also contributes to infant and child mortalities in Haiti. The participants in my survey sample of 60 women had an average of 4.4 pregnancies but only delivered alive an average of 3.5 babies and had an average of 3 children who were still living at the time of the interview. For women with many pregnancies—9, 10, or 11—less than half of their children—only 4 or 5—were still living at the time of the interview. One woman remarked that children were often afflicted with typhoid and diarrheal diseases and did not receive proper treatment, because the family did not have enough money to purchase

medicine, or transportation fees and time limitations prevented them from accessing medical services. Another woman emphasized the lack of food for everyone in the house as most problematic since families are usually large in Haiti. This contributes to the climate of insecurity, because it limits the amount of food and expenses to be spent on each individual. Each family member must survive on meager sums of money. Thus, a great proportion of child mortality cases can be attributed to not only illnesses, but also malnutrition and general deprivation, making day-to-day survival for children uncertain.

Conditions in Cité Soleil present an example of a community that is under constant attack by the climate of insecurity. It is the poorest area in not only Haiti but also the Western Hemisphere. A study that assessed youth and violence in Cité Soleil in 2010 found that 81.4% of the study population did not earn enough money to feed everyone in the household. A contributing factor was that 70% of the households had four or more members. Only 6% said they eat three meals a day, and 18% said they eat every couple of days. In terms of jobs, 86% were unemployed, 49% were self-employed, and 6.1% had short-term "day jobs." The results also demonstrated schooling beyond primary education is uncommon, as over half the study sample only had at most 8 years of schooling (Willman & Marcelin, 2010, 519). Life in Cité Soleil becomes extremely violent as the population suffers from pervasive hunger and is unable to change their situation due to scarce employment opportunities.

Paul Farmer, a doctor and anthropologist from Harvard Medical School, confirms that Haiti's climate of insecurity itself is violent because of the degree of suffering involved in coping with harsh poverty and misery. In the Central Plateau, where Farmer established a clinic for his organization *Zanmi Lasante* (Partners in Health), "[s]uffering is certainly a recurrent and expected condition… where everyday life has felt, often enough like war" (Farmer, 2010, 329).

One of Farmer's patients, a young widow with four children, observed, "You get up in the morning and it's the fight for food and wood and water" (Ibid., 329). Such descriptions of daily life illustrate that although the country is not in armed conflict, it does not seem to be at peace either because of the inherently violent elements of the climate of insecurity.

Given the magnitude of daily struggles, the climate of insecurity in Haiti is comparable to a state in conflict. Ideally, being at peace means not only "the absence of war," but also "the establishment of conditions for social justice" that provides a sense of security (Aoláin, 2009, 1064). According to Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist and the principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, there are two types of peace: negative and positive. Negative peace indicates "the absence of armed conflict," whereas positive peace signifies "absence of both direct physical violence and indirect structural and cultural violence" (Aoláin, 2009, 1064). Judging from the conditions that create Haiti's climate of insecurity, the country is in a state of negative peace. Although there is no formally declared conflict, violence still exists pervasively in physical and structural forms, as demonstrated by economic and social insecurities. Thus, the climate of insecurity itself constitutes violence against the Haitian population.

c. Political insecurity

In addition to social and economic insecurities, political turmoil is a significant contributor to Haiti's violent climate. In many eras of its history, Haiti experienced numerous stages of political chaos characterized by frequent changes in government leaders, brutal military coups, and the US occupation (1915) for two decades (New York Times, 2011). Instances of political turmoil demonstrate that poverty and lack of development are not the only defining

characteristics of the climate of insecurity. Even if an individual does not suffer from poverty, hunger, and/or unemployment, he or she is vulnerable to the violent nature of the climate of insecurity, because political turmoil affects almost all sectors of the population. This type of insecurity adds to the fear within Haiti's climate of insecurity, because one may be targeted to political violence at any moment.

Scholars have argued that François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who ruled the country under a corrupt dictatorship for over 30 years along with his son,[18] created a political environment of terror and nervousness in Haiti (Charles, 1995b; James, 2010a; Rey, 1999). One of his essential intimidation tactics was the use of a paramilitary force called the *Tonton Macoutes* to quell political dissidents through force (Charles, 1995b, 141). Feminist scholar Carolle Charles argues that the *Macoutes* were an extension of Duvalier's power intended to terrorize the population, who systemized lack of loyalty as "subversive, unpatriotic, and unnatural" and classified political dissidents as enemies of the state deserving of political repression and brutality (Ibid., 139-140). Thus, this force was a fundamental component in the political climate of insecurity in Haiti during Duvalier's regime. The brutality of the *Macoutes* is illustrated later in this section by the case of violence against Haitian feminist activist, Yvonne Hakim Rimpel.

Duvalier's terror pervaded society by going beyond simply targeting the material body, and by incorporating cultural and religious elements of identity. Linking the *Tonton Macoutes* with Vodou[19] religious clergy, the dictator attempted to manipulate people's loyalty to him. This affiliation with Vodou priests, who are highly respected in society, strengthened and legitimized

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[18] François Duvalier ruled from 1957 to 1971; his son Jean-Claude Duvalier ruled from 1971 to 1986.

[19] Vodou is the principle religion of Haiti that combines aspects of African culture with Catholicism. During the colonial era, slaves created Vodou to retain some trace of their African culture while masking it under Catholic elements of their European masters.

the presence of the *Macoutes* (James, 2010a, 58). Duvalier was able to extend his powerful presence through his paramilitary force, as "[o]ften, the priest and the Macoute were one and the same" (Wilentz, 1989, 34). Such blurring of distinction between the *Macoutes* and religious clergy displayed Duvalier's ability to penetrate not only the political but also social and cultural realms, thereby spreading his domination over a wide range.

Even after Duvalier's dictatorship came to an end, political insecurity continued in Haiti. According to Erica James, "terror economy" subsequently emerged during the coup period of 1991-1994 when military gangs perpetrated numerous human rights violations against citizens (James, 2004, 128). In 1991, a military led by Raoul Cédras initiated a coup d'etat to overthrow Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the first democratically elected president of Haiti, thereby launching another period of political turmoil. Bands of thugs called *zenglendos*[20] and armed civilian auxiliaries called *attachés* conducted "violent sweeps of pro-Aristide neighborhoods" in which they collectively terrorized communities through physical and sexual violence (HRW, 1999). Terry Rey, a scholar in the discipline of religion, argues that rape was naturalized as a "parcel of the junta's operation to round up and repress suspected Aristide supporters" (1999, 77). Such terrifying state of violence perpetuated the political climate of insecurity. When international health and population experts devised a human suffering index[21] in 1991, Haiti was one of the 27 countries in the world classified as having "extreme human suffering" and the only one in the Western Hemisphere under this category (Farmer, 1996, 262).

During the coup d'etat, Cedras' *attachés* and *zenglendos* found small faults on unreasonable grounds to terrorize the population. A join report by HRW and the National

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[20] *Zenglendos* were speculated to be the descendants of Duvalier's *Tonton Macoutes* (HRW, 1994).
[21] This is meant to measure the citizens' (dis)satisfaction using indices, such as per capita GNP, inflation rate, growth of the population, infant mortality rate, access to clean water, literacy rate, and personal freedom. It also takes into account freedom from government terror (Global Ideas Bank, 2009).

Coalition for Haitian Rights documented a case in which a woman was sexually assaulted because she had light brown-skin (HRW, 1994). Moreover, women were punished not only for their own beliefs but also the beliefs and activities of their male relatives who might have supported Aristide (Ibid.). The coup's political violence did not discriminate by gender and targeted Haitian men as well. In "On Suffering and Structural Violence," Farmer recounts the story of Chouchou Louis, a rural Haitian man who was severely beaten and killed for making an innocent comment. A month after the coup started, Chouchou was traveling on a truck when he observed on a bumpy road, "if things were as they should be, these roads would have been repaired already" (Farmer, 1996, 269). One of the passengers was a former soldier who interpreted this remark as condemning the coup, and so he dragged Chouchou out of the truck at the next checkpoint and ordered *attachés* to beat him (Ibid.). Four months after the incident, Chouchou was arrested while at his sister's house and subsequently found dead in a ditch (Ibid., 270). This depicts the random and pervasive nature of political insecurity in which any individual can be subjected to violence for a seemingly unimportant remark or characteristic.

Even in the post-coup era when Aristide returned to power in 1994 supported by President Clinton, political violence did not terminate. Similar to Duvalier and Cédras, Aristide too assembled his own paramilitary gang called *chimères* to ensure unfaltering support for his administration and to enforce his rule in slums by quelling dissidents (Barlett, 2009, 23). The use of gangs and armed force occurs frequently, because the social and economic insecurities of Haiti make it easy for government leaders to recruit members. The World Bank states that Haiti's state violence is derived from "competition for scarce resources, as well as allegiance to politically powerful personalities" (2006, 64). By aligning with powerful authority figures, gangs and other armed forces, who may not have much in life otherwise, secure political power over

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the civilian population. With this political power, gangs and armed forces are able to somewhat shield the blows of economic and social deprivation. In a harsh climate of insecurity, this type of power is extremely appealing; as a result, political violence is continually fostered.

Political insecurity is compounded by the fact that these forces were able to exploit the situation of intimidating and wielding violence because their actions were rarely punished. According to the HRW report, many perpetrators acted with impunity, for military authorities never publicly denounced these practices and failed to provide the population with means to legally address violations. Victims refrained from complaining due to the fear that it would further jeopardize their and their families' lives. Given that law enforcement officials were often involved in carrying out violence, victims did not have anywhere to turn to when they faced abuse or witnessed attacks on other victims (HRW, 1994). This silencing of human rights violations allowed political insecurity to continue terrorizing the population.

In the midst of fear and nervousness, political violence not only damaged the targeted individual but also disrupted family structures. Family members were often ordered by military officials to rape each other under threats of death (Rey, 1999, 78). Such intimidating and humiliating occurrences created fragmentation and traumatic tension within families and led to home environments in which they did not feel secure. Even if physical acts of violence did not take place, the possibility of violence that kept families and communities in fear fueled the reciprocity between political violence and Haiti's climate of insecurity. This means that while the climate of security generates violence, violence simultaneously sustains the climate of insecurity in Haiti through fear and trauma. This cyclical nature of violence and the climate of insecurity due to the consequences are further discussed in Chapter Four.

In addition, political violence contributes to the climate of insecurity by influencing violence at home. A study done between 1996 and 2003 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country with the highest rate of violence against women in the world, showed a correlation between private, domestic violence and violence in the public sphere by militia members during times of armed conflict (Ohambe, Muhigwa & Wa Mamba, 2005, 28). The public/political and private/domestic violence lie in a continuum in which the violence of armed conflict seeps into the home lives of civilians. This suggests that domestic violence in Haiti may be largely influenced by the politically turbulent circumstances, highlighting that it is in a state of negative peace structured by the link between public and private violence. Thus, violence against women in the domestic sphere must be explored in conjunction with state-level violence in Haiti.

Case Example: Yvonne Hakim Rimpel

The experience of Yvonne Hakim Rimpel illustrates the pervasive nature of political violence in Haiti. Her encounter with Duvalier and his *Tonton Macoutes* confirms that the climate of insecurity does not spare the privileged. Rimpel was a well-educated and outspoken journalist, an editor of a feminist newspaper *Escale*, and a founding member of the Ligue Féminine d'Action Sociale (Women's League for Social Action), the first feminist organization to be established in Haiti in 1934.[22] From a privileged family of a successful Lebanese businessman, Rimpel and her sisters were encouraged by their mother, who was of Haitian

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[22] The organization was formed by intellectuals, professionals, and activists from middle and upper classes. The group focused on obtaining legal rights, especially women's suffrage, access to education and equality for married women. These rights were essential, for they would open the door for women to enter the political arena that would in turn facilitate women's social mobility although such opportunity was only for the privileged minority. This was a challenging struggle, for pro-suffrage efforts were perceived as disloyal to the nation, race, family, and men, despite that Haiti had ratified the UN Charter in 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 that promote equal rights for all (James, 2010a, 64). The League thereby brought many women primarily identified as wives and mothers into the political arena (Charles, 1995a, 147).

descent, to pursue education rigorously. They became the first women in Haiti to receive a law or dental degree (Marcelin[23], 2011).

Within the family, Rimpel was known as "an extraordinary and daring woman" who wholeheartedly devoted her life to promoting better conditions for women in Haiti (Marcelin, 2011). Because she wanted to represent the voice of women who otherwise would not be heard, Rimpel "wrote things nobody else dared to write" (Ibid.). She led feminist demonstrations demanding that the government grant women the right to vote. As a strong supporter of women's education, she held night classes at her house and required her children to take in young, disadvantaged children from the community and home-school them under her supervision. She also hosted Christmas parties at her house for girls in orphanages and brought holiday gifts to women's shelters (Ibid.).

Unfortunately, even such a privileged and intelligent woman was vulnerable to violence within the climate of insecurity. Rimpel became a victim because she was strong and outspoken. She had publicly denounced François Duvalier as a candidate for the election of 1957, divulging his unfair procedures for forcing citizens to vote for him. In this election, Rimpel supported Duvalier's opponent Louis Dejoie, a former businessman who represented a more intellectual candidate and advocated for an expansion of education. Two months after Duvalier won the election, for *Escale*'s Christmas issue, Rimpel wrote "Peuple à genoux, attends ta délivrance" on the title page, which translates to "People on your knees, wait for your freedom" (Marcelin, 2011). Although this was merely a line taken from the Christmas carol, "O Holy Night," given her past of denouncing Duvalier, the government interpreted it as an attack against them. On

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[23] For the purpose of remaining anonymous, the name of the interviewee for the Yvonne Hakim Rimpel story was changed in this paper.

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January 5th, 1958, a group of ten masked men burst into her house in the middle of the night, beat Rimpel and two her daughters, and took her to a deserted place. After being sexually assaulted, she was found naked on an empty street the next morning and brought to her brother-in-law's place so that her children would not be frightened. However, because he worked for the government and did not want to be caught supporting an enemy of Duvalier, he refused to take her in (Ibid.). This emphasizes the political climate of insecurity, giving an insight into the magnitude of fear Duvalier had instilled within the population to the point that one would not even help his own family for the sake of his security.

Consequently, this case of kidnapping and torture magnified insecurity for Rimpel and her family due to Duvalier's intimidation and silencing tactics. First, Rimpel never again spoke out against Duvalier and completely shut down the production of *Escale*, the primary representation of her voice. The following week, an army officer came to her house and forced her to go to Fort Dimanche, a prison where Duvalier's prisoners were brutally tortured. At the fort, Rimpel was handed a paper to sign acknowledging that she had no problems with Duvalier. For the sake of her family's safety, she signed the statement, which was published in the Haitian international newspaper *Le Nouvelliste* the very next day. Although she was offered asylum by the American Embassy, she refused to leave Haiti because she feared Duvalier going after her family, for he had been known to kill the families of his dissidents in the past (Marcelin, 2011). By keeping Rimpel and her family under threat, Duvalier prevented them from drawing international attention to the event. Since the incident, Rimpel's agency was largely restricted as she had to act in accordance with what he deemed appropriate. Although it is surprising that such a privileged and strong woman would become a victim of violence, this situation illustrates that

Haiti's climate of insecurity does not only affect the poor. It makes the general population subject to fear and intimidation.

Duvalier's perpetration of terror by the *Tonton Macoutes* demonstrated the extent of his ability to attack his dissidents, which allowed people's behaviors to be regulated. By targeting the opposition's family members as well, Duvalier engendered an environment in which people were afraid of what he might do and therefore do not challenge his authority. Violence as a political tactic to crush the voice of opposition is "designed to alter [the individual's] actions in a systematic and routine way" by subjugating them under fear (Walby, 1989, 225). Duvalier's intimidation tactic manipulated Yvonne Hakim Rimpel in a manner that enabled him to keep a watchful eye on her actions and restrain her behavior. This restriction is illustrated by her shutting down the production of *Escale*, never speaking out against him again, and being prevented from leaving Haiti to ensure the safety of her family. Thus, Duvalier thwarted Rimpel from being the daring woman who freely spoke her mind.

In conclusion, the climate of insecurity in Haiti is defined by conditions that make day-to-day living uncertain and characterized by suffering. Such climate is composed of three elements: economic, social, and political. These factors create an environment that constitutes violence against the population, because it keeps people under constant fear and insecurity of survival. Whereas economic and social aspects of insecurity emphasize the suffering of those without material and educational resources, political insecurity demonstrates that it is not only the poor and uneducated members of society who are vulnerable targets. As illustrated by the case of Yvonne Hakim Rimpel, a privileged and well-educated woman, the pervasive nature of this climate of insecurity impacts various sectors of the population.

CHAPTER 3: GENDERED IMPACTS OF THE CLIMATE OF INSECURITY

In addition to presenting tremendous difficulties in daily survival by placing restrictions on abilities, Haiti's climate of insecurity Haiti affects men and women in differentially. Examining the climate of insecurity from a gendered perspective, I argue that it produces two social phenomena: the crisis of masculine identity for males and the feminization of insecurity for females. The crisis of masculinity arises because a man's identity as the breadwinner and head of the household is threatened by the structural elements of insecurity outside of his realm of control (Barlett, 2009). As their masculinity is compromised, one of the ways that men deal with this threat is to perpetrate violence against women as a way of asserting their power. This response is called the performance of masculinity (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana & Rose-Junius, 2005). The second product, the feminization of insecurity, is somewhat paradoxical. Whereas many households in Haiti are headed by females, thereby generating a matrifocal sphere, this seeming empowerment actually exacerbates insecure living conditions for women. As the head of a household, a woman must absorb the risk of survival for the rest of her family, making the circumstance of insecurity a distinctly female experience. These products of the climate function as mechanisms that facilitate violence against women in Haiti.

I. Males: Crisis of Masculine Identity

Because desperate living conditions pose great challenges to security and survival, for males Haiti's climate of insecurity creates circumstances that threaten their masculinity. Masculinity is constructed based on what a man can do in terms of executing his role as a provider (Bartlett, 2009, 15). However, the conditions of the climate of insecurity impose

restrictions in their ability to carry out the social expectations of being a male. Thus arises the crisis of masculine identity. In the midst of Haiti's climate of insecurity, the ideal roles for men are almost impossible to fulfill (Maternowska, 2006, 53). Regarding male identity, "earning power is key… since it is what makes [men] desirable and useful to a household on the edge of survival" (Ibid., 54). Unfortunately, as rampant poverty makes it extremely challenging to secure such power due to the lack of employment options and opportunities for social mobility, Haiti's climate of insecurity "ha[s] literally stripped men of their most basic asset, that of being a responsible partner and provider" (Ibid., 58). Maternowska illustrates this circumstance:

> "[T]he collapse of the Haitian economy and high rates of unemployment have ensured drastically reduced economic power. With little currency and denied sources of self-esteem through productive work, men are suffering from emasculation. This… has diminished the status of Haitian men in their own eyes, as well as women's, in the family and in the community. Devoid of steadily financial resources… men simply cannot act responsibly toward women and their children." (Maternowska, 2006, 70)

Unable to live up to their expectations as income providers, men feel victimized by the climate of insecurity as illustrated in this quote. Maternowska found in her research that all men were "deeply troubled by their inability to fulfill their conjugal contract" (56). While men want to realize their roles, the context in which they live prevents them from doing so. Hence, the threatening pressures to fulfill multiple expectations and representations in the midst of contradictions create frustrations (Moore, 1994, 67). As a result, men react by lashing out at women, because exercising power over females is the only form of control they seem retain (Ibid., 70). As masculine identity "draws on notions of virility, conquest, power and domination," these elements become manifest in gender relations (Kelly, 1988, 347). Thus, violence against women serves as a strategy for men in crisis to reaffirm the "eroding male identity" by means of exercising domination (Maternowska, 2006, 70).

In addition to the inability to fulfill the masculine role as wage earners, political violence perpetrated by military and police forces against the civilian population also has contributed to the crisis of masculine identity. As previously illustrated by Farmer's account of Chouchou Louis, political violence emasculates men, as they are subjected to intimidation and brutality, and feel powerless due to their inability to prevent the state-level violence. Since masculinity is characterized by power and possession of resources, when their lives are characterized by fear and subjugation to uncontrollable violence, it leads to a disruption of masculinity and subsequently a crisis of masculine identity (Bartlett, 2009, 5).

The response to this crisis is called "the performance of masculinity" through which men use violence to prove their retention of masculinity (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana & Rose-Junius, 2005, 1814). Through this performance, men intend to communicate with the victims and themselves the ability to be dominant even within a setting that restricts their capabilities. Sexual violence plays an essential part of this performance, because "a significant part of male identity in Haiti is bound up in sexuality" (Maternowska, 2006, 48). Hence, sexuality becomes an essential component of men's "effort to hold onto what little sense of masculinity they may have" (Ibid., 58). A study that looked into child rape in South Africa and Namibia concluded that rape "is often used as an act of punishment, used to demonstrate power over girl children and manufacture control… [and] as an instrument of communication with oneself—the rapist—about masculinity and powerfulness" (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana & Rose-Junius, 2005, 1809). Thus, the performance of masculinity via sexual violence is meant to convey the perpetrator's power, because men see it as a part of their identity to express sexual aggression.

Since the performance of masculinity is in response to the crisis of masculine identity, it can be hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between the extent to which masculinity

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is threatened and the frequency of violence. An ethnographic research that analyzed three accounts of rape in South Africa verified this hypothesis: "marginal men who fell short of meeting masculine ideals were more likely to perpetrate rape" (Niehaus, 2005, 69). The study concluded that for these "marginal men," rape symbolized a violent attempt to assert or mimic a dominant masculine persona as a way to overshadow "deficient masculinity" (Ibid., 82). Thus, women are most at risk of violence by men who are most marginalized by their failure to achieve the ideal masculinity.

This framework of masculinity applies to the circumstances of Haitian men. The climate of insecurity compromises their identity and social representation, because it presents an environment characterized by rampant poverty and unemployment that prevent them from fulfilling their role of providing economic support. When men perceive this threat, they react by performing masculinity. This explains why in Haiti a man may perpetrate violence more frequently against a female partner who is more educated, is employed, or makes household decisions on her own. Given that he is unable to successfully execute his duty, having a female partner who works and independently decides household purchases may lead to an inferiority complex for the man. The possibility of being emasculated is threatening, and so he reacts with violence to avoid emasculation. On the other hand, when a man feels there is equality in educational standing or decision-making power between him and his wife/female partner, he is less likely to feel threatened and to use of violence. This explains why egalitarian relationships have a protective effect.

Another masculine response to the climate of insecurity that facilitates to gender-based violence is men's engagement in risky behaviors. From her fieldwork in Cité Soleil, Maternowska noticed that many men repeated the need "to keep busy during the day with

distractions" (57). Within the climate of insecurity, men suffered from scarce job opportunities that deprived them of obtaining earning power but did supply ample leisure time. In their free time, most men distracted themselves with alcohol and sexual relations outside of their main unions (Ibid., 58). This availability of free time is a risk factor for violence. The 2000 DHS found women were 3.32 times more likely to experience spousal violence if their husband comes home drunk frequently than if their husbands did not drink at all (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Out of all the characteristics analyzed in the survey, alcohol abuse by a husband/partner was found to be the greatest risk factor. Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter One, men who were engaged in polygamous relationships were more likely to perpetrate violence against their female partners. Thus, as men engage in risky behaviors of heavy drinking and multiple sexual relationships in their leisure time, women's vulnerability to violence to violence increases.

II. Females: Feminization of insecurity

a. Matrifocality

The climate of insecurity poses a paradox for women. Nearly half of households in Haiti are female-headed,[24] a phenomenon that makes women's lives even more challenging (Amnesty International, 2008a). In the feminization of insecurity, a woman experiences insecurities on behalf of not only herself, but also the rest of her family. Thus, heading a household is far from empowering, because it deepens the extent of poverty and misery felt by the woman (Ibid.). Not surprisingly, female-headed households[25] account for the majority of victims of endemic poverty

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24 Female-headed does not necessarily mean that the woman is single. She may be in a relationship in which the man does not live with her, or he may live with her but does not contribute much to the household.
[25] Because of the extent of poverty felt by female-headed households, many rely on remittances sent from abroad. Female-headed households occupy a majority of households who receive remittances; whereas 40% of male-headed households receive remittances, 60% of their female counterparts do (Jadotte, 2007, 31).

in Haiti (Magliore, 2008). Having a woman as the main provider of a household increases its risk of indigence by 6%, while it decreases the probability of being non-poor by 5% (Jadotte, 2007, 40). This leads to greater insecurity for female-headed households as they face greater risks of poverty. This feminization of insecurity places a great deal of strain on women in ensuring the survival of their households.

In this context, a woman serves as the caretaker at home and the wage earner as she assumes control of the household. This engenders matrifocality within Haitian families, meaning the households revolve around the women. Women are referred to as *poto mitan*, or center post, because they are "essential ingredients" of Haitian society (Barlett, 2009, 37; Becker, Bergan & Schuller, 2009). Their role as wage earners outside of the household is especially crucial since "without women's earned income, most Haitian households would not survive" (Maternowska, 2006, 52). The World Bank reported that Haiti demonstrates one of the highest female Economically Active Population (EAP) rates in the developing world, with 62% of the female population earning money (World Bank, 2002, 35).[26] The fact that more than half the female population is economically active emphasizes the essential role of women in supporting their families and attempting to risks of poverty and insecurity for their families.

Unfortunately, the reality that a high prevalence of women is economically active is far from empowering them. In fact, women's work signals "the country's economic desperation" since "the poorer the household, the more dependent it is on the meager earnings of women" (Coleman & Iskenderian, 2010, 118). Because women mostly work in the informal and poorly paid or unpaid sector, a large proportion of female household heads do not earn enough money to

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[26] From 1981 to 1999, the proportion of economically active women increased from 40% to 48% while the EAP rate of men decreased from 60% to 52% (World Bank, 2002, 35).

sufficiently provide for their families (Ibid.). In fact, people in households in which a woman is the primary wage earner have per capita incomes 7% below those of people in households in which a man occupies this role (CEDAW, 2008, 14). Such insurmountable challenge makes life violently difficult for women in Haiti.

As the head of the household, a woman is responsible for multiple individuals in her household with whom she must share her earned wages (Becker, Bergan & Schuller, 2009). This means she may be single-handedly experiences the risks of poverty, hunger, health problems, and other insecurities not only for herself but also for each family member, intensifying the extent of insecurities she faces. Being responsible for any of these risks can be financially devastating to a poor woman and her household as they magnify her vulnerability (Coleman & Iskenderian, 2010, 120). All of these factors explain why female-headed households occupy the majority of those suffering from extreme poverty in Haiti.

The feminization of insecurity also stems from the fact that women spend a higher proportion of their income on goods for children and collective household consumption than men do. In Maternowska's research, women indicated it was a man's responsibility to *bay lajan* (give money) for the maintenance of the household, but only a few men were able to do so (61). Even when men found jobs and were able to provide for the household, none of the women believed that men gave up everything they earned, because they had obligations to other relationships that they were in. One woman remarked, "He seems to have his own needs" (Ibid.). Whereas 82% of women gave 100% of their income to the household, only 49% of men contributed their incomes (Ibid.). This highlights the indispensability of women's economic activity for the survival of households since men are not pulling their weight. It seems contradictory that while men define their identity by their ability to provide economically for their families, a lower percentage of

males than females contribute to their households. Thus, this circumstance underscores that many Haitian households are truly female-headed.

How does the feminization of insecurity breed violence against women? Because women bear an unequal burden of misery and poverty in Haiti, their desperate conditions are easily exploited and violence becomes facilitated (Becker, Bergan & Schuller, 2009). One element of the feminization of insecurity is that women fear having extremely limited financial means to support themselves and their children. This forces them to stay in abusive relationships, because they may rely on their husbands/partners to provide money to supplement their meager earnings, if any. As mentioned in Chapter One, one woman in Maternowska's study remarked that it is worse to not have economic support for her children than to be beaten by her partner (62). In this situation, a woman compromises one type of security for another—she gives up her own protection from violence to ensure that her children do not suffer from poverty and hunger. Thus, the domestic sphere "remains a site of struggle for females" (Ulysse, 2006, 26). On the one hand, the household centers on the functions of a woman as the head; however simultaneously, underlying vulnerabilities create insurmountable hardships for her and facilitate violence.

b. Political and legal feminization

In addition to being characterized by poverty, the feminization of insecurity involves political and legal aspects. Charles claimed that François Duvalier feminized political insecurity by recognizing women as political subjects since women were previously separated from politics. This redefined gender oppression in the political realm as the regime institutionalized the idea of the "patriotic woman" fully supportive of Duvalier's state (Charles, 1995b, 139). Duvalier employed women as members of congress and of the *Tonton Macoutes*, allowing

women to ironically gain political power by means of executing violence against other women. Not only did Duvalier name a woman named Madame Max Adolphe as one of the leaders of the *Macoutes*, but also he created an exclusively female *Macoute* division, called the Marie Jeanne unit (Bartlett, 2009, 37; Schiller, 2001, 147). Marie Jeanne was "a slave woman remembered as an ancestress of the Haitian Revolution and whom Duvalier dubbed 'a daughter of the revolution'" (Schiller, 2001, 147). The dictator used her figure to represent a "patriotic woman" (Bartlett, 2009, 37). Charles views this phenomenon as the state's perverse manipulation of gender identity to assert power over its subjects (1995b, 141). Although women gained political recognition during the Duvalierist era, they essentially served as puppets of the administration. "Patriotic" women were forced to support him and act in accordance with what he considered appropriate, as the case of Yvonne Hakim Rimpel previously demonstrated.

Moreover, as women increasingly entered the political realm, they were no longer treated as "passive political actors, devoted mothers, and political innocents" (Ibid., 139). Those who did not accept their role as patriotic women were classified as enemies of the nation deserving of political repression and brutality (Ibid., 139-140). Women began to indiscriminately face detention, torture, exile, rape and execution, and were responsible not only for their own actions but also for those of their male relatives. This politicized identity of women was a drastic departure from previous times in which women and children were exempt from being targeted to state violence (Ibid., 140). Thus, Duvalier's rule depicted the perverse and widespread nature of insecurity; by subjecting women to political violence, his ability to pervade various sectors of the population was manifested.

The legal feminization of insecurity largely entails gender inequality. Even though many Haitian households are matrifocal, the ideology of gender hierarchy in which males occupy a

higher social rank exists simultaneously. Some scholars argue that the establishment of such hierarchy can be traced back to the colonial era. After the overthrow of the French rule, free men of color established a society in which women "were treated as second-class citizens and thrown to the 'bottom [rung] of the economic and social ladder'" (Clark, 2006, 300). For example, during the transition period from slavery to free republic, former slaves engaged in a semi-wage, semi-share cropping system under which the wages of women were 2/3 of those of men. Gender inequality continued as various constitutions written throughout history kept women in subordinate positions. Until 1979, Haitian law deemed married women as minors who were subject to and accountable to their husbands (Ibid., 300-301). The constitution also required that a woman turn over all that she inherits to her husband, and if she wants to run a business, she must receive authorization from her husband (Maternowska, 2006, 59). Such legal requirements foster the idea of women as dependents on their male partners.

In addition to being considered legally subordinate, acceptance of abuse against women was implicitly established in the Haitian Penal Code prior to its revision in 2005.[27] Previously, under Article 269, a man was permitted to kill his wife if he caught her in an act of adultery: "Murder committed by a husband against his wife and/or her accomplice or both, should he surprise them and catches them in the act in the conjugal home, is excusable" (Rey, 1999, 80). On the contrary, a Haitian woman was not granted the same "legal license to kill their unfaithful husbands," who only faced a maximum of $50 fine if he were convicted of adultery (Rey, 1999, 80). This inequality in rights and punishments for adultery protects men from abuse and murder, but allows them to happen to women. Laws that have been traditionally biased exacerbate the

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[27] This revision is further discussed in the Epilogue.

climate of insecurity for women as the unequal structure of the legal system foster unjust abuses against them.

The Haitian judicial system also feminized insecurity by making family lives for women more difficult. Because it does not recognize any types of unions besides marriage or children born from any other types, many are born to single women and unknown fathers. This is exacerbated by the fact that the law does not require the identification of a father on birth certificates (Magliore, 2008; Maternowska, 2006, 59). Such circumstance eliminates any degree of responsibilities that fathers have towards their children from non-marriage unions (Magloire, 2008, 2). All childbearing duties therefore lie with the mother, and so if the father decides to abandon his partner and their child(ren), the mother has no way of legally requiring him to support her. This judicial feminization of insecurity places a great burden on the mother, for she is faced with the challenge of ensuring the survival of her child by herself in an insecure environment.

In sum, the climate of insecurity results in violence against women by producing two phenomena that differentially affects men and women: crisis of masculinity and the feminization of insecurity. Males deal with the crisis, a condition in which they are thwarted from upholding their masculine ideals of being economically powerful due the limitations placed by the climate of insecurity, by wielding violence against women. This performance of masculinity in the form of violence is employed to communicate their power. Because various insecurities make it extremely challenging to obtain any form of power, men grab onto what they can to feel a sense of control in a context in which they lack control. In this case, it is the power of the male gender that gets expressed in violence.

The second product, the feminization of insecurity, places a great burden on females, because as the heads of households they are responsible for their own survival as well as the survival of their families. This situation facilitates violence, because it leads women to be economically desperate. Thus, when a woman finds a man who can provide even small sums of money, she develops an economic dependency on him and chooses to stay in the relationship despite that it may be abusive. The feminization of insecurity is also compounded by Haiti's judicial system that has traditionally treated women as subordinates and does not protect them enough from various vulnerabilities, such as facing unjust abuses and raising children independently. All these factors intensify the insecurities posed by challenges to living for women.

CHAPTER 4: TRAUMATIC CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

While Haiti's climate of insecurity creates conditions that make women vulnerable to violence, it is simultaneously produced by violence against women. After a woman encounters violence, this climate is exacerbated as she faces the consequences of violence on top of various elements of insecurity that make daily survival challenging. I refer to these consequences as trauma, defined as a long-lasting experience that induces suffering on an individual who is victimized. Three elements that make up trauma include stigma, shame/humiliation, and silencing. These elements are traumatic because it induces fragmentation within the victim as social relationships and functions of everyday life are disrupted. Within the climate of insecurity, a great proportion of victims do not do anything about the situation, because they do not want to be identified as victims of violence or are unaware of to whom to turn for help. As a result, the problem remains silenced. This circumstance perpetuates the climate of insecurity as women are forced to repress their suffering and to deal with the trauma of violence on their own.

I. Illustration of Trauma in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

In Edwige Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, the victim of violence experiences trauma through complete separation from the life she used to lead, which becomes associated with terror. The novel's protagonists, Martine, is raped at the age of 16 by a *Tonton Macoute* in Haiti. Subsequently, she moves to the United States to forget the reminders of this traumatic experience and to avoid the shame of being a rape victim. Because she is impregnated as a result of rape, she leaves her newly born daughter, Sophie, with her elderly mother and sister back in Haiti. Sexual violence alienates Martine from her family and her homeland, where she has an established

social network of support, and drives her away to a place where she does not know anybody. She believes she no longer has a future in Haiti since her reputation is damaged, and the only way to escape from her identity as a rape victim is to remove herself from the situation. She is terrified of going back to Haiti, because "[t]here are ghosts there that [she] can't face, things that are still very painful for [her]" (Danticat, 1994, 78). For Martine, Haiti is transformed into a space of terror, and by fleeing this space, Martine buries her pain instead of finding a way to come to terms with it. Martine's desire to completely dissociate herself from the incident "induces a sense of fragmentation and the unspeakableness of the trauma" (Francis, 2004, 80). This fragmentation and unspeakableness of sexual violence force Martine to remain suffering in silence, thereby intensifying the degree of trauma.

Even when Martine runs away to the US to erase the reminders of rape, trauma and shame become a daily part of her life. Martine displays classic symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which include shock, fear, agitation, confusion, social withdrawal, flashbacks, sleeping problems, and emotional detachment (Jordan, Campbell & Follingstad, 2010, 613). When Sophie comes to the US to meet her mother for the first time, she notes, "Late that night, I heard that same voice screaming as though someone was trying to kill her. I rushed over but my mother was alone thrashing against the sheets. I shook her and finally woke her up. When she saw me, she quickly covered her face with her hands and turned away" (Danticat, 1994, 48). Through her nightmares, Martine relives in her body "the moments of terror that [she] cannot describe in words" (Francis, 2004, 80). She not only is ashamed of being a rape victim, but also feels humiliated by her daughter witnessing the nightmares. Thus, the account of Martine demonstrates her perpetual state of insecurity as the trauma and shame of being violated continue to pervade her life.

II. Elements of Trauma

a. Stigma

Incidences of violations against women do not end with the physical act of violence, because its traumatic consequences become an ubiquitous part of the victim's life, affecting her relationships with family and friends. One source of trauma is stigma, especially for victims of sexual violence. Stigma is a disreputable mark that defines the individual as a victim and by social connotations associated with the term. The stigma of being sexually violated prevents victims from getting necessary medical, legal, or even emotional help, because she does not want others to find out and label her based on this incident. It also influences the victim's attitude towards the violence and her way of dealing with the consequences. As demonstrated in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, the possibility of facing stigma as a rape victim shames Martine and drives her away from Haiti to the United States, where she lacks social support and independently copes with the psychological trauma of rape.

Being a victim of sexual violence is stigmatized, because as a predominantly Catholic nation, Haiti looks down on sexual behavior of young women. Although it is deemed "normal for a man," sexual behavior of a woman "undermines her honesty" and renders her promiscuous (HRW, 1994). An unmarried woman does not want to make known that she has been raped, because such shaming act will decrease her chances of good marriage. One Haitian human rights activist claimed, "When a girl is about to get married, members on both sides of the family are anxious to know if she is a virgin. If she is not, this is dishonor for the girl and especially for the family. You lose your honor when you have been violated. You do not want to give publicity to the action" (Ibid.). Because marriage presents the valuable possibility of moving upward in

society,[28] damaging any chances of it is to be avoided at all costs. Even if silencing can be detrimental the victim's mental state, she is forced to keep the incident hidden. In this respect, a woman not only experiences sexual violence but also violence of the climate of insecurity that emphasizes social mobility.

> "The taboo which surrounds the question of sexuality in Haiti causes the woman who is the victim of rape or sexual harassment to be constrained to silence, either because the judicial system doesn't protect her enough, or because in revealing the crime, she puts her whole future at stake. For the woman who is a victim of rape will find it difficult to find a suitable man to marry her. This situation affects the raped victim, not only in her femininity and pride, but also in her morality and her psychological balance." (HRW, 1994)

This passage illustrates how stigma as a victim of violence perpetuates insecurity by feeding trauma into her life. As the climate of insecurity demands marriage as a survival strategy and a prime opportunity for socioeconomic mobility, the focus of dealing with the aftermath of violence becomes marrying well instead of preserving their pride as women and the well-being of their mental state. This is traumatic for the victim because she is forced to hide the incidence of violence and prevented from seeking appropriate support. This traumatic insecurity is further compounded by the fact that she will always be in fear of someone finding out and stigmatizing her as a victim of sexual violence.

Even a woman who is already married does not escape from the possibility of facing stigma by her husband/partner and the community. There exists fear that the husband/partner will abandon her if he finds out that she has been sexually violated, for she appears promiscuous. The victim of sexual violence is neither exempt from stigmatizing gazes by her community. One journalist from Port-au-Prince remarked, "once you know someone has been raped it is hard to

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[28] The majority of women in the elite class obtain their privileged position through marriage (Charles, 1995b, 143).

give them moral support. You feel embarrassed for the person. And there are certainly cases where the husband leaves" (HRW, 1994). Thus, the stigmatizing impact of sexual violence on one's reputation leads a female victim to "repress her pain and live with her frustrations" and to establish "mechanisms which bury her even further until she accepts the facts as inevitable fate" (Ibid.). Thus, such repression of suffering makes the victim's life traumatic and perpetuates the climate of insecurity.

b. Shame and humiliation

> *"[W]hen you've been raped, it's as though you're shunned from society: you shouldn't study; you shouldn't go to the hospital; you should stay in a corner. Being raped, it makes you... a person without rights, a person rejected from society and now, in the neighbourhood I live in, it's as though I am raped every day because every day someone reminds me that I've been raped and that I am nothing, that I should put myself in a corner, that I shouldn't speak, I should say nothing." (Amnesty International, 2008a)*

This quote by Rosa, a Haitian girl who was raped at age 15 and then again at age 20, poignantly illustrates the degree of shame and humiliation felt by a victim of violence. Erica James found in her research with abused women in Haiti that "the most common laments among victims were feelings of shame, humiliation, powerlessness, and isolation or disconnection from their families and communities" (2004, 137). These emotions make Rosa feel like she is nothing, a person without rights who needs to stop performing all normal functions of life. In the midst of these emotions occurs the "social death" of a victim by which she is alienated from her social networks due to shame (Ibid.). In Rosa's case, social death is represented by her feeling of rejection from society and the belief that she should remain in a corner and never speak. Shame and humiliation, like stigma, make the victim want to hide herself, thereby leading her to internalize the trauma of violence and preventing her from speaking out about the incident.

Shame and humiliation may also lead the victim to experience "feelings of depersonalization," in which she feels her body is not her own (James, 2004, 138). Such manifestation of trauma means that shame induces the victim to separate or save herself from the bodily space that was violated. In *Breath, Eyes, and Memory*, this body is represented by Haiti. Martine wants to dissociate herself from the reminders of rape by running away from this space of terror. By depersonalizing her homeland, she is able to give up everything she knows and owns, and to move to a foreign land. This distancing from the bodily entity of violence stems from the transformation of Haiti in her mind as a space that does nothing but identify her as a rape victim.

Rosa's remark that she feels like she is being raped every day emphasizes that violence against women is not an act that occurs at one point and ends there. Trauma due to shame and humiliation remain within the victim. There exists a Haitian proverb that says, *Bay kou bliye, pote mak sonje*, which translates to "the giver of the blow forgets, the bearer of the scar remembers" (Martsolf, 2004, 293). Even after the physical act of violence, the victim continues to suffer from the somatic and mental trauma that violence leaves behind. In a study that assessed the impact of childhood maltreatment on mental and physical health on Haitian adults, it was found that 53.9% of victims who faced violence as a child had scores indicative of major depression as adults (Ibid., 296). This demonstrates the longevity of trauma. Mental health consequences remain for a long time, because shame and humiliation wear down the victim by destroying her self-worth and leading her to isolate herself from society. This isolation perpetuates the victim's climate of insecurity as she feels alone and rejected from society.

c. Silencing

The silencing of the incident contributes to trauma, because a woman must deal with it on her own. A victim may never find a way to come to terms with the incident unless she receives external support. Unfortunately, studies from Haiti highlight that the majority keep quiet about their experiences. Not only is there is a lack of appropriate legal and medical infrastructure to help victims, but also many times they choose not to report the incident. The 2000 DHS reported that among women who experienced violence by anyone, 68.7% responded they did not seek any help. Of the 31.3% who did seek help, 19.7% turned to their family; only 1.6% sought help from the police, 1.0% from a lawyer, and 1.0% from a doctor (Kishor & Johnson, 2004, 24). In a 1996 study by CHREPROF, 66% of victims kept their experience of gender-based violence secret for the following reasons: fear of social judgment (32%), reprisal (22%), and lack of appropriate legal measures (14%) (Fuller, 1999). This study confirms that the fear of being stigmatized occupies a significant part of keeping the incident hidden. Such depth of silencing exacerbates the climate of insecurity for the victim, because in addition to the challenging living conditions, she must deal with the trauma of violence without any help. This situation parallels feminization of insecurity in which a woman as the head of the household bears the burden of ensuring the survival of her household by herself.

Regarding the scarcity of legal measures to seek justice, the following quotes from a 1994 HRW report highlight why a victim would not report a case of violence. The first two are by female victims of sexual assault, and the third is by the UN/OAS Civilian Mission's former director of legal services, William O'Neill.

> 1) *We never went to the police. There would have been no use doing this. It would just have resulted in more hardship and terror for the family, and we were all too shocked by*

my daughter's death and everything else that happened. We were more concerned with our safety and preventing further problems.

2) *I did not file a police report. I would never speak to the police. I have heard that it is worse when you talk to them. You really risk your life going to talk to them because everyone knows they are part of the crime problem.*

3) *There is no reason for anyone, and especially a victim of rape, particularly if her assailants are the military, paramilitary forces, or anyone else even nebulously associated with the military, to believe that there is a chance for judicial redress. It just won't happen. Furthermore, the woman would probably be putting her life in danger. It is no accident that the justice system in Haiti does not work. The government [military authorities] has fostered this and benefits from it. (HRW, 1994)*

The general perception seems that there is no point in reporting violence, for neither the police nor other authority figures are to be trusted. In fact, reporting violence to these personnel may further endanger the victim, because they take part in perpetrating the crimes. O'Neill, who stated that authorities are actually benefitting from not providing justice to the population, cited corruption of the Haitian judicial system as its primary failure to address political sexual violence against women (HRW, 1994). Thus, it is senseless even to believe a victim would obtain any judicial redress. The first quote by a sexual assault victim also reveals that because sexual violence is a shaming act, the family preferred to keep it within their household and not let it spread. Due to the fear of stigma and inability to communicate the incident to someone who can effectively help, the victims of violence continue to live silently with traumatic reminders of violence.

This act of silencing was evident in the case of violence against Yvonne Hakim Rimpel. After she was tortured, Duvalier drove her into silence by threatening to go after her family if she were to attract international attention to the incident. Fear for the safety of her family members perpetuated a climate of insecurity for Yvonne, who did not dare speak out against Duvalier again. She not only shut down the production of her newspaper and falsely acknowledged that

she had no problem with Duvalier, but also remained silent about the incident. She never revealed the identities of the *Macoutes* who abused her even though she knew who they were and never recounted the entire story of her torture to her family until she was nearing death. Although her neighbors knew something had happened to her, none of them knew of exactly what it was. Because she kept quiet, Yvonne's case was neither known nor discussed publicly until after her death (Marcelin, 2011). This highlights the silencing imposed via Duvalier's intimidation tactic that led Yvonne to feel insecure about her safety and the safety of her family.

Even if a victim of violence musters up enough courage to report her case, she is severely limited by other barriers standing in her way of obtaining judicial redress. If the victim is not a virgin, the court may take the case less seriously and dismiss it. This implies that a woman's value is largely assessed in terms of her virginity, and once it is lost her worth as a person is significantly diminished (Rey, 1999, 80). Another obstacle is getting hold of the medical certificate, which is required by court to prove rape. These are almost impossible for many women to obtain, because one must go to the doctor and have enough money to pay for transportation and medical services (Fuller, 1999). In this respect, poor women are disadvantaged in seeking recompense, because they are not likely to obtain a legitimate medical certificate to prove that they were violated.

In sum, violence against women perpetuates the climate of insecurity that women face as victims, for many rarely find justice and constantly suffer the traumatic aftermath of violence without much external support. The three elements of trauma—stigma, shame/humiliation, and silencing—foster insecurity in the lives of victims, because trauma keeps them in fear and forces them to internalize their suffering. In addition to facing challenges of living, female victims of

violence, especially sexual assault, must worry about being stigmatized as rape victims and judged as promiscuous if people find out about the incident. Being raped may affect chances of marriage for young girls, and so they are forced to hide their victim status. Moreover, after violence occurs, the victim is left with feelings of shame and humiliation, causing them to isolate themselves from society and to keep quiet about their traumatic experiences. These elements exacerbate the everyday insecurity experienced by women in Haiti. Thus, the climate of insecurity and violence demonstrate a reciprocal relationship; just as this climate facilitates violence against women, the latter perpetuates the country's climate of insecurity.

CONCLUSION

Piti piti zwazo fe nich li.
Haitian Proverb: Bit by bit a bird builds her nest.

In this thesis, I argue that violence against women in Haiti presents an unconventional portrait, as many sectors of the female population, including the educated and wealthy, are vulnerable to violence within the climate of insecurity. Subsequently, the traumatic consequences perpetuate this insecure environment, generating reciprocity between the climate of insecurity and violence against women.

Paul Farmer rightly claims that the structure of Haitian society leads those at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy to suffer disproportionately from violence (1996, 263). Poverty and social inequality, which become "the primary and determining conditions of [women's] lives," inherently takes away their locus of control and their ability to protect themselves (Ibid., 275). However, this understanding of the overwhelming insecurity for the poor simplifies some elements of the situation of violence against women in Haiti. Although it is true that in some cases those at the bottom of the socioeconomic status face greater rates of violence since they may be more economically dependent on their male partners or lack the resources to protect themselves, privileged women are not exempt. Haiti's political turmoil targets almost all sectors of the population and evokes violent insecurities, as demonstrated by the case of Yvonne Hakim Rimpel, a privileged and educated woman. Thus, the challenges imposed by social, economic, and political instabilities make living within the climate of insecurity a risk factor for violence.

My research suggests that empowering women through educational and financial resources, however important, is not in itself enough to reduce violence against women in Haiti.

Educational and economic empowerment must be linked to further public awareness of women's equality, and of the toxic social contribution of violence against women. Public health campaigns against violence against women, and improved legal response to crimes of violence against women, can help to redress this hidden epidemic. In tandem with public awareness of women's inherent equality and their rights not to be subject to violence, the equality between partners that is the one zone of safety for Haitian women needs to be pursued in terms of mitigation of the climate of insecurity across gender and class demographics.

Despite this grim reality of violence against women in Haiti, there are some glimmers of hope. With respect to Yvonne Hakim Rimpel, the fight she put up to improve conditions for Haitian women has left a great imprint on the population. Usually when women are violated, it is extremely challenging for them to reintegrate into society, but the fact that Rimpel remained in Haiti and was able to face society after her encounter with Duvalier's brutality represents her resilience and strength. Nowadays, as a symbol of aspiration, Rimpel inspires both young and old Haitian women who want to achieve challenging feats in the face of various obstacles (Marcelin, 2011).

In addition to serving as a figure of hope, there have been several instances of posthumous political integration and recognition of Rimpel's struggle for women in Haiti. First, the Haitian Minister of Social Condition for Women created a shelter for battered women that she called the Yvonne Hakim Rimpel Center. Second, UNESCO, which gives a handful of scholarships to journalists who suffer repression, named one of their scholarships for female journalists the Yvonne Hakim Rimpel prize. Third, the street on which she was found after being violated is now named after her. Lastly, the Haitian Ministry of Culture devised a rule of transparency named after Rimpel. This regulation states that every Wednesday the Ministry must

give public address to people with the intention of explaining what is going on in the government (Marcelin, 2011). These examples of Yvonne's posthumous recognition demonstrate that although she faced great insecurities after the incidence of violence, her struggle left an enduring impact on Haitian society that now greatly respects her.

Even for women who do not have such high profile as Yvonne Hakim Rimpel, being victimized by violence may motivate them to take action and seek justice. Erica James in her research noted that victims of violence engaged in the "performance of human rights" in which they spoke out about their circumstances in an attempt to gain recognition as legitimate sufferers and to shield themselves from further blows of *ensekirite*. Through their performance, female victims "appropriated their own suffering and the victim identity as means towards recognition or political subjectivity, as well as strategies for survival and resistance (James, 2010a, 25). Although the extent of actions they could take and the humanitarian responses they would receive in return were unfortunately limited, by breaking out of their silence women converted their identities as silenced and passive victims into active agents within the climate of insecurity.

Moreover, Haiti has introduced various legal changes expanding women's rights and moving towards a more equitable environment for women. After several years of fighting for women's suffrage, the Ligue Feminine d'Action Sociale helped to obtain a limited right to vote for women with their husbands' permission in 1950; in 1957 full equal suffrage was granted (Fuller, 1999). Following this change, women became eligible to hold office in the political arena, and several female figures have since occupied prestigious positions. Although for a short period of less than a year, in 1990 Haiti elected its first female president, Ertha Pascal Truillot, an occurrence that has yet to be seen even in the United States. Two female prime ministers have been elected so far: Claudette Werleigh (1995-1996) Michèle Pierre-Louis (2008-2009).

Currently, the Minister of Social Condition for Women is a woman (Marcelin, 2011). In addition, the Labour Code of 1961 granted equality regarding access to employment, salaries, and wages (CEDAW, 2008, 16). Another change in favor of women was a 1982 amendment to the Civil Code, which stated women were no longer minors accountable to their husbands and gave them equal legal status in marriage (CEDAW, 2008, 16; Fuller, 1999).

As previously mentioned in Chapter Three, the Penal Code revision of July 6, 2005 introduced changes that provided some criminal justice for women: (1) identifying rape as a crime against the person and significantly increasing penalties for sex offenders; (2) eliminating excuses for murder of a woman by a jealous husband, although excusing murder and injury in case of a reaction to aggression; and (3) decriminalizing adultery and thereby removing the discriminatory gender provisions (Sweeney, 2010). These revisions confer more protection on Haitian women, as they have increased the degree of punishments for rape criminals and stopped the practice of forgiving men's aggression in cases of adultery.

All these changes have led to a progress in status for women, demonstrating that Haitian society is gradually recognizing the importance of creating a more egalitarian society. Although some traces of inequality still remain to be addressed, the legal standing of women is improving, and the conditions for women have advanced since previous times when they could not do anything without authorization from their husbands/partners (Marcelin, 2011). For greater changes, the country needs to further acknowledge that women are valuable assets to society and to strive to foster an environment of secure and equitable conditions for Haitian women.
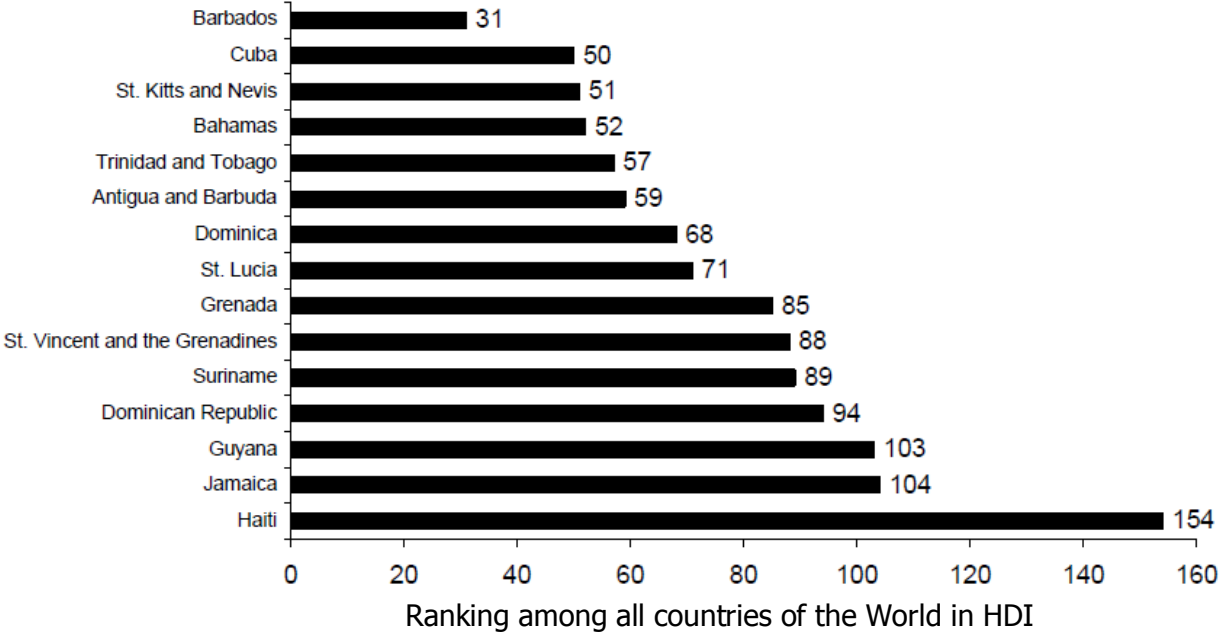
APPENDIX A

Types of Unions in Haiti, by Order of Stability (World Bank, 2002, 40)

| Type of Union	Definition	Characteristics
Marye	Legal marriage	Generally involves collaboration and stability. In rural areas, it is not commonly practiced because of costly rituals and ceremonies. The man is usually obligated to provide economic support for the woman and children.
Place	To set up a household	Generally involves collaboration and can be as stable as *marye*. Originally created as a form of partnership because rural residents did not trust the legal system and civil officials, and wanted to avoid costly weddings and the influence of the state or Church in restricting partners.
Vivavek/Menaj	To live as a pair	May or may not involve cohabitation; less stable than *place*. Male economic support is limited.
Remen	Lover	More common among young people in rural areas, and involves sexual relations. May or may not lead to *place*.
Fyanse	Engaged	More prevalent among young people in urban areas, and generally practiced by higher social economic classes.
Antente, Flirte, Wik'en	Casual	Involves sexual relations that are unstable and casual.

Ranking of Caribbean Countries in the Human Development Index (World Bank, 2007, 3)

APPENDIX C

Murder Rates for Countries of the World vs. GDP per Capita, Late 1990s (World Bank, 2007, vi)
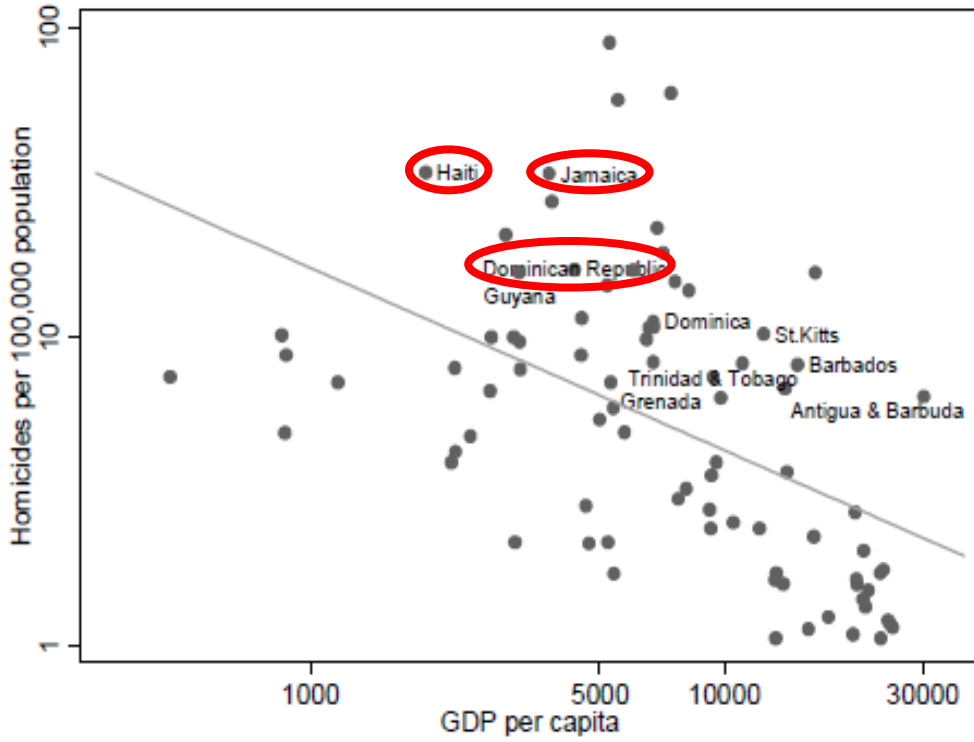
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