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The University of San Francisco

COUNTER-NARRATIVES: HAITIANS IN ECONOMIC TRANSITION

A Dissertation Presented  
To  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
Department of International Multicultural Education

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

By

Patricia Barthaud  
University of San Francisco  
July 2020

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Counter-Narratives: Haitians in Economic Transition

The stories of Haiti and the Haitian people have often been filtered through the sensibilities of those who are not of that nation nor of African ancestry. Haitian people deserve the opportunity to tell their authentic stories of their lived realities. This study presents the stories of a small group of Haitian young people under the age of 40 who incorporated their passions into viable work to improve economic circumstances for themselves, their communities, and their country. Based upon narrative inquiry, data collection included interviews, observations, and documents gathered in Haiti. The results produced a complex portrait of participants who embraced opportunities and mitigated obstacles as best as they were able. Participants also offered suggestions for effective partnerships with INGOs. Despite frustration with the negative media images projected onto Haitians from the global community, the participants expressed a distinct love of their country and desire for respect from the rest of the world. Overall, this study's participants offered a sense of joy in their Haitian identity and an understanding that their individual and collective success would contribute to Haiti's standing in the world.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

<u>Patricia Barthaud</u> Candidate	<u>July 15, 2020</u> Date
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Dissertation Committee

<u>Susan Roberta Katz</u> Chairperson	<u>July 15, 2020</u>
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<u>Shabnam Koirala Azad</u>	<u>April 30, 2020</u>
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<u>Genevieve Negron Gonzales</u>	<u>April 30, 2020</u>
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## **DEDICATION**

*For my mother, Gloria Manuel Broussard, and my grandmother, Amelia Hector Manuel.*

*Thank you for instilling in me the love of words, reading, art, dance and music.*

*Thank you for exposing me to different religions, languages, nature, and the example of reaching higher to quench my curiosity and explore possibilities. Most significantly,*

*thank you for stressing the importance of the Golden Rule:*

*Do unto others as ye shall have them do unto you.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There is no way I would have been able to accomplish this milestone without the encouragement of my family, friends, fellow students, and my dissertation committee. I extend my deepest gratitude to my committee chairperson, Dr. Susan Roberta Katz. Thank you for your patience, kindness and empathy as we completed this journey together. Thank you to Dr. Shabnam Koirala Azad for suggesting another path toward my scholarship. Your words and warmth have guided my inquiry and will continue to do so in the future. Thank you to Dr. Genevieve Negrón Gonzales for challenging my assumptions.

To my fellow students in this wonderful program dedicated to Human Rights Education: the brilliance of thought and action I witnessed from you expanded my vision of academe and my place in it. Thank you, my Diss Buddy, Dr. Nancy Ryoo. Thank you, Dr. Maisha Beasley, Dr. Annie Adamian, Dr. Melissa Canlas, and Victoria Isabel Duran.

To my friends who have gracefully walked with me through the many fluctuations of this journey, thank you is not enough recognition, yet I humbly offer it to you all. A special note of gratitude to Rella LaFear, Patricia Forte, and Karen Anzaldo who suffered through many phone conversations with my craze on the other end of the line. Thank you to my Writing Salon colleagues Janet Mills and Pamela Holton. Without your dedication to the written word, your humor and support, this journey might not be complete.

Thank you to my family who did not always understand why I would approach this milestone at my age in the first place and supported me anyway. To my sister Cynthia Broussard, thank you for putting up with my sometimes mercurial moods

through all of your health issues. To my lovely son Yves-Langston Barthaud, I so appreciate your steadfast belief in my capabilities. You inspire me most of all.

Finally, this dissertation would not exist if it had not been for the cooperation and generosity of the study participants. They opened their hearts to me and worked with me even when I am sure it was inconvenient. As my work continues, I will try to earn the trust the participants put in my scholarship.

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## **CHAPTER I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

### **Personal Introduction**

Frederick Douglass is my hero, since about 7<sup>th</sup> grade. My classroom had a picture of him on the wall: big face, big mane of gray tinged white hair, a stern yet inviting gaze. Douglass escaped enslavement while still a child. Important to me, he learned to read and write and eventually garnered accolades for his oratory. I am a life-long reader. Douglass endorsed women's suffrage; I was impressed with that. He went on to become Consul General to Haiti. That too impressed me.

A few years ago, as a member of the Mosaic Conference, centered on improving increased representation of people of color in our national parks, I was fortunate enough to visit Frederick Douglass' home, a national historic site, in Washington D.C. It was closed, but I stood on his porch and peered through a window and saw the weights he lifted as part of his exercise regime. Our guide mentioned that Douglas commuted miles from his home on a hill to and from the Capitol, on foot. I too like to walk miles at a time.

That day, I walked from Douglass' porch, down a path that led to a mini red brick cabin with a side chimney that stretched from the ground to several feet above the roof. It sat behind the home he shared with his wife. This was Douglass' writing studio. My heart swelled. I stood transfixed. I pictured him sitting, contemplating, ruminating, then writing his thoughts onto paper. My passion is writing.

This experience both excited and saddened me. Why? It was exciting to acknowledge the accomplishments of this once-enslaved man. Once free, he did something. Douglass used his considerable abilities to benefit society as a whole. In that environment, I was saddened. I thought of all the black Africans who remained contained

as chattel after he escaped. How many minds did we lose? What innovations do we not enjoy today? What have we not built upon? What contributions that may have pushed our society forward, higher, have we missed because of white ego? I don't know; we don't know. That is a downfall of a Euro-centered socio/economic/political White supremacy.

What has been happening to individual African peoples in the U.S. is happening to Haiti as a country built by people of African descent. I visited Haiti for the first time in 2014 on a Global Exchange Reality Tour to see the Haiti tourists don't normally see. We were seven people. In the van on the way to our hotel, we passed by many people and businesses. One of the women in our group asked in a surprised voice, "They have hair salons here?" When recounting adventures I have experienced in Haiti, someone will, in an incredulous tone, ask, "They have clubs in Haiti?" or, "They have fun in Haiti; can they have fun in Haiti?"

I am tired, so tired of people assuming the only attribute Haitian people experience is misery and ineptitude. It is frustrating to me that the only thing associated with Haitian people is strife. I believe that impression is a social construct orchestrated among the U.S. government, the media, and business entities. I am so over it. Consequently, I want to contribute to a different perspective of Haiti - the Haiti I have experienced through the admittedly short periods of time I spent there. Haiti is not perfect, yet I encountered all sorts of people from economists, hotel owners, hotel workers, community activists, and farmers, to name a few. I marveled at the myriad of hairstyles Haitian women created. I love Pikliz, a Haitian accompaniment to any meal that is somewhere between coleslaw and Kimchee. A Haitian man once asked me, "Don't you know Haitian men are builders?" It is interesting that a Haitian family will take years

to build a home as they garner the funds. When the home is completed, they owe no one and no bank. I find the patience and persistence astonishing, only because I don't think I could wait that long.

Rush hour is an early morning flotilla of people streaming downhill, on foot, to work in downtown Port-au-Prince (PAP). The men in crisp short-sleeved shirts with fragrant colognes surrounding them. There are families all piled on a moto to drop the little ones off at school. There too are the families lined up in SUV's in front of the schools that remind me of the many mornings I was in the same circumstance with my child. Women sweep the streets with all sorts of brooms that I have never seen, before traffic begins. I went to beaches that look like something out of a movie set. The difference was Haitians were enjoying the water.

So much of the value of Haiti and its people is not represented outside of the country. As an African American educator, my purpose with this study is to present a different story than we commonly hear: to present Haitians as rounded people, the unexpected counter to a well-worn narrative of paucity. My study provides a platform for a group of Haitian young people under the age of 40 to voice their narratives considering their truths of interests and how they plan to achieve their goals with the attendant nuance no one else could provide.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Stories paint pictures that frame people and events from a particular perspective, in a particular manner. Stories shape our perception of how we see and interpret the world and our place in it. Consequently, who is directing the narrative matters. Too often, stories of Haiti and the Haitian people have been filtered through the sensibilities of those

who are not of that nation, nor of African ancestry. Telling their story in their way affords Haitian people the opportunity to control the narrative on the various aspects of their lives. Haitian storytellers may paint a more realistic picture of themselves and what they value, in contrast to the negative racially tinged narrative currently held as truth in the United States.

The stereotypical perception of the Haitian people as a ne'er do well, born without the innate ability to create and sustain an economically viable state or lives, persists as a narrative for many people in the United States. To mitigate this impression, the Haitian people deserve the opportunity to tell their authentic stories of their lived realities, and the U.S. public deserves the opportunity to listen. Narratives that highlight the economic agency of the Haitian people would have the potential to present new information of resistance against the hegemonic economic policies of the United States toward Haiti.

When reading an article or a book about Haiti, the reader generally first encounters the author's statement that Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere (Potter, 2009). This claim is usually followed by a recounting of the many things that have gone wrong for Haitians in the past and the present: the decline of trading power post-statehood, the corrupt governments, the complicated land ownership policies, the poor quality of education for its citizens, the desecration of the land, and the apparent inability to sustain an economically viable quality of life, despite being a resilient people. As Potter (2009) stated in her study on U.S. media images of Haiti, "These articles place the blame of the country's problems entirely on Haiti itself, with little regard for the outside forces that also contributed to the country's present-day state" (p. 208).

Almost universally, the Haitian people are portrayed in the U.S. media as those who cannot do for themselves. While some are unable to do so (as is true for all peoples!), the major story to be told about the Haitian people is one of resilience and resistance. At the root of the problem of the distorted perception of Haitians is the relationship between the U.S. government's neoliberal policy and enduring negative racial frames toward the Haitian people who are of African descent. The most recognizable frame is criminality – portraying people of African descent as criminal beings. It is a narrative that preserves the hegemonic trope of the white male as superior to all peoples, keeping the dynamic of moral power over peoples and countries of color.

Sommers, Apfelbaum, Dukes, Toosi and Wang (2006) address this media criminality construct associated with African Haitians with a similar narrative for African Americans. They conducted an analysis of the media coverage of Katrina Hurricane victims. Specifically, they examined the “relationship between race and coverage of the crisis” (p. 32). One of the major story angles Sommers et al. (2006) followed was that of violent crime post-Katrina. The researchers found media framed Katrina victims as actively trying to hurt those sent in to help them, committing killings, and raping children. According to Sommers et al. (2006), it was later discovered that these acts either never occurred or did not occur in the numbers initially reported by the media and district bureaucrats. Sommers et al. (2006) and Celeste (2013) both note that media chooses to publish “familiar cultural symbols” to grab their dominant demographic and that minority groups cannot recognize themselves in news stories since they are not the target audience (p. 71). The same may be said of Haitians who read media depictions that portray them as cognitively deficient and forbidding.

I wanted this study to do the unconventional in that it goes directly to the voice of the everyday Haitian person to gather information concerning how they feel about the trope of criminality foisted upon them. I wanted to obtain responses from the person who picks up visitors to Haiti at the airport; the person who works in a boutique they may visit; the person who answers cultural inquiries on tours of the country. It was interesting to hear the study participants react to expectations that they are somehow criminals, just because they are of African descent. My intent was to gather information on whether or not that frame of criminality manifests itself in participants' interactions with foreign non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

The second frame is viewing human beings as speechless objects. Usually in media portrayals of people of African descent, they are the persons spoken about, not the ones speaking. In the aftermath of the 2010 Haitian earthquake, Pressley-Sanon (2011) examines the power dynamic and the gaze of foreign photojournalists based in a colonial narrative of African people. Pressley-Sanon's (2011) goal is to motivate a rethinking of the dominant hegemonic culture. She examines the turnabout of the Haitian person asking questions of or making statements to the foreigner in order to make their viewpoint known.

Pressley-Sanon (2011) tells the story of a U.S. journalist who spent time with a young Haitian woman living in a tent city, immediately after the woman has been "gang-raped and disfigured" (p. 17). As the main story, the journalist uses her negative pre-conceived notions of and experiences in Haiti. Eventually, without consent from the traumatized rape victim, the journalist takes a photo of her on her cell phone. She follows with an in-the-moment tweeted story including the Haitian woman's name and directions

to her domicile. Later, in a twist of fate provided by Haitian-American writer, Edwidge Danticat, the woman was given the opportunity to speak for herself. She told the reporter, ““You have no right to speak of my story”” (p. 18). Pressley-Sanon (2011) uses this encounter as an example of the “silent other” speaking back, claiming her power to be heard in her way. My role in this study is that of the middle person, sharing the voices of a group of Haitian people who try to exert power over their lives through economics.

The third frame is of Haitians as heathens. Vodou is a religion that is not well respected in the U. S. Its Haitian congregants are considered heathens, non-believers. Michel (2006) defines it as follows, “Vodou is central to the Haitian experience and as such cannot be abstracted from the day-to-day life of its followers” (p. 28). Ramsey (2012) gives an account of the demand for religious respectability by a group of “Haiti- and international based scholars and scholar-practitioners” (p. 28) in their request for the Library of Congress to change the subject headings of Voodooism and Voodoo in the listings to the preferred accepted name of Vodou (p. 14). Ramsey (2012) echoes the harm of “othering” frames noted by Celeste (2013) of minimizing Haitians’ contributions to their society. In relation to my study, there is the possibility that questions of religion may be addressed in conversations with foreign colleagues, or clients whom the study participants encounter.

As previously mentioned, U.S. neoliberal economic policy complements the negative racial frames concerning Haiti and its people. Chomsky (1999) defines neoliberalism (also known as the Washington consensus) as a set of “market-oriented principles” the U.S. government and U.S.-influenced powerful global fiscal entities have devised to rearrange weaker states’ infrastructure to their own benefit. The rules mean to



“liberalize trade and finance... let markets set the price... end inflation, privatize” (pp. 19-20). Chomsky (1999) continues by arguing that those who control the neoliberal politic are the scions of private industry, in particular, “huge corporations that control much of the international economy and have the means to dominate policy formation as well as the structuring of thought and opinion” (p. 20).

Neoliberal economic policy means that a few control the many, both in fiscal and in social terms (Chomsky, 1999). Commensurate with other countries where neoliberal policies have been exacerbated by the north-south divide, one of the results felt by Haitians is a shift from an agrarian society to an industrial manufacturing society. In a culture where people previously sustained their families by farming and exporting their crops, they are now vying for below minimum wage manufacturing jobs in cities, leading to lives of fiscal impracticality. In the same instance, U.S. corporations and the Haitian elite are gaining major profits from the invocation of these neoliberal policies (Chomsky, 1997).

A significant number of Haitian people, despite U.S. neoliberal economic policies toward their country, go about the business of doing what they need to do to raise the level of economic capability in their communities (Barthaud, 2014). It is accurate to say that Haitians may welcome some assistance from INGOs and individual volunteers. However, contrary to what is generally mentioned about the people being so hopeless and helpless, in general, rather than accepting help with no input of their own, Haitian people would prefer to collaborate with those respectfully offering aid (Maurer, 2013).

Due to U.S. neoliberal economic policy toward Haiti and the Haitian people, coupled with the persistent negative racial narrative, a more complex, realistic counter-

narrative is needed to offset these stereotypical perceptions. Such a counter-narrative would permit the Haitian people to inform the U.S. public of who they are and what they are doing for themselves to raise their standard of living. In addition, a counter-narrative may prove useful to those from the United States, individuals and INGOs alike with good intentions when offering aid to the Haitian community. This new chronicle may provide information to better comprehend what Haitians at the grassroots level want for themselves and effective partnerships with the international community in the Haitian quest for self-determination for themselves and their country.

### **Background and Need**

Fundamentally, a historical perspective is necessary to understand what Haitian people face when trying to improve their economic circumstances. Since 1804 when the Haitian Revolution fostered the establishment of an ethnically African sovereign state in the Western hemisphere, the Haitian people have been thwarted in their attempts toward self-determination and building a nation they want for themselves. Like most people of African descent all over the world, Haitians are usually characterized as less than human. This sentiment has continued to exist from the time of enslaved African peoples noted in James (1989) "...the cargo came up on deck..." (p. 9). Dash (2008) states "...nineteenth-century Eurocentrism...saw the creation of a modern black state as an aberration" (p. 32). The myth, called "Haitian Exceptionalism," espouses that Haitians are so different from the norm of Western civilization in physical characteristics, language and culture that they cannot acclimate to modernity, and consequently must be treated as premodern entities. Such an attitude is borne out today in U.S. economic neo-liberal policies toward the state of Haiti. As Harvey (2005) writes:

Neo-liberalism is... a theory of political economic practices that proposes that political well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices... deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision have been all too common. (p. 2)

Palley (2005) further delineates what occurs to people as a direct result of such policies:

Neoliberal policy has consistently sought to promote the cause of labor market deregulation. This has taken the form of allowing the real value of the minimum wage to fall, undermining unions, and generally creating a labor market climate of employment insecurity. In this, neoliberal policy has been true to its theory, which maintains that employment protections and wage rigidities are not needed. The result has been widening wage and income inequality. (p. 5)

Both Harvey (2005) and Palley (2005) observe how neoliberal policies are affecting the Haitian people. The assumption is that the Haitian government is incapable of comprehending a free market system; therefore, it should refrain from interfering in setting rules to safeguard the economic status of Haitian citizens. The government should step aside and let the markets fluctuate even in the face of lower wages and an inferior quality of life for its people.

### *U.S. economic policy toward Haiti*

As a sovereign people, Haitians have the economic right to self-govern and to live on terms they deem best for themselves. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1976) specifically notes, “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (Article 1:1). This reading of the ICESCR (1976) treaty is particularly potent as it builds on the aspirational Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948). The UDHR instructs in Article 22 that these rights are “indispensable for [their] dignity and the free development of [their] personality.” This article infers that a human being has the right to pursue personal interests toward a satisfactory life of their choice when possible. Article 23 notes that persons have the right to enjoy the dignity of work, including a fair wage for services rendered. Article 26 states that persons have the right to develop their personality through education, indicating access to adequate schooling. These rights form part of the background of social security for Haitian people to take steps to improve their quality of life, which reflects their interests and afford them a practical living wage.

According to the United States Department of State (USDS) (2013), U.S. economic policy toward Haiti purports to “foster economic growth, enhance government capacity, and strengthen democracy; help alleviate poverty...” (Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1982.htm>). Yet today, 80% of Haitians live in poverty, on less than \$2 per day, according to World Bank (2014) records.

In Haiti, the U.S. dollar circulates freely, meaning it is in direct competition with the gourde, Haiti’s indigenous currency. A result of a relaxed trade policy is found in

Edmonds' (2012) statement, "Under the dictatorship of the Duvaliers (1957-1986), they provided an investment friendly climate by enacting minimal taxes, violently banning trade unions, preserving starvation wages, and a removal of any restrictions on the movement of capital" (p. 441). Duty free arrangements between the United States and the Haitian governments foster economic growth for U.S. corporations and their Haitian corporate trading partners. However, these agreements are not in the best interests of the Haitian masses who have to make a living adequate to fulfill food, shelter, clothing, and dignity needs.

As Katz (2010) states, "loosening trade barriers has only exacerbated hunger in Haiti" (p. 1). For instance, during his tenure in office, former President Bill Clinton forged an agreement with the Haitian government to reduce the tariffs on rice exports from his home state of Arkansas to Haiti (Katz, 2010). Until then, Haitian farmers had produced enough rice for domestic purposes and for export (Katz, 2010). After the agreement went into effect, rice imported from the United States was less expensive than homegrown Haitian rice. Haitian people bought the less expensive product. Rice farmers were forced to leave their farms and migrate to the city to find other jobs. In this circumstance, the loosening of trade regulations harmed the Haitian people in that it not only changed how some earned their living, but also induced relocation from rural to urban areas, thereby negatively affecting the development of their personality and their quality of life (Katz, 2010).

### ***International non-governmental organization (INGO) aid***

Combined with U.S. neoliberal economic policies, persistent negative racial images influence how we in the U.S. make sense of Haiti. This phenomenon leads to

another impediment that Haitians must mitigate when partnering with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and volunteers. In their study of agenda setting via U.S. media coverage of foreign nations, Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) found that “The more negative coverage a nation received, the more likely respondents were to think negatively about the nation” (abstract).

Given the plethora of negative racial images toward the Haitian people, it seems to follow they sometimes must work with INGOs and individuals, who may have good intentions, but often develop programs that do not meet their needs. If the standard narrative of the Haitian people is that they cannot do for themselves because of some innate lack of maturity, then that message, combined with societal misgivings toward people of African descent, will contribute to decisions for how to extend a helping hand. Erroneous and misleading information to the U.S. public is not helpful to Haitians. Negative U.S. media coverage of Haiti and its people only buttress the demeaning racial narrative and is detrimental to any form of true partnership Haitians may want to form to attain their economic goals.

The historical myth of Haitian exceptionalism, ongoing neoliberal economic policies, and the attendant negative racial messages combine to create a toxic amalgamation. This dynamic produces educated skepticism among Haitians as to the motivation of INGOs and individuals who express interest in their well-being. Consequently, when the 2010 earthquake hit the island, the global community, including INGOs from the United States, descended upon Haiti. As Edmonds (2012) found, rather than giving true aid to the Haitian people who needed it, the priorities of INGOs were elsewhere. “Haiti remains in ruins, with INGOs benefitting from the extreme

privatization of the Haitian state, resulting in a patchwork system of services which are unaccountable to the Haitian people” (p. 439).

The activities of many well-meaning, and in some instances opportunistically arrogant, INGOs and individual volunteers in Haiti have been documented (Katz, 2013; Schuller, 2012). Those who work in INGOs often assume they have more knowledge about what is effective in unfamiliar lands such as Haiti than the Haitian people themselves. In this way, their efforts fail and do not contribute to the common good of the Haitian people. Schuller (2012) has studied INGOs and their effect on their Haitian clients. He quoted a Haitian woman’s sentiment about foreign aid and INGOs, ““They receive the aid. They drive fancy cars...they give you a coating of dust. As long as the aid passes through the bigwigs, we poor will never see a cent”” (p. 58). Ultimately, Haitians experience how many INGOs produce temporary fixes, line their pockets with funds meant for those they purport to aid, and then they leave. Another way is possible. Haitians must be heard to lessen wasted energy on INGO efforts that have little redeeming value in their lives, as they attempt to move forward economically.

### ***Haitian people under the age of 40***

Haitian historical background is replete with an overwhelming amount of negative imagery. To offset this negativity, in this study I focus on another dimension by having a conversation about the agency of the Haitian under 40 population. They, like those in other countries of color, seem to regard their governments, social situations, and economic circumstances with a gaze different from their parents’ generation. Worldwide, people of African ancestry are pushing back against others’ depictions of their lives.

For instance, in 2015 in anticipation of then President Obama's visit, CNN named Kenya as "a hotbed of terror" (Ma, 2015). Kenyans were incensed that this high-profile visit, by a President of the United States of Kenyan descent, was being framed in this manner. They fired back on social media including Twitter with #Someone tell CNN: "Unless you are the one bringing the terror, we are a hotbed of investment opportunities & great people #SomeoneTellCNN" (Dearden, 2015). Earlier that morning I heard young Kenyan entrepreneurs talk about the story on NPR. There was more to Kenya than a terror group. They were small business owners in technology and fashion among other sectors. The comment that attracted me the most was from a young woman who said they were no longer going to allow other people to tell their stories.

I believe it is incumbent upon people of African descent to tell our own stories. I believe that just as Kenyan people are investing in interesting projects for their lives, so too are Haitian people. We need to make these stories available to the public, to present a more authentic picture of who people of African descent are, and what in particular young Haitian people under 40 are pursuing to enrich their lives, their families and their communities.

Lessons can be learned from reading or listening to stories this Haitian population takes to exercise their personal power. People who think they have little in common with this segment of Haitian society may be able to see themselves reflected in stories of how these "others" traverse economic pressures, while building viable lives reflecting their dreams and values. They may employ drive, creativity, and optimism that allow them to persevere in resistance to U.S. economic policy. In some ways it is the act of agency itself, not the degree of success that is important. This Haitian segment act as citizens



worthy of a sovereign nation, even as other nations persist with activities to keep them down. Their accomplishments could be an example of what is possible here in the United States for people who think their economic circumstances cannot be surmounted in the face of similar neoliberal policies enacted by the U.S. government.

The historical background of racial disparity grounded in Haitian exceptionalism; the detrimental U.S. policy toward the Haitian economy; and the often-misguided assumptions of INGO efforts contribute to a flawed perception of the character of Haitian people. This study begins to fulfill the need to provide a group of Haitian people under the age of 40 an opportunity to tell their stories indicating their pursuit of economic agency, in resistance to the “common sense” narrative of their inability to effectively traverse these constructed barriers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

A counterbalance to the negative U.S. media, government and business constructs related to Haiti and its people is required. The dominant narrative is destructive to a people who exercised the agency to fight for and win the right to self-governance in concert with other free states. I believe that, rather than others speaking for and about them, it is important that Haitian people directly articulate their own narratives to better reflect who they are and what they find important for themselves and their country. Yet, it is noteworthy that the participants were responding to the questions I raised as an outside researcher; they were not spontaneously expounding their views on their circumstances. Consequently, the stories they shared were filtered through me, an outsider, and may not be what the participants would have shared with other Haitians in

the same period or the same space. Therefore, I truly value the participants' graciousness to impart their stories for this endeavor.

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study is to explore the life events and influences that have led a group of Haitian people under the age of 40 on their individual paths to expand their economic capacity in pursuit of an enhanced quality of life for themselves and their communities. This study endeavored to delineate the types of partnerships Haitian young people are interested in pursuing, and what effect (if any) negative racial stereotypes have had on their efforts to configure satisfying lives.

### **Research Questions**

A goal of this narrative inquiry is to provide a space for a group of Haitian people to present accounts of their realities as they attempt to exercise autonomy over their lives to fulfill their needs and reflect their personalities. Their stories impart a counter-narrative to non-Haitian constructs. Haitian people under 40 are an emerging group of young adults, embarking on career paths that may not always feed the dominant narrative of those outside their country. The study features five participants: a linguistics student, an artist, a mental health counselor / music mix-master, a community activist, and an entrepreneur who work to improve economic stability for themselves as well as their communities. I intentionally chose participants who reflect diverse life pursuits and perspectives.

The overarching research question is: How do five Haitian people under age 40 navigate their positions in the global and local economies? Sub-questions are the following:

- a) What circumstances have led this group of Haitian people to their work and/or

educational choices?

- b) What networks, alliances, and institutional spaces is this group of Haitians using in their quest for economic stability and self-reliance?
- c) In what ways do these five Haitian people express desire for international non-governmental organizations (IINGOs) partnerships vis a vis their quest for economic stability and self-reliance?
- d) What are the reflections of this group of Haitians on the impact of historical and current negative images of Haitian people?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Postcolonial theory effectively frames the narratives which the participants bring to this study. According to Rukundwa and van Aarde (2007), postcolonial theory “allows people emerging from social-political and economic domination to reclaim their negotiating space for equity” (p. 1190). This study depicts the steps that a segment of the Haitian population under age 40 is taking to challenge the specter of U.S. policy influence on their lives. Postcolonial theory features actions that formerly colonized peoples employ to extricate themselves from continued exploitation by a former colonizer and their cohorts.

#### ***Postcolonial theory***

Postcolonial theory is essential to my study of the present-day agency exhibited by a group of Haitian participants under the age of 40 in their choices to attain economic stability. Postcolonial theory is applied in this study to explore the varied forms of resistance the participants employ to earn a decent living despite the continued negative

influence of U.S. economic policies in their state, as well as their own government's complicity with those policies.

Fanon (1963) addresses postcolonialism through the concept of decolonization, which he describes as “an encounter between two congenitally antagonistic forces” engendered by the act of colonialism (p. 2). His premise is that violence begets violence. The colonists used violence to conquer indigenous people of color in foreign lands. They concocted a narrative in which the colonists were the superior beings, and the colonized were barely human, dispensable. Fanon argued that it was not enough to conquer them; the colonists injected the Manichaean system of polarization. Fanon and Philcox (1967) defined Manichaean, inferred from a Persian religious belief in light vs. dark as, “Black and White...the two poles of this world, poles in perpetual conflict” (p. 79). Fanon (1963) indicated the dichotomy of us against the other, good vs. bad was used in order to dehumanize the colonized people, equating them with animals and the opposite of moral beings. Fanon described this phenomenon as “a quintessence of evil” (p. 6). Decolonization is the process of a people removing themselves from an oppressive occupation by another to re-assert their innate humanity.

Although Fanon's (1963) premise of decolonization was set in relation to the 1954-1962 Algerian uprising against its French colonists, his theory is applicable to other peoples who have fought against the shackles of colonialism. Therefore, the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution comprised of enslaved African peoples engaged as a community to free themselves from French colonial rule and to take charge of their country is an apt historical reference for the tenets of postcolonial theory.

Fanon (1963) theorized that during the process of decolonization to reclaim their humanity, the formerly colonized constituents became divided among those in influential government positions, the business and intellectual elite, and the masses. The economic and social interests of those in government and the elite became entangled with the former colonists and their Western cohorts to the detriment of the masses. Fanon (1963) continued to argue that it is the masses who reject the colonists' vision of their natural superiority and have a clear vision of liberation for all of the formerly colonized. The business community and intellectuals then incorporate the thinking of the oppressors and forfeit their indigenous concept of communal liberation to the European belief in individual success, leading to a self-inflicted conflict of interest between themselves and their own people (pp. 9-11).

To further contextualize postcolonialism, Said (1979) contributed the concept of "Orientalism," which refers to a construction of the East, including India, Egypt, the Middle East, and Islam by Western Occidental scholars and theorists as a course of study. Said (1979) notes that Orientalism is based not in fact, but in a Western-spun narrative about people residing in the East without regard for or listening to Easterners express stories of the reality of their lives. Orientalism's narrative is grounded in a created hegemony of the Occidental as knowledge bearer and the Oriental as the receiver of that knowledge. Through this constructed narrative and a seeming buy-in from leaders in the East, Westerners are able to exercise economic, political, and cultural power over the perceived "weak partner" (p. 40).

According to Said (1979), after World War II the US built on the European fiction of the Orient and applied it to inhabitants of the Middle East in particular. Said (1979)

noted, “if the Arab occupies space enough for attention, it is as a negative value” (p. 861). In addition, Said (1979) addressed American social scientists’ absence of Arabian literature from their studies. He observed, “The net effect of this remarkable omission in modern American awareness of the Arab or Islamic Orient is to keep the region and its people conceptually emasculated, reduced to ‘attitudes,’ ‘trends,’ statistics: in short, dehumanized” (p. 876).

While Said (1979) regarded the Orient as a whole, Spivak (1988) used the term “subaltern” to speak of Western marginalization and otherization of China and India. Spivak’s (1988) examination of a conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze notes the intellectuals’ discourse of subjectivity often ignores their contribution to the objectivity of the other (p.272). For example, the philosophers speak of French Maoism in detail yet disavow precision in their “appropriation” of Chinese Maoism. Spivak (1988) cites how the difference between an intellectual’s conversation and their scholarly output informs the fault in their uninformed theorizing (p. 272).

Throughout her appraisal of the conversation, Spivak (1988) makes the point that Foucault and Deleuze’s academic discourse is often conducted through a lens of hegemonic hierarchy from the scholars’ viewpoint, even as they disavow that privilege. Spivak (1988) cites the difference between what Foucault, Deleuze, and others of their ilk write for public consumption and what they say in private. Spivak (1988) notes Foucault and his followers feature “an effectively heliocentric discourse...the historical sun of theory, the Subject of Europe” (p. 274). She also acknowledges the influence they have had on the scholarly literature that academics, students and other interested parties use to incorporate those ideas into their work about and /or in these countries. To make her

point, Spivak (1988) claims that in their professional capacity, “Western intellectual production is...complicit with Western international economic interests” (p. 271). Spivak (1988) cautions Western intellectuals to think through their biases, to try to comprehend cultural differences to avoid misinterpretations as they use postcolonial theory in their work.

Another theme of Spivak’s (1988) postcolonial discourse is that of “epistemic violence” which serves to ‘otherize’ the postcolonial subject (p. 280). She utilizes the example of the British reducing the Hindu historically cultural practice of “Widow Sacrifice,” a wife subjecting herself to immolation on her husband’s funeral pyre. The British passed a law, that no Hindu person favored, to reclassify widow sacrifice from a cultural ritual “superstition” to a crime of “legal science.” In British eyes they were inaugurating “a good society,” saving “brown women from brown men” (p. 298).

Postcolonial theory serves as a frame for and backdrop to understanding why and how Haitian people are building lives that suit their identity of personalities and visions for themselves and their communities, despite enduring Western business and governmental intervention in their country. Postcolonial theory provides access to the voices of Haitian people who are generally ignored as they represent themselves in resistance to the dominant myths present in their lives.

Therefore, postcolonialism is suitable as a theoretical framework for this study as it allows for the authentic viability and voice of those who have been traditionally overlooked and undervalued. In addition, postcolonialism focuses on resistance against hegemony. This study attempts to bring those attributes to the forefront by concentrating on the agency of a group of Haitian people under the age of 40.

### ***Limitations***

My study consisted of five participants, too small for generalizability of the findings. However, phenomenological inquiry does not intend to generalize, but rather to allow for in-depth description and interpretation of participants' experience from their own point of view. As an African American woman, I am not a native Kreyol speaker, which could have presented communication problems. To mitigate this limitation, I employed the services of an interpreter, who is a widely known, trusted member of the community with experience in collaborating with foreigners from various countries. This interpreter performed such duties when I toured Haiti in June 2014. I returned to Haiti in June 2015 to take Kreyol language lessons with him for one month. My goal was to become familiar enough with the language, in a short time frame, to be able to get my point across. Also, I thought it was important to demonstrate that I was willing to try to communicate in their language. In addition, the interpreter's ability to put people at ease, to help allay participant skepticism of my motives, proved invaluable. Through both our efforts, language did not inhibit the intimacy required for a rich collaboration between participant and researcher. The participants' willingness to share their experiences was much greater than I expected.

### ***Delimitations***

This research was limited to Haitian young people, 18-39 years of age, who were members of the economic underclass and grassroots community activists. The selected participants consisted of an community activist, a linguistics student, an artist, a mental health counselor, and an entrepreneur. Research took place in Haiti for two months from



January-February 2016 in sites that included a farm, an artist's place of business, a mental health clinic, a boutique, and entrepreneur client sites.

I have focused on Haitian people under the age of 40 because they are an emerging group who are purposefully acting on their dreams in new and innovative ways, in contrast to previous generations. Having participants with a variety of occupations and goals strengthened the study to bring a sense of possibility into a complex environment.

### **Significance of the Study**

Although scholarly interest in Haiti and its people has been increasing (Munro, 2014), most studies have focused on its history, recounting the misdeeds perpetrated upon the Haitian people by foreign and domestic interests. Research that includes the voices of Haitian young people often dwells on violence or sexual encounters related to HIV/AIDS, (Willman & Marcelin, 2010; Holschneider & Alexander, 2003).

Wilentz (2013) noted much less research concentrates on the perspectives of Haitians on their lives and their relationship to collaborations. In this vein, I have found a growing body of research devoted to the perspective of Haitians on their relationship with INGO projects. For example, Budosan and Bruno (2011) conducted a mixed-method study to gather information on everyday Haitians' mental health issues post-earthquake. The researchers utilized semi-structured interviews and unstructured observations and focus group discussions. These methods were applied to community mental health workers, primary health care doctors, and patients in Potoprens. INGOs and local Haitian NGOs partnered in the effort to provide amelioration to the expressed needs of the communities with mixed results.

The trainings the INGO's and their NGO partners conducted did increase the mental health care practice capacity of the community workers and the primary health care doctors needed to address the concerns of the residents and patients. However, according to Budosan and Bruno (2011), clinical practices did not really change. They attributed this result to the local doctors' lack of motivation to change and the medical personnel's concern for the absence of an organized governmental approach to mental health issues.

LaHatte (2017) examined the relationship between Haitian people who work with local NGOs and act as intermediaries with INGO personnel in capacity building exercises. Through conversational interviews with the Haitian intermediaries, LaHatte (2017) found that they often faced a moral dilemma between doing their job and maintaining good relationships with the recipients of aid who were members of their communities.

My research for this present study, in part, attempts to build on the literature devoted to the documented relationships between Haitians and INGOs. It is my goal to feature Haitian voices in their exercise of agency and self-determination for their place in their society.

In an effort to counteract the historical and global effects of enslavement and disparity, the United Nations has declared 2015-2024 the U.N. Decade of People of African Descent. In a U.N. website video presentation, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein (2015) states the purpose of the decade is two-fold: 1) to "tell the truth" about the "magnitude of discrimination" that has produced poverty in the lives of people of African descent, no matter where they are in the world, and 2) "to

celebrate contributions of People of African Descent to societies in which they live and to humanity” (Hussein, 2015). In her video on the UN website, UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova (2014), notes the purpose of the Decade is “to encourage governments to counter and eliminate all forms of discrimination, including prejudice inherited from the past.” According to Hussein (2015), the U.N. Decade of People of African Descent exemplifies efforts to mitigate the negative impact of post-colonialism on people who deserve the “right to advance their lives free from deprivation, with full participation in decision making” (Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asg378OIZ8s&feature=youtu.be>). Historical prejudice is what Haitian people under the age of 40 face when they try to break out of the common sense mold the elite and the international community has relegated to them.

This study intends to contribute to scholarly literature on Haiti by showcasing narratives of contemporary Haitian people under the age of 40 in urban areas and farming country. These individuals exhibited agency and self-reliance to make better lives for themselves and their communities, despite being constrained by a stifling U.S. economic policy and negative racial themes. In this study, five Haitian people face us and speak their own truths rather than being the perennial faceless “other” spoken about in exceptional terms. By doing so, they negate the dominant narrative of being “less than” and present their lived experiences in a more positive, realistic light. People in the United States should have access to this counter-narrative so that we can better understand our neighbors in the Caribbean and their agency in building productive lives in the face of foreign socioeconomic interference.

My hope is that the information garnered from this study serves to showcase five

Haitian young people's self-determination and highlight their goals and current practices toward moving forward with their lives. My intention was to gauge their perceptions of how, why, or if they would want to engage with U.S. INGOs and individual volunteers. The pervasive negative images of the Haitian people will persist unless their true agency can be heard and seen, altering those images. In addition, the participants' narratives may contribute to understanding how INGOs can better focus their talents to assist Haitian collaborators in their endeavors.

## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

What are the historical macrolevel forces that frame the dominant narrative of limited Haitian agency? In this study, I argue that U.S. neoliberal economic policy, negative racial frames, and the relationship between INGOs and the Haitian people all inform and contribute to the constricted effectiveness of Haitian agency. This chapter aims to develop this argument through discussion of the relevant scholarly literature. What hampers people of African descent from fully realizing their economic capacity is grounded in a colonialized racially misleading dogma about peoples of a darker hue.

Included in this review is a sketch of racism against people of African descent in post-colonial times followed by an examination of how poverty is produced rather than the result of an inborn condition associated with people of a darker hue. Next Haitian scholars and allies address the economic realities of living in Haiti. A discussion of why Haitians migrate to other countries and the racist attitudes they encounter follows. Finally, the review concludes with a discussion of Haitian peoples' acts of agency that controverts racist stereotypes against people of African descent and the effects realized by the recipients.

### **Racism Against African Peoples: A Post-Colonial Perspective**

In his study of Caribbean Fanonian philosophers' interpretations of racism, decolonization historian Grosfoguel (2016) explained the concept of those living above and below the zone or line of a human being. Those above exert power over those below the line: "racism [is] an institutional/structural hierarchy related to the materiality of domination" (p. 11). The historian continues that for those living below the line, "the

recognition of their subjectivities, identities, spiritualities and epistemologies are denied” (p. 10).

Grosfoguel (2016) articulates that those who exist on both sides of the line experience power in very discrete life practices. Those who live above the line experience oppression “*mitigated* by racial privilege” (p. 11-12) in all its manifestations of “class, gender, sexual and/or national/colonial oppression” (p. 12). Those who live below the line experience oppressions “*aggravated* by racial oppression” (p. 12).

To clarify his position, Grosfoguel (2016) refers to de Souza Santos’ (2007; 2010) articulation of the materiality of domination by racial hegemony to resolve discord. Those who live in the zone of being are recognized as humans, therefore ““regulation”” which includes “civility...[and] political negotiation” (p. 13) and ““emancipation”” meaning language for “liberty, autonomy, and equality” (p. 13) are applied to the alleviation of conflicts. Violence is rarely used as a mitigation tool for those in the zone of being.

In the zone of non-being, for those considered less than human, “violence and ...overt appropriation/dispossession” (p. 13) are the means to alleviation of conflicts. Regulation and emancipation are used only in extraordinary or unique circumstances. Grosfoguel (2016) refers to these resolutions as a “project of colonial modernity” (p. 14) - a continuation of systemic colonialism in a post-colonial environment.

### **Poverty Is Produced**

As previously stated, neo-liberal policy means that the powerful few influence the many in global finance and societal norms. The scions of mega corporations and fiscal entities such as the World Bank control how money flows and affects people in much of

the world, in relation to this study, the global south. Roy, Negron-Gonzales, Opoku-Agyemang, and Talwalker (2016) state that it is incumbent upon us to comprehend “how poverty is produced and how and why it persists in a world of prosperity” (p. 34). Since the Haitian Revolution, Haiti has been subjected to the fiscal machinations of western powers including those of the U.S. and France. The result has been a country in continual fiscal deficit. Below I explicate some of the manifestations of Haiti’s financial challenges.

Haitian American memoirist and essayist Danticat (2010) utilizes the occasion of its 2004 bicentennial to detail Haiti’s misfortunes at the hands of an unkind global community. Danticat (2010) contextualizes how Thomas Jefferson reacted after the enslaved fighters’ 1784-1801 successful rebellion to establish a free state, the second after the US in the western hemisphere (p. 97). Danticat (2010) notes Jefferson resented Toussaint L’Ouverture’s leadership to overthrow the French colonists because he was of African ancestry and Jefferson feared that something similar could happen in the US with enslaved Africans if word of the victory got out (p. 97). Before the revolution, Haiti’s economy thrived, but as Danticat (2010) described, Jefferson’s congress cut all financial ties with the new country derogatorily naming its inhabitants ““cannibals of the terrible republic”” beginning a downturn in Haiti’s economy (p. 98).

Danticat (2010) elucidates that France’s economy was in flux after the Haitian overthrow. Consequently, France’s loss engendered the sale of the Louisiana territories to the US at about 4 cents per acre, allowing the US to profit from Haiti’s conquest. Danticat (2010) continues, since Jefferson refused to acknowledge the black republic of Haiti as an equal and sovereign state, it was not until Abraham Lincoln in 1862 that the

country was recognized in its own right. In the interim, Danticat (2013) says that Haiti was under much pressure. Not only did lack of US trade and recognition separate it from economic stability, Haiti agreed to pay France for the loss of revenue it endured as a result of losing to the revolution. The sum of money Haiti paid France would amount to “twenty-two billion US dollars” (p. 99) in 2010 (Danticat, 2010).

According to Danticat (2010), the enormous remittances Haiti paid to France began the cycle of economic deterioration and tumult that continues in the present. Since then, Danticat (2010) offers that the US occupied Haiti for 19 years in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was during this time that the US government appropriated Haiti’s gold reserves and transferred them to a New York bank (Bergman, 2011). Danticat (2010) remarks that democratically elected Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who began to institute paths to improve the Haitian economy, was removed from office and taken to the Central African Republic on a plane provided by the US., leaving the populace without a leader willing and able to improve their economic circumstances.

### **Haiti from the Inside**

Certain Haitian scholars and allies are frustrated with the socio-economic disposition of Haiti. They use their position to elucidate the reasons the conditions exist, even as they work to improve a country they love.

As a son of Haiti, scholar and educator Fatton Jr. (2014) declares he is writing his investigation of rebuilding post-earthquake Haiti “in deep anguish and at times utter despair; it is full of anger, disappointments, but also faint hopes” (p. 1). Fatton Jr. (2014) describes Haiti as sitting on the outer periphery of developing nations: “The outer periphery is a de facto occupied territory under the surveillance of foreign peacekeepers



and under the control of international financial institutions (IFI's) and nongovernmental organizations" (p. 14). Fatton Jr. (2014) corroborates Chomsky's (1999) detailing of U.S. governmental influence.

Haitian social scientist, Dupuy (2010) agrees with Fatton Jr. (2014) concerning the IFIs and the politicians who entertain them. Dupuy (2010) states IFI policies were never meant to benefit the people and countries they targeted. The goal was to acquire below market labor production and channels for their merchandise (p. 19). To demonstrate the ministrations Dupuy (2010) recounts that the Haitian parliament passed a bill to raise garment workers' pay to \$5 per day (p. 19). The workers demonstrated for President Preval to sign the bill. He discounted both entities and signed a bill for \$3.75, still below the average wage in the Caribbean.

Medical organization Partners in Health founder, Farmer (2006) explains, "from the time of slavery, racism has been used to justify the economic exploitation of the Haitian poor" (p. 192). From sugar cane plantations in the past, to manufacturing sweatshops in the present, U.S. corporations have used Haitians as a source of cheap labor (p. 192). Economically, Haiti is in dire straits and is forced to rely on other nations, even other poor nations like its neighbor the Dominican Republic (Fatton Jr., 2014). The U.S. government, in collusion with the Haitian business class, has used its power to thwart the actions of a Haitian president who endeavored to exercise his power to provide a living wage to his people. Such deeds put Haiti in a precarious position to aid its citizens. Instead, a majority of Haitian workers remain at below subsistence wages, while the merchant class and U.S. business interests maintain fiscal control of the Haitian economy.

### **Racism against Haitians: Migrants to Other Countries**

Bahamian scholar, Knowles (2018) notes that their home economy is the reason Haitians migrate to countries with better fiscal standing. After independence in 1804, the once thriving Haitian economy began a depression based on French agitation that continues today. Consequently, many Haitians seek economic relief outside of Haiti. Yet when Haitians exercise their need for autonomy and self-sufficiency and emigrate to other countries in pursuit of a better life, they are met with discrimination steeped in cultural stereotypes in much of the Caribbean (p. 66) and the U.S.

### **Migrants to Dominican Republic**

According to the UN Population Division Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs (2017) Haitian migrant population in the Dominican Republic (DR) totaled 336,729. Emigration from Haiti to the DR began during the US occupation of the DR in 1916 to work in the sugarcane fields (OECD/CIECAS 2017, p. 43).

Keys, Kaiser, Foster, Burgos Minaya and Kohrt (2014) were interested in the effect racial and ethnic discrimination had on Haitians who migrated to the Dominican Republic (DR) to find employment. Haiti and the DR are situated on the Isle of Hispaniola, one third occupied by Haiti. Keys et al. (2014) conducted a mixed-method study to explore how racial discrimination (*anti-haitianismo*) shapes Haitians' perceptions of the medical care they receive in the DR and affects the state of their mental health. At the time of the study Keys et al. (2014) estimated Haitians numbered 500,000 to 1.5 million of the DR unacknowledged population. The DR has a history of blatant discrimination against Haitians. Haitians are regarded as Africans with all of the

cultural implications promoted in a deprecatory manner and therefore unaccepted as part of Dominican society (Keys et al., p. 3, Frelick, 1993).

Keys et al. (2014) directed 39 in-depth interviews with Haitian migrant workers and DR medical personnel. Findings from the Keys et al. (2014) study presented divergent perceptions of discrimination in encounters between Haitian migrants and DR medical personnel. Although the Haitian participants pointed to discrimination as a major factor in their lives in the DR, Dominicans did not acknowledge it as a significant factor in their mutual experiences (p. 16). However, Keys et al. (2014) found the discrimination Haitians experienced in the DR in general, is reflected in clinical situations and contributes to “depressive and anxiety symptoms” (p. 16).

Haitians know they are discriminated against. The DR system does not allow them to have well-paying jobs; usually farming or other jobs that DR officials say DR citizens do not want (p. 12). There are government raids on their dwellings and sometimes the raids lead to deportation to Haiti (p. 17). Even though the work the Haitian migrants perform contributes to the DR economy, they still face discrimination from poor Hispanic Dominican citizens who are also job seekers (p. 12). According to Keys et al. (2014) the medical care that Haitian migrants receive in the DR is premised on medical personnel perceptions of their patients. In their study Keys et al. found that medical staff opined that Haitians have bodies that exhibit a higher level of tolerance to pain as opposed to white Dominicans; that the over-crowded living conditions Haitians endured were a cultural signifier, not a result of enforced discriminatory economic practices in the DR (p. 17).

The study administrators found that Haitians felt humiliated (imilyasyon) and worthless (vale) (p. 17) when not seen in a timely manner, passed over in favor of a Dominican patient, or the general oppressive behavior afforded them in the DR. Congruent with Rosenthal and Lobel's (2016) study on the negative effects societal stereotypes can have on black women, Keys et al. (2014) found that Dominican medical staff's stereotypical perceptions of Haitians contribute to a lack of effective medical care for their patients. The researchers note that acknowledgment of stereotypical discrimination in the DR can lead to depression, low self-esteem, and internalized feelings of low self-worth among the Haitian migrant population (p. 17).

In 2013 the DR government instituted a law that put most Dominicans of Haitian descent in jeopardy of losing their citizenship status and any documents they would need to participate in civic functions such as attaining a driver's license or registering for classes. Human rights researcher, organizer and DR citizen of Haitian descent, Belique Delba (2019) delivers a personal odyssey on the most recent state approved discriminatory practices against Haitians. Belique Delba (2019) asserts that after years of attempts to constrain their civil rights, in 2013 the DR Constitutional Court revoked the citizenship for the children of Dominicans of Haitian descent (pp. 20-21). Sentence 168-13 states "children born to migrants under irregular conditions between 1929 and 2007 are not Dominican nationals" (p. 22). Belique Delba (2019) stipulates that any Haitian migrant is considered 'irregular' and is negatively impacted whether they have correct papers or not.

In 2011 when she was 24 years old Belique Delba (2019) began her journey to obtain her birth certificate to attend college in the DR. She was refused the copy until her

parents immigration status at her birth was researched (p. 18). Belique Delba's parents emigrated from Haiti to the DR in the 1960's and 70's to work on a sugarcane plantation where she was raised. Akin to the patients Keys et al. (2014) described, Belique Delba (2019) notes her reaction to the clerks disrespectful attitude: "The sense of powerlessness I felt led me to tears" (p. 18). Belique Delba (2019) had doubts about the outcome since her brother's request for his birth certificate had been languishing for two years. Belique Delba (2019) corroborates Keys et al. (2014) notations of the DR attitude toward people of Haitian descent:

Being Haitian in the Dominican Republic is sometimes seen as offensive or insulting, in light of the perception that everything bad emanates from blackness or Haitianness, as if being white were synonymous with good and being black synonymous with bad. (p. 22)

According to Belique Delba (2019) the majority of Haitians arrived in the Dominican Republic beginning in 1952 as a result of an agreement between the Haitian and DR governments for Haitians to work in the DR's sugar cane fields. They were to be issued an ID card and a "temporary residence permit" (p. 26). The migrants were to stay on company grounds in '*bateyes*', as it was less expensive to keep the workers there as opposed to sending them back to Haiti only to have them return the next season and again file governmental paperwork (p. 27).

Belique Delba's (2019) civil fight to obtain her birth certificate began in 2011. Although she received her document and entered college in 2012, there have been legal challenges to the veracity of the document along the way. Belique Delba has been in and out of court proceedings through 2018 and at the writing of her chapter the authenticity of

her birth certificate was again legally challenged (p. 37). The discriminatory practices against Dominicans of Haitian descent is yet another marker in the long tentacles of colonialism in an era supposedly past their reach.

### **Migrants to The Bahamas**

According to the UN Population Division Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs (2017) Haitian migrant population in the Bahamas totaled 28,754. Emigration from Haiti to the Bahamas began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the two were trading partners under enslaved conditions. A confluence of the Bahamian economic upturn and the Haitian Papa Doc political agitation the 1950's caused Haitians to flee to the Bahamas to find gainful employment.

Knowles (2018) conducted a case study of the Bahamian-Haitian immigrant relationship, the dynamics he attributed to European colonization. The researcher credits European colonization for the animosity between residents of the two countries; Haitians who migrate to The Bahamas are met with acrimony (Knowles, 2018, p. 66). Knowles (2018) found that Haitians are 16% of the Bahamian population, the highest percentage of migrants in The Bahamas (p. 66). Knowles (2018) also found the major sources of conflict between Bahamians and Haitians are: 1) language – Haitians speak Kreyol; Bahamians consider it a bastard French; 2) colorism – Haitians are generally darker skinned than Bahamians; 3) religion – although Haitians and Bahamians are Christians, Haitians also practice Vodou an ancient African religion. Bahamians consider Vodou a sinister adoration based in the occult (p. 66). Interestingly, (Knowles, 2018) found, although Bahamians deem Haitians low on the economic and cultural scale in their country, Haitians consider themselves a more cohesive cultural unit than Bahamians.

Similar to what Keys et al. (2014) found in the DR, Knowles (2018) discovered that the Bahamian government devised measures to stem Haitian migration to their country. As with the DR, the Bahamian government conducts raids on Haitian dwellings which can lead to deportation (p. 67). Children born in The Bahamas of either Haitian or Haitian-Bahamian parents do not automatically acquire Bahamian citizenship. They must wait until they are 18 years old to apply for citizenship. After at least a two-year process there is no guarantee citizenship will be granted which in effect renders people of Haitian descent without a home country (p. 66). Knowles' (2018) investigation further found that Haitians want a process to establish legal standing in The Bahamas. Without proper documentation Haitians are unable to secure their human rights to equitable education, to employment, to open a checking / savings account, to drive an automobile, to establish a domicile, or to adequate healthcare, in fact the makings of a good life experience (pp. 66-67).

Knowles (2018) argued that a Haitian-Bahamian arbitration with a third-party NGO might mitigate the animosity between Bahamians and Haitian migrants, but Bahamian officials claim their sovereignty to avoid what happened to Haiti due to outsiders including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) running / ruining their economy (p. 70). Bahamian authorities might be more inclined to begin mitigations with bi-cultural student organizations to break down the stereotypes and cultural barriers Haitian members of the population face (Knowles 2018, p. 71).

### **Migrants to the US**

According to the UN Population Division Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs (2017) Haitian migrant population in the US totaled 671,499. Zong and Batalova (2019)

stated the 1960's political volatility contributed to the Haitian elite and skilled professionals migration to the US.

Frelick (1993) explained the US policy of interdiction toward Haitian boat people, who in the late 1970's began coming to the US by boat to escape the brutal Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti. Frelick (1993) describes the US objection to the action of *refoulement*, the step a government could take to prohibit entry to its country for a boat carrying refugees and return them to their home country (p. 675). According to Frelick (1993) the US did support the 'first country' policy which stated that refugees fleeing a country would be taken in by a border country, but when that proved too much for the border countries, then other countries would provide harbor for the refugees. This action pertained to an 1979 international agreement under the auspices of the UN (p. 682). Frelick (1993) states that under the agreement 500,000 Vietnamese boat people, refugees were admitted to the US at least on a temporary basis (p. 682).

The 'first country' policy was endorsed by several U.S. presidents beginning with Jimmy Carter, until the Haitian boat people crisis (Frelick, 1993). According to Frelick (1993) the US wanted to avoid entry for Haitians. The US encouraged countries closer to Haiti like Venezuela, Honduras and Belize to take the boat people in, even though those countries were not really able to accommodate them as the US could (p. 686) and did with the Cuban refugees.

As with reaction to people of African descent in other countries, (Keys et al. 2014; Ware, 2015), Frelick (1993) notes Haitians were not welcome in the US. Frelick (1993) states that Haitian people were trying to obtain refugee status during an economic downturn in the US. In 1991, civic entities and politicians were concerned with Haitian



migrants' negative impact on the economy and social services. In reaction to those concerns, Frelick (1993) stated that in November 1991, the US government policy under George H. W. Bush divided refugee status into economic and political assignments (p. 679). A political refugee was noted as fleeing from personal attacks on their lives and were eligible to apply for asylum. An economic migrant was emigrating to find work; their circumstance was considered not as dire as a political refugee (p. 679). Bush declared the Haitian boat people were economic migrants. Eventually, Bush said there was to be no screening at all of Haitian boat people to determine if some qualified for political refugee status. This policy allowed the Coast Guard and the Navy to interdict Haitian boats, sink them, and to repatriate Haitian emigres (Frelick, 1993). Frelick (1993) further notes that the Coast Guard and Navy interdicted the Haitian boats in international waters, consequently this allowed the US government to claim it did not commit *refoulement* (p. 680).

In a contemporaneous case study of US immigration policy toward Haitian boat people before Bush changed it, Stepick (1982) presented an amalgamated anecdotal evidence of what would lead someone to risk their life to escape to a better place, in a flimsy much too overcrowded boat. He recounted the story of a young Haitian man who serendipitously encountered members of the Tonton Macoutes, a paramilitary group under the Duvalier regime. Stepick (1982) notes there was a misunderstanding of the situation on the young man's part. Members of the Tonton Macoutes pursued him. When they could not find him, the Tonton Macoute killed one of the young man's brothers and maimed another. According to Stepick (1982) the young man, fearing for his life, sold a parcel of family land and borrowed money to escape on a boat destined for the U.S. (pp.

163-164). This young man's story represents that of a political refugee, not an economic refugee as the Bush policy brushed all Haitians who tried to escape conditions from an unsympathetic government.

Similar to Frelick (1993), Stepick (1982) found that U.S. administrations were reluctant to grant Haitians refugee status. Stepick (1982) notes that early on, U.S. immigration hearings for Haitian boat people did not go well for them. Stepick (1982) stated advocates for the Haitian boat people cited racist attitudes toward Haitians trying to enter the country "(since the Haitians are black)" (p. 163). The hearings lasted about one third the time a normal hearing would last for refugees from other countries, barely enough time to make their case for remaining in the country (p. 163). The U.S. government contended that the reasons the Haitians gave for leaving Haiti were fabrications; they were seen as individual conflicts, not systemic problems that rose to the level of political refugee status (p. 163).

As with many scholars before and after him, Stepick (1982) describes Haiti as a gravely impoverished land. However, in this instance he accurately notes the government does little to improve the Haitian peoples' stability and systemically admonishes them for the slightest perceived condemnation of the state (p. 178). Consequently, when the U.S. interdicted Haitian boat people and repatriated them to Haiti, Stepick (1982) found they faced sometimes extreme consequences including physical retribution and jail time.

### **Haitian Agency**

If all that is known about the Haitian people is what the U.S. media presents to its audience along with "common sense" low expectations for people of African descent, then the reality of Haitian economic agency may surprise many. Yet, the activity of self-

reliance and organization to live in purposeful dignity are characteristics that the Haitian people as a group have long enjoyed.

### ***The Haitian revolution***

The Haitian Revolution was one of the most significant acts of agency by enslaved Africans. Yet more than two hundred years later, it is still difficult to find acknowledgment of that great undertaking in any media, including history books, where it is barely mentioned, and certainly not celebrated. In most colleges and universities less than a handful of students focus on Haiti toward their scholarly endeavors.

Haitian historian Trouillot (1995) deftly explains why this silence persists. Trouillot (1995) notes that it was “unthinkable” that African slaves would, could, want to be free (p. 73). Even more “unthinkable” was the idea of black people defeating an organized army. This made them seem human, challenging “common sense”. Trouillot (1995) formulates two tropes of silence to explain how hegemonic narrative persists even when the truth is more than evident, through the formulas of erasure and banalization. The formula of erasure conveniently ignores the act itself, “It” in this case the Haitian Revolution, “did not *really* happen” (p. 96). The formula of banalization trivializes each component of the revolution until it does not seem that important, “Some slaves were better fed than British workers” (p. 97). In other words, “What happened in Haiti ... contradicted most of what the West has told itself and others about itself” (p. 107). The revolution was an initial step to fulfill the dream of self-determination and economic independence for the Haitian people, contrary to the West’s narrative.

## *Lavalas*

Continuing in self-motivated activities, the successful popular uprising against the tyranny of the Duvalier regime 1957-1986 is stark proof of Haitian willingness to do what is necessary to express a cohesive, democratic personality in their quest toward leading better lives (Schuller and Morales, 2012). An example of post-colonial resistance is Lavalas, the grassroots political organization that toppled Francois Duvalier in 1986 (Hallward, 2010). Lavalas, which means, “flood” or “everyone together” (p. xxiv), originally included peasants, “the urban poor...progressive members of the church and the liberal elite” (p. 74). It was through Lavalas that Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president of Haiti in 1991. One of Aristide’s operating principles, *tout moun se moun* (“everyone counts as one”) has become Lavalas’ slogan (p. 21).

Flynn and Roth (2010) detail the changes Aristide and the Lavalas movement made to improve the lives of the Haitians on the margins of society. The accomplishments of Lavalas range from education to economic reforms. In education, more schools were opened between 1994-2000 than were opened between 1804-1993. The literacy rate increased by thirty percent, improving the reading skills of 100,000 Haitians (p. 4). Lavalas refurbished medical facilities, and in 2004 established a new state hospital in Potoprens. Flynn and Roth (2010) note, “under Lavalas administrations, infant mortality declined from 125 deaths per 1000 to 110” (p. 5).

The agency Lavalas exhibited came at a cost, however. President Aristide was twice deposed by U.S. backed coups d’etat. As Flynn and Roth (2010) write, “the purpose of the coup was to destroy Lavalas, entrench the rule of the rich in Haiti, and dismantle the progressive programs of Lavalas governments” (p. 13). A component of

agency is courage in the face of adversity. The Lavalas party was banned from participating in general elections after the 2004 coup. Yet they persisted, demonstrating in the streets of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital city.

In November 2018 Lavalas reacted to street demonstrations regarding evidence that President Jovenel Moïse appropriated millions of dollars from Petro Caribe oil funds meant for infrastructure projects. (Retrieved from

<https://www.facebook.com/HaitiActionCommittee/posts/10156915836664886>).

Published on Haiti Action's Facebook page (2018) Lavalas stated an "exceptional" response was needed. The organization called for Jovenel's resignation, a transition committee to change Electoral law, and to respect the wishes of the people. Former President Aristide intimated in a conversation with Hallward (2010), voting was an expression of dignity for Lavalas constituents. "The people insist that they will be the *subject* of their history, not its object" (p. 350).

### ***Neighbor to Neighbor***

Continuing to show their prowess, it was Haitians who were in the vanguard to rescue fellow citizens from the wreckage and organized safekeeping groups in tent cities and other areas in the immediate aftermath of the 2010 earthquake that took so many lives and destroyed countless dwellings (Katz 2013). For over two centuries Haitian people have exhibited an ability to recognize a problem, devise a plan to mitigate it, and execute the plan to improve their lives on their own terms. It follows that they are quite capable of taking those skills and applying them to the kinds of jobs or positions they choose to express their personality and live life with dignity, despite Western negative assumptions to the contrary. As Kivland (2012) notes, rather than holding off for

foreigners to arrive with aid, there are Haitians who “form organizations designed to *engage* outside support in *their* quests for meaningful social change” (p. 76).

### *UniFa*

Human rights activist Leslie Mullin (2018) writes of a graduation ceremony in June 2018 and history of the Dr. Aristide Foundation University (UniFa) begun in 2001 by then Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. According to Mullin (2018) the goal of the university is to challenge the idea that the poor should not participate in a college education; insure that the doctors trained at the university are obligated to treat those in the most dire of circumstances; and to perform their duties in the countryside where Haitians historically are without access to healthcare (p. 11).

Mullin (2018) states that Dr. Aristide recruited young people from the rural spaces of all nine sectors of Haiti. He chose those “talented young people” (p. 11) who would have been overlooked by other Haitian institutions of higher learning because of their low economic status. At the time of Mullin’s (2018) article UniFa grew from a medical program to dispensing “degrees in medicine, nursing, dentistry, engineering, law, physical therapy, and continuing education” (p. 11).

Growing UniFa has not been an uncontentious process. Mullin (2018) acknowledges the 2004 overthrow of the Aristide administration. The teachers and students left the campus; Aristide was expelled to South Africa. U.S. and United Nations troops took over the campus, destroying much of what was left behind (p. 11). Since Aristide’s return Mullin (2018) states that the unrealized government assurances stand in opposition to UniFa’s “living example of democracy in practice” (p. 13).

### *Fonkoze*

Another manifestation of Haitian agency is the micro-credit venture. Roy, Negron-Gonzales, Opoku- Agyemang, and Talwalker (2016) state micro-finance is a system of lending small amounts of money to indigent women (p. 116) in economically depleted countries. They are women who are not able to secure finances through the traditional institutional methods to help build a sustainable income (p. 116). The researchers found that micro-lending in general sometimes caused women dire problems (p. 117). However, Roy et al. (2016) also acknowledged micro-lending was more of a success story in Bangladesh where the enterprise began than the replications in other countries (p. 120). In Fonkoze, Haiti has seemingly modeled its micro-finance system after that of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

In her comparison study of the effect of micro-credit in Bangladesh and Haiti, Kim (2017) notes that the first established micro-credit program began in Bangladesh, 1976, through Dr. Muhammed Yunus and Grameen Bank, a micro-finance institution (MFI). Kim (2017) states that Father Joseph Philippe, a grassroots leader, introduced micro-finance to Haiti when he established the Fonkoze organization in 1994. According to Kim's (2017) research, Grameen Bank and Fonkoze are the largest micro-finance entities in their respective countries (p. 25).

Kim (2017) found that Fonkoze followed the Grameen model of addressing the needs of the whole woman through solidarity lending, a vehicle for mutual responsibility within a group. A woman who seeks a micro-loan must participate in Fonkoze's 6-month course geared toward making smarter life and business choices including health and education classes, along with indicators to build self-esteem. Upon successful completion

a woman joins a group of five women who are also seeking credit and have completed the course. The accountability piece is that if a woman defaults on her loan, the group forfeits its right to obtain more credit (p. 28).

Lack of Haitian governmental infrastructure is a hazard to the country and its people. Kim (2017) states that after the 1991 cyclone hit Bangladesh the government instituted infrastructure to insure a measure of safety when the next natural disaster hit, as it often occurs in that country. Micro-lenders also stepped in to provide funds to help clients recover (p. 29).

The 2010 earthquake that shook Port-au-Prince and the surrounding environs was a major blow to Fonkoze and its participants. Kim (2017) found that not only was Fonkoze's central operations facility marred, but many of the lenders were either killed or maimed, both instances a challenge to Fonkoze's mission to uplift women's capacity to better their lives (p. 27)

According to Kim (2017) the Haitian government did not respond to the effects of the earthquake, instead it relied on INGOs from other countries to provide aid which "was mostly uncoordinated and not supporting Haiti's long-term growth" (p. 29), a neo-liberal factor Roy et al. (2016) pointed to in their research. Kim (2017) opined that had Fonkoze been able to lend credit to its constituents, that would have been more effective than what the INGOs provided (p. 29).

Despite the setbacks and lack of effective governmental support that Kim (2017) discussed, Fonkoze's 2018 Annual Report describes its major success: 56,313 Solidarity group participants; 139,000 graduates of the Education program since 2000; 8,215 families participated in the 18 month A Pathway to a Better Life since 2007 with a 98%



graduation rate in 2018; 136,000 children screened through Community Health Stores in 2018. Fonkoze continues its mission to provide services that impoverished Haitian women utilize to better themselves, their families and their communities.

### **Identity through Agency**

McAdams and McLean (2013) define narrative identity as a means for people to connect the story of their past to a plan for their future. McAdams and McLean (2013) found that when people are able to explain their stories in “episodic” (p. 233) fashion to themselves and others it clarifies who they were, are and potentially can be in the future. According to McAdams and McLean (2013), those whose stories include redemption from a particularly negative episode in their lives are more psychologically fit to meet life’s challenges (p. 236). The agency exhibited by Haitian people in this section of the literature review belie the common sense narrative so enthusiastically marketed to the world. It allows a varied perspective from the people themselves as to how they fight in a manner that evokes their “common sense” for dignity and self-sufficiency. This study participants’ narratives are further evidence of Haitian agency.

### **Summary**

This chapter reviewed the literature pertinent to this study regarding Haitian participants’ under the age of 40 economic agency. It began with Grosfoguel’s (2016) exposition of the power dynamics of the zones of being and non-being. Those above the line are considered human; those below the line are considered less than human. The power exerted by those above the line over those below the line of being perpetuates the systemic racism in a post-colonial environment.

This chapter then moved on to provide evidence of how poverty is produced to keep formerly colonized people down. Danticat (2010) drew a line from Thomas Jefferson's fearful reaction to the successful Haitian Revolution when he cut off trade with the newly freed nation, to France's demand for and reciprocation of funds to cover its loss of revenue from free enslaved labor, for losing the war with Haiti, to the US interference with democratically elected President Aristide's economic policies to lift Haiti's economy.

Haitian scholars and allies make the case that Haiti is under economic pressure from IFIs and INGOs. Fatton Jr. (2014) situates Haiti on the "outer periphery of developing nations" under the powerful thumb of the U.S., IFI's and INGOs economic influences. Dupuy (2010) notes that these economic influences were meant as a means to use the Haitian people as a source for cheap labor. Farmer (2006) further makes the case that from the sugar cane mills to the manufacturing sector the US has used the Haitian people for its own economic benefit.

From a discussion of the adverse economic influences on the Haitian people, this chapter examined the obstacles encountered when they leave Haiti to improve their lives and well-being. Racism proved a prominent character Haitians faced in their efforts to improve their lives. Keys et al.'s (2014) study of the treatment of Dominicans of Haitian descent in medical situations, and Belique Delba's (2019) personal narrative of the effects of the revocation of citizenship for the same population is a study of systemic cultural and economic racism against Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

Knowles (2018) centered the acrimony between Bahamians and Haitians in the denigration of Haitian Kreyol as a legitimate language and colorism in that Haitians are

generally darker skinned than Bahamians. Knowles (2018) attributed these attitudes to the continued effects of colonialism in a post-colonial world. Similar to the DR, Knowles (2018) noted the Bahamian government engaged in legal manipulations to prevent Bahamians of Haitian descent from acquiring citizenship.

In 1991 Haitian emigrants to the U.S. were again met with hostility. Frelick (1993) detailed the effects Haitian economic refugee status had on the 'boat people' who tried to escape the brutal Duvalier dictatorship. U.S. policy determined that they would be interdicted in international waters and returned to Haiti to face an uncertain future. Stepick (1982) considered racist attitudes toward Haitians seeking asylum resulted in truncated hearings and governmental accusations of Haitian fabrications of political reasons to leave their country.

Finally, the review of literature concluded with examples of Haitian agency beginning with the successful revolution, the grassroots movements of Lavalas, neighbors helping one another after the earthquake, UniFa established to open the doors of higher education to those who are often overlooked because of their lack of finances and Fonkoze a micro-lending institution that helps impoverished women increase their economic capacity.

As discussed above, Haiti has been consistently identified as the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere. The Haitian people are counted as impoverished in country and in the ability to take care of themselves. The global identity of the country and its people are set by outsiders in geo-political circles and the media (Sommers et al. (2006). In this literature review I have shown how the Haitian people have persistently contradicted that

false identity by following the tenets of their personalities to protect themselves from unwanted outside influences.

This dissertation study is intended to: 1) show the obstacles participants in the study may have to breach, and 2) to fill a gap in the literature to examine the actions some Haitian people employ to create a more fulfilling life in the face of extraneous interference from the United States. In the following chapter I explain the organization of the study to elicit the narratives of five study participants' journeys to turn their interests and dreams into realistic goals and accomplishments toward creating an authentic life in contradiction to western supposition and assumption.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **Restatement of the Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to explore the life events and influences that led a group of Haitian young people under the age of 40 on their individual paths to expand their economic capacity in pursuit of an enhanced quality of life for themselves and their communities. This study endeavored to delineate the kinds of partnerships Haitian young people were interested in pursuing and what effect (if any) negative racial stereotypes had on their efforts to configure satisfying lives.

### **Research Design**

The research design that informed this study was a qualitative phenomenological narrative inquiry. McMillan (2008) explained the phenomenological approach as a tool to “describe and interpret the experiences of participants in order to understand the essence of the experience as perceived by the participants” (p. 291). Clandinin (2006) noted “narrative inquirers study experience” (p. 45). That is, the use of narrative inquiry was a method to analyze participants’ stories and how they made meaning of their lives within such context and the people with whom they engaged.

The choice of a phenomenological narrative inquiry was appropriate as a research method because of the ability it afforded the researcher to attain knowledge of the personal motivations of a group of Haitian young people under 40 who were in the midst of constructing lives that reflected their personality, on their own terms. Such a method also allowed a window into how people make meaning both individually and collaboratively with INGOs and volunteers from the U.S.

A major reason for choosing narrative inquiry was to be in conversation with Haitian young adults under the age of 40 to gain insights into their perception of Haitian realities regarding work and education. Their stories also touched on negative racial tropes, particularly if and how they had any bearing on their goals. Narrative inquiry was a means to illuminate the participants' personal trajectories and relationship with the world outside Haiti. Utilizing narrative inquiry elucidated several individuals' experiences in their efforts to expand their economic capacity for themselves and their communities. For the researcher who is an outsider, their stories present the opportunity to understand the Haitian context from insiders - those living the realities - and to then juxtapose these stories against the dominant narrative of Haiti and the Haitian people as poor, less than, and exceptional.

### **Participants**

All participants were involved in work or education to become economically viable in a manner that suited their own interests, not those of international INGOs or outsiders. Ultimately, the five participants consisted of Philippe, a street artist who sold his work to tourists; Becky, a linguistics student at the State University of Haiti; Success, a community advocate; J9, a music mix-master/mental health counselor; and Sony, an entrepreneur who began a Kreyol language acquisition business and a touring company. Sony, the entrepreneur, who served as an interpreter when I toured Haiti in June 2014, was a trusted Haitian community member. Local grassroots organizers and business people rely upon him to expose foreign visitors to what Haiti has to offer.

My Kreyol language classes with Sony included weekly field trips emphasizing different aspects of Haitian life. These outings allowed me the opportunity to meet many

Haitian people whom I otherwise would not have encountered. In the process, I was able to engage five people who agreed to participate in the study. Contact with my collaborator and the participants continued through e-mail, text messaging, and telephone calls. These methods were used to set up lodging, meals, transportation to and from interviews and observations, and to have participants member-check the written interview and observation documents for veracity.

McMillan (2008) states purposive sampling occurs when “particular individuals” are chosen because they have personal experiences with the topic under scrutiny (p. 119). I chose participants who were actively pursuing efforts to improve their economic and social standing within their communities in a variety of ways of which we here in the United States may not be aware. The participants afforded an entryway into the diverse efforts Haitian young people under 40 have made to achieve that end. The participants were individuals actively pursuing projects to reposition their status from a below subsistence / subsistence economic existence to a fiscal position that they considered satisfactory. The participants were engaged in building a viable economic capacity for fulfilling their goals and a more complete expression of their personalities, as stated in Article 22 of the UDHR.

I have noticed that social media has increasingly become a platform for young people of color, in particular those under age 40, to express themselves. In addition, they, unlike their parents or their grandparents, refuse to have the dominant media tell their stories, or define them in the usual negative terms. Instead they fiercely, seemingly without fear of recrimination from their governments or their elders, use social media as a tool to speak their counter-narrative. They no longer allow other people to speak for

them. Since I am so encouraged by this phenomenon, I wanted to build on what this demographic of young people of color began.

The criteria for participant selection included the following: individuals must be Haitian young people under 40, ranging in age from 18-39, who worked to help themselves and others in their community improve their economic and social stability. I intentionally chose participants who pursued varied interests in order to show that Haitians do not make up a monolith of limited imagination. I wanted a college student from UNIFA, the university that former President Aristide began as an alternative to the state university system. During my first visit to Haiti in 2014, I encountered an impressive display of cooperation between street artists; I decided that a street artist would be a nice addition to the study. I thought a farmer would lend a balance between rural and city perspectives. In 2015, I returned to Haiti to take Kreyol language lessons from the interpreter of my prior year tour, and his assistant. The interpreter's ability to readily answer our questions in specifics and detail about Haitian culture and history on my previous year's tour, led me to ask if he would be interested in participating in my study and Sonyd agreed. His assistant was an effective instructor, and I was interested in how he used mental health applications on friends and family. J9 agreed to participate in the study. I enlisted the interpreter to help me find the student and the farmer.

Unfortunately, classes at UNIFA ended the week before I arrived to collect data in 2016; consequently, the interpreter recommended a friend in her first semester at the state university. Although initially unsure about joining the study, Becky eventually assented. Due to political demonstrations (*manifestations*), her classes were suspended and the university was closed during the time I was scheduled to observe Becky in class. The



interpreter suggested another friend who worked with a farming collective, although not a farmer himself, and Success agreed to participate after we met in person. With the interpreter, I returned to the street artists' location in downtown PAP and found someone who presented as confident and approachable. We conversed with my newly acquired Kreyol words, English, and help from the interpreter. I readily incorporated Philippe into the study participant group. All participants were Sony's former fellow students at ETS with the exception of Philippe the street artist.

### **Setting**

All participants were located in Potoprens and in nearby rural areas of Haiti. As I was asking people to reflect and speak on their lives, their economic circumstances, and their dreams for improvement, I wanted to be able to visit their workspaces, study spaces, and participate in their projects if feasible. Consequently, the setting was in a location of participant preference, meaning their workspace, their home, a café, or another space of their choosing.

### **Data Collection**

Interviews, observations, and documents were the modes of data collection chosen to obtain insight into the Haitian young peoples' thoughts, ideas, and feelings of how and why they had chosen their paths while having to live in resistance to negative economic policies, racial portrayals, and consequent misguided aid efforts of the international community. I collected interviews and conducted observations for a six-week period from early January to mid-February 2016. Each of the five participants was asked to read and sign a Human Subjects Permission form before beginning the study. For participants who neither read nor spoke English, I engaged the services of a

professional translator, a person of the Haitian diaspora in the United States. He translated the permission form and the study interview questions from English to Kreyol.

### *Observations*

Merriam (2009) states “observations take place in the setting where the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs ...observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest...” (p.117). My plan was as follows:

- To observe the participant artist in relation to fellow artists when they are actively selling, and if possible when they met, informally or formally to discuss how business was progressing.
- To observe the participant linguistics student’s classroom interaction and with her peers in a more informal setting.
- To observe the participant community advocate as trainee, trainer, in meetings and discussions with colleagues.
- To observe the participant mental health counselor / music mix-master, in his approach to clients and colleagues.
- To observe the participant entrepreneur with clients in meetings and various outings.

In practice, the participant artist did not formally meet with his colleagues during my observation period. The reason for this was explained during the interviews.

Unfortunately, I was never able to observe the participant student on campus or in a classroom. All other observations proceeded as planned.

### *Observation procedures*

Krathwohl (2009) states, “observers are judged by whether they are sensitive enough to capture the critical aspects of what is occurring, how well they can make sense of these aspects, and how accurately their explanations fit the data” (p. 260).

Observations took place in the participants’ natural settings as previously described. I spent one week with each participant observing, listening, and handwriting field notes, as the occasion dictated. In addition, I took photos during observations. When warranted the translator also took photos when I observed a participant who spoke only Kreyol. Photos provided another layer to participants’ narratives as they proved important cues for remembering certain circumstances and feelings in the environment of an observation. At times, it was important to check the positioning or size of an object, or the expressions on the faces of the participants and their colleagues. For instance, the intensity of a participant’s body language when engaged in a professional situation served as adjunct to his/her story and to my understanding of it. If it made sense at the time, I became a participant observer in some small way in an activity, giving me a further depth of understanding as to what the project or work reality entailed.

After the observations concluded, I immediately on the same day wrote a formal report of my impressions of the session and e-mailed or had the document hand delivered to the participants to insure I did not miss something of significance. I observed four participants at least three times, for up to one hour each session, during the week we spent together to more fully comprehend what comprised and how they approached their work life, including the challenges and successes they incurred. I was not able to observe

the linguistics student in a classroom situation: classes were closed due to a national holiday and mass political demonstrations.

The significance of this data collection method to my study is that it was important to observe the participants operate or conduct themselves in their associated settings. It was critical to observe them engage with people who were intrinsically important to how they viewed themselves in the world. As an observer I was able to gain insight into the enthusiasm and seriousness of purpose the participants demonstrated. For instance, the community advocate took me to a farming collective. He had previously trained the farmers on a new technique and had to check on their implementation. Just the trip to get to the farm was something I did not expect. We took a Tap Tap, a van that serves as public transportation, miles up the mountain. Then we left the road and walked what seemed to me at least a couple of miles or more, literally over verdant hills and dales, which I recorded through photos. Not only was I able to observe him as he worked, but I was encouraged to engage in a new technique of soil fertilization, becoming a participant observer. I took photos and spoke with many of the farmers who ranged from young to very old. They were so gracious to me.

I was able to observe how the farmers and the participant interacted with respect and enthusiasm for each other's progress. This observation experience was so much richer than I had expected. If I had not used observation as a data collection method, I would have missed an important opportunity to view the participants on sight to see and feel their involvement in their chosen paths, which would have led to minimizing my understanding of how they exercised their agency to make meanings of their lives.

### *Unstructured interviews*

Phenomenological narrative inquiry utilizes unstructured interviews which lead with open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013). The questions are “focused on understanding your central phenomenon in the study” (p. 443) in this instance, the agency of a group of Haitian young people under 40. I chose this type of interview to be able to afford the participants the latitude to tell their stories without feeling constricted by too many detailed inquiries.

### *Interview procedures*

Each participant agreed to two formal one-on-one interviews, and if necessary, one follow-up interview for clarification purposes. The individual interviews ranged up to one hour each and were conducted at a location of the participants’ choosing, as I wanted to be cognizant of their busy lives.

Natural environment is germane to narrative inquiry (Merriam, 2009). In this study, it pertained to the lived experience of each participant in his/her everyday reality, of not only earning a living, but also in his/her efforts to expand economic capacity for an improved quality of life for themselves, families, and communities. Although initially I had wanted to videotape the interviews, none of the participants granted permission to do so. Since they did not voluntarily offer a reason for their reluctance to be videotaped, I did not probe and simply accepted their decision. Therefore, all interviews were simply audio-recorded.

I conducted interviews in English when the participants were fluent English speakers. Following these sessions, on the same day I immediately transcribed the interview contents into a secure file on my laptop computer. The participant entrepreneur

agreed to collaborate with me when interviewing participants who were Kreyol only speakers. I asked the questions first in English; he then translated the questions to Kreyol for the participant to respond. The translator then repeated the participant's Kreyol responses to me in English as I was recording the interview. Once the interview was completed, I followed the protocol established for all interviews: I transcribed the taped interview into a written document. As per our agreement for Kreyol only speakers, I then sent the document to the translator and he translated the interview into a written Kreyol document.

Commensurate with member-checking, I e-mailed the transcribed documents to all of the English-speaking participants. The Kreyol transcribed interview was hand delivered to the participant at an appointed place and time of his convenience as he did not have an e-mail address. Feedback was requested within two days following both e-mail and in- person receipts. All participants did respond. For safekeeping, the English and Kreyol-translated interview transcriptions were contained in an electronic folder on my laptop computer.

Included in the next section are pertinent questions that encouraged respondents to more fully feel comfortable enough to share information that resides below the surface of ordinary everyday conversations.

### ***Interview questions***

The following open-ended questions were meant to allow the participants space to tell their stories of economic agency in their own words without too many prompts from me. I asked follow-up questions for clarification of responses to ultimately understand what led the participants to their present status.

**Research question a:** What circumstances have led these Haitian young people under age 40 to their work and / or educational choices?

**Interview questions**

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
  - a. Where did you grow up?
  - b. Have you always lived in this community?
2. Tell me about your work
3. How did you end up doing this work? / What led you to this field or on this path?

**Research question b:** What networks, alliances, and institutional spaces are these participants using in their quest for economic stability and self-reliance?

**Interview questions**

1. What opportunities have helped you get to where you are?
2. What kinds of obstacles have led to challenges along the way?
3. How have you navigated these challenges?

**Research question c:** In what ways do these five Haitian young people under age 40 express desire for international and/or Haitian partnerships vis a vis their quest for economic stability?

**Interview questions**

1. Have you had any interaction with INGOs or Haitian NGOs?
2. What has your experience been with these organizations?
3. Based on your experience, what recommendations would you make for any partnerships with international or Haitian organizations?

**Research question d:** What are the reflections of Haitian young people under the age of 40 on the impact of historical and current negative images of Haitian people?

***Interview questions***

1. Are you aware of the negative images of the Haitian people?
2. How have these negative images impacted you?

***Documents***

Collection of documents concerning Haitian people at below or subsistence economic circumstances is key to this study. Merriam (2009) defines documents as a “wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study at hand” (p. 139). INGOs and community groups write newsletters, blogs, and maintain active websites. I collected documents throughout the study. Popular culture documents such as media and art were incorporated into this research. Personal documents and artifacts were also included. These documents, in their varied forms, added another dimension to the study that complemented observations and interview situations. Documents are another window into the subject matter.

***Document collection procedure***

Documents were collected from each of the five participants:

- linguistic student - copies of study materials
- Community activist – written material and photos
- Artist - photos and paintings
- Entrepreneur – photos and business contracts
- Mental health counselor – Photos (his and mine), Espere brochure



Of all the documents I was able to collect, photographs featuring participants interacting within their communities added the most significant dynamic to the study. To see the participants in action and to exercise my ability to photograph these moments in time proved a valuable resource. I took many photos of each participant, which reintroduced instances that were unclear to me and allowed me to be more precise in writing this dissertation. I took many photos of each participant.

Photos served to support the interviews I conducted with the participants. For example, I knew the artist stacked his artwork every evening to put away for the next day, but my photos brought back the precision and care he took in preparing his art. The community activist provided me with photos of his work along with an extensive brochure that showcased his many community education endeavors. These included his work with the farming collective, the ministry, the children's camp, a church group, and a student sponsorship program among others. He also presented a copy of a certificate he earned to teach English and computer skills to students. These documents served as a backdrop while I wrote about his belief in the power of education to empower himself and his community.

I entered into a contract with the entrepreneur to assist me with transportation and documentation in Kreyol, so I knew of the detail he required to proceed. While I took photos of the student at her job in a small boutique, I was unable to take any on campus due to political events. She did share her study materials with me, including a page from a course textbook. The mental health counselor provided photos from his personal life and a mental health brochure from his work. While these documents offered good

information, the observations, interviews, and personal conversations concerning J9's plans for the future were much more helpful.

### **Ethics**

My goal with the participants was to be as transparent about my intentions as possible. I did not want to be in a position of doing something I did not explain up front before they agreed to participate in my study. I did not want to be like so many outsiders who do not deliver what we jointly agreed upon before participation. My plan was to have open communication and be respectful during the data collection process. Creswell (2013) notes that triangulation is the use of several types of collected information to substantiate the authenticity of what has been gathered. Attributes of unstructured interviews, observations, documents and artifacts effectively verified the collected information. This study also utilized member checking, or "respondent validation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 217), which invites participants to review the interviews the researcher employed in this venture. Doing so attained feedback as to the veracity of the work completed. In addition Chapter 4 will be translated to Kreyol for the participant who speaks and reads in that language only. I do this for his convenience, incorporating another layer of validation, and trust building. I approached reliability through the use of a quality iPhone voice recorder for the interviews, and careful, detailed transcription of the questions and responses by the translator and by myself.

### **Data Analysis**

What is central in narrative inquiry is the voice of the participants: what they say, how they say it, and the contextual information provided. When analyzing the data collected in his own research studies, Creswell (2013) wrote that at times he has ignored

the questions presented to the participants and just read what they said first, therefore recommending:

Preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in ... a discussion. (p. 410)

I followed this suggestion, especially reading the participants' body language and tone of voice exhibited during interviews and observations. For instance, the music mix-master sometimes emphasized a statement by clapping his palms together, or his voice would reach a higher register. These actions could denote excitement, surprise, or determination, and I incorporated them into the participants' responses to my questions. For example, J9 agreed with Sony's idea that expats need to acquire knowledge of Haitian culture and said, "I think it would be better if they would come here, and learn a little bit about Haiti, about the people [claps fist to hand] in any way."

### **Researcher Background**

I am an African American woman. My position in the U.S. is of a middle-class person of color, who experiences all of the hegemonic micro-aggressions this society has at its disposal. Through reading and listening to the language associated with Haiti, I have come to a certain realization. The fear that fuels the racist micro-aggressions against individuals or groups of color, black people particularly, in this country, are heightened and magnified toward the country of Haiti and its citizens. These actions can be interpreted as a result of their temerity to fight for and win statehood. I see the same attitudes toward a country established by enslaved people of African descent as somehow

a threat to the sensibilities of those in power positions of white Europeaness in the U.S. I find this polemic disturbing and overwhelmingly sad for all of us. It is for this reason I decided to focus my scholarship and service on the stories of agency and self-determination evidenced by Haitian young people under 40.

As a person who has been subjected to racial stereotypes all of my life, I wanted the stories of Haitian young people under 40 describing their exercises in economic resistance to be evidence of positive elements in their lives. Remembering Frederick Douglass' accomplishments post-enslavement, I hoped the participants' stories would serve as a counter-narrative to that of Haitians' inability to create satisfying lives for themselves. But I did realize that this may not be the case. As noted in Roberts (2010), it is my responsibility as a qualitative researcher to refrain from fabricating the data or results I gathered. It was also my duty to refrain from falsifying or intentionally changing the data or results to fit my preconceived notions of the study participants' motivations for their economic journey. As mentioned in the Ethics section of this proposal, I used the tools of validation to check my bias. Despite the limited time I spent with this study's participants, their narratives and my observations allowed me to experience the complexity of the participants' perspectives and daily lives - a snapshot-in-time of their reality as individual Haitian people.

Although the questions posed to the participants were designed to elicit their stories, narrative inquiry requires the researcher to analyze those responses. Consequently, my position as researcher imposed the power dynamic of my interpretation on participant stories, which may be mitigated in some small way, as the participants and I are both of African descent and face similar behavioral stereotypes. In addition, I

realized I was of a different generation from the participants with whom I collaborated. I am used to settings where I am the oldest person in the room; I have not noticed any untoward repercussions. However, I did broach the age difference with the study participants and it was of no consequence to them. They either shook their heads, indicating it was not a problem, or in one case, I was told that age was not important in conversation.

I brought my experiences as a U.S. citizen of color to this study with all of the attendant negative assumptions by the West. My intention was to listen and record the participants' stories and analyze the data through a lens informed by personal and professional experience. I valued each participant's contribution to this study and, as best as I could, presented the findings as they occurred, not as I wished they would occur.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

### Overview

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to explore the life events and influences that have led a group of Haitian people under the age of 40 on their individual paths to expand their economic capacity in pursuit of an enhanced quality of life for themselves and their communities. I wanted to better comprehend how a conventional Haitian person, someone not from an economically nor socially advantaged group, positioned themselves to follow their dreams and improve their economic security. My conviction was that it would be enlightening to hear from the participants, given the constant barrage of off-putting messaging from media and politicians concerning the lack of capability of Haitian people.

The five study participants provided compelling stories which detailed their pursuit of occupations that made sense to them, contributing to the manner in how they wanted to conduct their lives. At times, I was surprised by their commentary on their younger selves' circumstances, whether it was concerning dire circumstances, or the will to learn something new. I was also impressed by the participants' commitment - not only to themselves but also to their broader communities. My observations and interviews revealed five people who had visions for their futures and the willingness to devote whatever energies they found necessary to achieve their goals. The participants were in varying stages of realizing their professional aspirations. This study aimed to elucidate their journeys so far.

## Profiles of the Participants

Four of the participants in this study were born and raised in - in western Haiti. The fifth grew up in Grand' Anse in northern Haiti. Most schools in Haiti are private community, INGO, or state-run and tuition based, but it is difficult to come up with the funds. Four participants attended the Institute of Social Work and Social Science (ETS), a private college for students who wanted to pursue careers in psychology and social work. According to Idealist (2013), the college was “entirely volunteer-led” including professors and administration among other positions, allowing students to participate in “affordable degree programs.” The website K12 Academics noted that, “less than 1% of Haiti's young people will go on to receive a university degree in Haiti,” and some colleges will offer scholarships. Even with affordable tuition rates, J9 was forced to withdraw from the program, since he ran out of funds. Eventually, due to administrative problems, the program was cut short. The sections below describe these five participants’ journeys of self-realization.

<i>Table 1</i>		
<i>Participant Information</i>		
<u>Participants</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Area of Interest</u>
Becky	22	University Student, Linguistics
J9	28	Mix-Master / Educator
Philippe	38	Street Artist
Sondy	28	Entrepreneur
Success	24	Community Activist

## *Sondy*

Sondy is a 28-year-old entrepreneur. He is dark-skinned, about 5' 11" to 6' tall, with a ready, flashing smile. Sondy is a charismatic man, who is passionate about Haiti and language, specifically learning languages and applying them professionally. Sondy is a student of his country's history and culture. His thirst for continuous learning about Haiti and languages feeds his entrepreneurial personality. Sondy is constantly looking for new places to explore and new people in Haiti to engage to enhance the cultural information he can pass on to clients. To that end, Sondy has been in the process of building an all-inclusive touring and language acquisition business. His target demographic is the expat community that is so prevalent in Haiti. Due to his interests and chosen path, Sondy sees himself as "an ambassador for Haiti."

Sondy was raised by his grandparents from one to nine years of age. He explained that in Haiti, young parents are "not really ready to have kids." His parents were focused on work. At age nine, his innate curiosity caused problems for his grandparents; they sent him to live with his father, who regularly physically abused him until he was 11 years old. Sondy recounts his experience:

So, there was a lot of violence. I really couldn't digest it as a kid, because it was definitely too much on me. I ran away, and I spent five days on the street, trying to get to my grandparents in the countryside, talking about my grandparents on my Mom's part. When they took me back to Prince-Prince, because the idea was that I didn't want to come back at all, I wanted to just flee and never come back again, because my father was living in Potoprens. He was my nightmare at that time. When they took me back, the best question I think he ever asked me was,



‘What do you want to do?’ And then, I was strong enough to tell him that I didn’t want to live with him anymore. (Sondy, January 16, 2016)

Sondy moved in with his mother, who provided a supportive environment. Sondy shared, “I started to really experience what love means - love of being a kid - because she really took care of me. She gave me what I needed at that time.” At age 19, Sondy, wanting more freedom, decided to move out on his own.

### ***Philippe***

Philippe is a 38-year-old street artist, the married father of two children, and a devout Christian. Philippe is a medium height, solidly built man of dark smooth skin, close cut hair, and a winning smile. On the job, when Philippe notices a potential customer, he confidently greets them with a smile and a handshake. That openness disarms and allows the person to feel comfortable as they peruse his artwork.

Philippe faces very real physical challenges pertaining to keeping his street art safe, which is reflected in frustration with the lack of infrastructure in the government and his street artist association. He thought the association would bring much needed organization to his fellow workers, but instead is in disarray. Philippe is contemplating moving to another country to better provide for his family.

### ***Success***

Success is a 24-year-old community activist, whom I call the ‘Super Community Person.’ His life revolves around enterprises geared toward improving not only his own circumstances, but also those surrounding him through a farming cooperative, a religious ministry that includes providing an education for children and young adults who cannot afford it, and the international YMCA program. Success is slight of build with a bit of an

Afro framing a face with full lips that turn upward in a smile. He is enthusiastic about his work and looks directly at you, almost piercingly, when speaking of it. (OB1 SU, January 26, 2016). While Success volunteers for all of the above listed activities, translating documents for NGO's is how he earns an income; however, those jobs are not that plentiful.

### ***J9***

J9 is a 28-year-old music mix master as well as a mental health counselor/educator. He is of medium height with medium brown skin, sometimes-twinkling eyes, and a beautiful wide smile. J9 is easy-going, yet serious about his work. Flashes of a purposeful, keen intelligence emerge, almost as a surprise in its depth. J9 is interesting because his work encompasses two distinct provinces: music mix-master for jingles and commercials and mental health counseling. He seems equally passionate about and accomplished in both enterprises. J9 has definite entrepreneurial plans for his future, including a multi-layered public transportation business that he will oversee, bringing economic security to his friends and family.

### ***Becky***

Becky is a 22-year-old young Haitian university student, who lives at home with her parents and younger brother in Bois Moquette, Petyonvil. She is about 5'6" tall and slender, with medium brown skin tone, dark brown almond shaped eyes, and a heart-shaped mouth that widens into a generous smile. Becky sometimes wears her hair pulled back in a short ponytail. Becky is quietly outgoing and seems just on the verge of becoming her adult self. Her love of languages led Becky to attend the Faculte de Linguistique Appliquee (FLA), the language department of the State University of Haiti.

She worked part-time as a salesperson in a small women's boutique in Petyonvil. Becky is very excited to begin her studies in a new environment and looks forward to one day building a small translation bureau in Haiti.

### **Themes**

Through interviews and observations conducted for this study, the participants were driven by the major themes that emerged in the findings: 1) passion for their interests, 2) persistence in pursuit of meshing passions with professional goals, 3) desire for worldwide mutual respect, and 4) frustration with global derogatory media depictions. Under each theme, I grouped further responses as sub-themes to delineate how the participants manifested their understanding of their place in society. In addition, I documented the participants' commonalities and where they diverged commensurate with their experiences.

To understand what the participants were pursuing and why, it was necessary to obtain information concerning their particular circumstances vis-à-vis their interests, when they began, and how those interests influenced their decisions for their educational and professional choices. In order to discover the themes for this study, I referred to Creswell's (2013) instruction for deriving story themes from the chronology, epiphanies, and events. I began by coding the participants responses to each study question: a set of three interviews each participant. I then categorized the responses to each sub-question per participant and then synthesized the categories per question and participant. To synthesize the categories, I put similar categories together and counted which had the most responses per participant for the question. From that information the themes became evident. An example is below.

**Research question d:** What are the reflections of Haitian people under 40 on the impact of historical and current negative images of Haitian people?

<b>Table 2</b>		
<i>Theme Building Example A</i>		
D1: Are you aware of the negative images of the Haitian people?		
Categories	Participants	Synthesis: Number of Participants
Acknowledge Haitian Stereotypes	Sondy, Success, J9, Becky	4
Show both sides of Haiti	Sondy, Success	2
Self-critique of Haitians / Country Marketing Vision	Philippe	1
Comparison to other countries	J9	1
Ethnic pride	J9	1

<b>Table 3</b>		
<i>Theme Building Example B</i>		
D2: How have these negative images impacted you?		
Categories	Participants	Synthesis: Number of Participants
Less business	Sondy, Philippe	2
Frustration	Sondy, Philippe	2

A Call to Action / Community Action to Transform Haitian Society	Philippe, Success	2
Self-critique	Philippe	1
Ethnic Pride	J9	1
Heavy weight	Becky	1

Table 2 Sub-Themes D1: Are you aware of the negative images of the Haitian people?

1. Acknowledge Haitian Stereotypes
2. Show both sides of Haiti

Table 3 Sub-Themes D2: How have these negative images impacted you?

1. Less Business; Frustration; A Call to Action / Community Action to Transform Haitian Society (2 each).

I took the top two responses from D1 in Table 2 and the top three responses from D2 in Table 3 since there were three of the same amount of participant responses. I then checked the original responses along with the syntheses. I deducted that knowledge of the negative media projections led the participants to question why there was so little positive depictions of their country. The pain of fewer business opportunities led the participants to want to gather their communities together to improve how the country looked physically and to improve their groups' attitude toward their capabilities to improve their circumstances. From the participants responses and my analysis I arrived at an overall theme of 'frustration with negative images projected globally.'

**D:** Frustration with negative images project globally.

### ***Passion for their interests***

In his psychological study, Canadian research psychologist Vallerand (2008) led the development of the Dualistic Model of Passion. He describes passion “as a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, find important, and in which they invest time and energy.” Vallerand (2008) delves further to describe ‘harmonious passion’ as “an autonomous internalisation of the activity into the person’s identity...and is in harmony with other aspects of the person’s life” (p. 2). All five participants exhibited Vallerand’s ‘harmonious passion.’ The study participants exhibited the duality and harmonious passion of Vallerand’s (2008) model: they each began with a strong interest in a subject matter, actively developed that interest and believed in their ability to incorporate it into a viable living that they could enjoy.

The theoretical framework of postcolonialism is reflected in the participants’ willingness to exhibit their agency in pursuit of their interests with little regard to the “common sense” low expectations of those who are not from or of Haiti as to how their lives should unfold. Sony and Becky were interested in learning as many languages as they could; Philippe was a street artist who began drawing as a child; Success and J9 were driven to serve their communities through differing avenues. What follows are indicators of how the study participants actively meshed the objects of their enthusiasms with their professional interests.

### ***Understanding of clients’ needs / beginnings***

Haiti is a land of two official languages, Kreyol and French. Most Haitians speak Kreyol only. French, the language of government, business, and education, was the sole

official language until 1987 when the Haitian Constitution was amended to admit Kreyol as the country's second official language. Sony and Becky both expressed a deep love and affinity for language acquisition, evidenced by their ability to be almost entirely self-taught. While they both spoke Kreyol and French, they also were interested in adding other languages to their repertoire.

Sony acknowledged, "I've always had a passion for languages." During his undergraduate studies, Sony applied to medical school. The program, administered by Cuban medical personnel in Haiti, required that students learn Spanish. While Sony did well with the language, he realized, "medicine wasn't really apt for me." He left medical school and began work with a U.S. university's mental health program in Potoprens. That experience precipitated Sony's entrepreneurial spirit to manifest itself.

I started to get involved in community projects, and those community projects led me to a lot of other people that I had to meet during this time. And that's how I started to teach Kreyol. And when I started to teach Kreyol, I started to have a lot of ideas of how to make this better. And that's when I figured that having a company providing services to expats would be actually something that would interest me. (Sony, January 16, 2016)

The expat community in Haiti is global, attracting many people from European countries among others. Demonstrating awareness of his potential client base, Sony observed, "Fortunately, I speak Kreyol, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese. Now I'm learning German and Italian." He went on to explain the connection,

I've been involved in many cultures, different cultures, and I've understood what people really needed...here. People visiting, or people living or working in Haiti,

I've understood what they needed. And then I dedicated myself to provide them with those kinds of services. So, here I am today. (Sondy, January 16, 2016)

Similar to Sondy's interest in language acquisition, Becky stated, "I wanted to do [study] linguistics, [timbre of voice picks up here] because I've always wanted to speak many more languages than just Kreyol and French." Becky recounted how she began her quest,

My Dad gave me a dictionary; English / French dictionary. And I was like, "This is amazing!" There are so many words in it. "Maybe you can learn all this."

I started to challenge myself; I started to learn a lot of words. And then I told my Dad to buy me a mirror. I started to try to converse with myself through the mirror. I started to question myself and try to answer back; imagine that I was two persons. Day to day I started to get better. I was like...and it was like, "Wow!" I started to look for people who speak English, so I could practice with to see if I was that good. That's how it started. (Becky, February 5, 2016)

Unlike her fellow study participants who were well into their careers, Becky was a university student just beginning to formulate her career objectives. The volunteer professors and administration at ETS were Americans who spoke English, not Kreyol. Becky's English proved proficient enough for her professors to request she translate not only for students in the classroom but also to accompany one particular professor who visited hospitalized patients in another region of Haiti to obtain critical medical information.

Becky's perceptions of what visitors to Haiti need to communicate effectively prompted her to consider incorporating translation as a career objective. Becky stated, Sometimes people come to Haiti and they have to find guides, people



to...Sometimes you find someone that knows the place but doesn't know the language the foreigners speak. I was thinking that maybe that I could have the place...how could I call it? A little business where I work with other translators, or I help them, make it easier for people to work with them; to find their service. To make it easier so you don't really need to just find some random people in the street or something like that, you know? I was thinking maybe, there could be...I don't know if I could call it an agency, where there are a lot of translators available to work with those persons. (Becky, February 2, 2016)

As with Sony, Becky spoke several languages, including Kreyol, French, Portuguese, and although she understood Spanish when spoken to her, she hesitated to speak it in return. These two participants' interest in language acquisition eventually led them to target the expat presence in their country as business clients. Sony began as a Kreyol instructor and expanded his business to touring for vacationers and expats alike. Becky was just beginning her university studies in linguistics:

I wanted to know what the language was really about; what it was made of and how did people end up speaking different languages. To make it maybe, better, so I'll work on it, because I want to be a translator. (Becky, February 2, 2016)

Sony and Becky both realized people who come to Haiti to tour or to work needed qualified communication assistance. Their vision was to apply their love of languages to help their target group have a positive Haitian experience.

Continuing in the entrepreneurial vein, Philippe was a self-taught artist who painted abstracts for himself and commercial art for his business as a street-artist in Petyonvil in downtown Potoprens (PAP). Philippe expressed his passion in this way,

It's a gift. Since I was in school, I was really good at doing drawings. Whenever I would have a homework to do, I would forget about the homework, and then do drawing. I didn't really have someone teach it to me, but I just learned it, and from that, I have a family, I build a family. (Philippe, January 18, 2016)

By 2006, Philippe relocated from Grand Anse to PAP and needed to earn a living. Just as Sony and Becky had used their skills to further their interests professionally and educationally, Philippe developed his artistic skills to form a business as a street artist. His older sister provided the seed money to launch his idea and Philippe noted, "With that money, I started to buy materials. I have a love for drawing, painting, and that was opportunity for me to do business."

The street artists are located in a dynamic downtown area, close to a major hotel and a shopping district. Paintings of street scenes of women in traditional African garb selling produce and men steering boats, among others, grace the fences of a long narrow street across from the hotel. In addition to selling his work, Philippe also contracted to sell other artists' paintings as well. When I asked him what determined the potential to resell the artwork, Philippe was as sure about his clients as Sony was about his, "I am in this area for a long time, so I know exactly what clients need. And once we know exactly what the client needs, that is exactly what we look for and expose [show] them."

For Success, the community activist, and J9, the mix-master / mental health educator, their clients were the Haitian people. Their approach differed, but they were clear in their service. Early in his life Success and his family lived in Cite de Soleil. They escaped death by gang violence and relocated to Port-du-Paix. His parents were indigent. The community pulled together to help provide the family with a home for a new

beginning. In addition, public school is not free in Haiti; the community again stepped in twice, to pay Success' school fees. Success reflected on his fortune,

I'm the first person who's finished with high school, and who goes to university, and I can say, I am one of the light for the family [smile]. Because I'm the one who, by the grace of God, who understands things differently than them. Because education is something... that's one of the things that make people see things differently. (Success, January 25, 2016)

Through friends and colleagues, Success became involved with multiple community organizations including the YMCA Youth Ambassador's program for youth development and the Association de Planteur des Legumes de Kensicoff (APLOK), a farming collective. Success said, "The goal of this farm association is to help them do something better with what they do." Success served as international coordinator for the Sentinel Ministries Fighter for Christ. The ministry funded a community school for students whose parents cannot afford to pay for their children's education, providing uniforms and meals among other items. Success stated, "There's spiritual, social, economics. We ...working on changing people's lives. Show them how to work by themselves."

In addition, Success began his own organization - Association Sociale pour le Development des Humanité / Social Association for the Development of Humanity, (ASDH), to administer a camp for children. Success said its goal was, "to make the poor kids...the kids with poor parents to feel the same as kids with rich parents." "I just give myself away by involving in community organizations; involving in community schools to let people know." Success is of a population who are in circumstances of not having

enough. His work with his various communities reflected a way to pay the help he received forward.

Similar to Success, J9's early familial experiences influenced his passion, in his case, for music. In our initial interview J9 enthused, "First of all, I love music; I know music." J9 came from a musical family; his father, siblings, cousins, everyone either sang, wrote, and/or played music. This environment encouraged J9 to explore his leanings,

I learned a little bit of piano, just a little bit; just enough to be able to make music, to make good music. I started making music at my house, recording. I started with my friends. I recorded my cousin, "Do you want to make music with me?" I would make the instrumental. And, she was like, "Yeah!" And then I recorded her voice, and I mixed and mastered it, and it was like a good song. All I had was a computer and a little microphone, a computer microphone [laughing]. At my house! [Said with wonder.] (J9, February 12, 2016)

In addition to music, J9 cultivated another passion: caring for others. He recounted an episode of a high school friend with a heart condition whose doctor put her on oral medication, but she still had seizures regularly. J9 confided, "I talked to her, and have her talk to me, and make her feel comfortable." When his friend's seizures receded, she discontinued her pill therapy and credited J9 for helping her. This incident prompted J9 to enroll at ETS. He noted,

I was at the university because I like psychology. I like helping other people feeling good and recognize their emotion; like what do you feel right now and

how to manage that. I love that. I love to help people manage their stress. (J9, February 12, 2016)

J9 seemed equally drawn to music and caring for others and managed to parlay both passions into his professional life, as a music mix-master for which he was paid, and as a volunteer mental health counselor and educator.

Comparable to Success, J9's careers as a mix-master and mental health advocate began through interest and observations from friends and colleagues. As previously mentioned, J9 began experimenting with music in his home, which eventually led him to produce music for family for a competition. The winner of the competition overheard J9 directing his cousin and wanted to work with him. J9 stated, "I started working at the TV [station], making music and other things." J9 increased his abilities by training with the colleague and the station owner. He left that position to work in accounting. At the same time, J9 rented a studio where he recorded and mix/mastered music for his personal clients. A friend who worked at a radio / tv jingle production company, knew J9's abilities, and recommended him to management. They had a client who wanted a tune with a Kompa beat, a modern calypso. J9 had never worked with Kompa music, but he made the effort,

It was my first time making Kompa. They love it. [He relishes telling this story: all teeth and crinkly eyes]. And they say, 'Okay, Okay! We love you; we love your sound; we love the quality; we love the energy; we love everything.' I started to work with them [mix-mastering commercial jingles]. (J9, February 12, 2016)

In his position at the music production company, J9 incorporated a digital console and a computer station and voice-over professionals to perform his duties. J9 described his job,

I am the main producer of the jingles. I produce the jingles. I come with an instrumental, and I have to come with a hook. They give me the...most of the time they give me the scripts. I have to modify them, make them match my melody. Mix it and master it, and then send it back to them. If they need a little correction, then they send it back, and I just correct it. (J9, February 12, 2016)

J9 did well at ETS but had to leave when he ran out of money for classes. A former instructor contacted him when she was opening Espere (Hope), a community mental health organization in PAP to serve as counselor and educator. J9 had several duties, including conducting support groups: "It's really fun especially when I'm working with the children. I love to work with the children." J9's main job was to train the trainer, as he explained, "I'm working on the education program, training other mental health workers," who, once certificated, train colleagues in schools, churches, orphanages and other mental health organizations.

Although Espere generated income from donations and its train-the-trainer program, no one who worked there earned a salary. The income was used for clients who needed their services but could not pay. J9 explained the rationale for how the income was dispensed,

The money is used to help the patients, because we work with families raising children, and they don't have money. We have to provide for...we have to give them, not economic security, but a little to live. (J9, February 12, 2016)

For example, J9 was counseling a woman whose son was seriously ill. J9 said, “But, she knows how to sew, and we gave her some machine so she could sew for the community, so she could make a little money to raise her child.”

Success made the most of the educational opportunities community members afforded him by volunteering to pass on salient information to those he found in similar financial circumstances. J9 used his musical talents to fulfill the needs of production management. Like Success, J9 volunteered his time, in his case, to help Haitians begin to address their emotional and financial stressors. Applying their passions to their professional lives helped facilitate all of the study participants to acquire a clearer idea of who their clients were and what needs they could address.

### ***Building community***

One prominent factor among four of the participants (Sondy, Philippe, Success and J9) was their willingness to contribute their skills to help their communities thrive. Sondy and Success were not only interested in enhancing the skill-sets of their immediate community but of Haiti as a whole. Sondy’s business goals were two-fold: 1) “to have a real business, to create sustainability, to create jobs, to bring people in,” and 2) “to really advertise Haiti abroad, and make sure that Haiti can become the destination premiere.” Success echoed Sondy’s vision, “If Haiti is more educated, more people would be willing to come in Haiti.” The participants believed that enhancing their own skills would also lift up Haiti’s reputation. They felt a strong connection and responsibility toward their country.

Like Success, J9 volunteered his time. As a mental health educator, J9 helped give his Haitian clients the tools to address their emotional well-being without fear of the

associated stigma, that until recently rested within Haitian culture. In his paying position as mix-master, J9 focused on his personal community of family and friends, which included many musicians. At times, management gave J9 special projects to produce for his job. When possible, he shared these opportunities with friends and family. As J9 excitedly told me, “I call MY friends, and be like, ‘You want to do this?’ And they say, ‘Yeah.’ And then we do it! So, next week it’s going to be a radio show, next Friday.” He explained to me that he had a job that paid well and that those in his immediate community were talented, just not as fortunate. When J9 had the opportunity to offer his friends a chance to earn a bit of an income doing what they love, and paid them from his earnings, he did so. J9 stated, “it’s because, you know, it’s what I do... I am helping myself and helping other people in a certain way. I want to help other people get stable and get a stable economy. Get an economy really stable.”

Philippe and Becky’s involvement with community was not as straightforward as with Sony, Success, and J9. Although, Philippe said, “I don’t just do painting, but I also buy other people’s painting, and then I do exposition. I work in cooperation with other artists.” I questioned if buying and displaying other artists’ work, was actually building a community, or a shrewd business opportunity. Maybe both? Philippe would like to be a part of a close-knit group of artists, but so far that has not been the case.

Unlike Sony and Success, Becky was at the beginning of the journey toward her goal to become a translator. Becky noted that she was a student who did not yet have too much experience in her profession. Her community was made up of students in her linguistics program. Between her job, traveling to and from university, and studying, Becky did not have time to develop a student community. The closest Becky came to



Speak about a community was her goal of beginning a translation bureau, but she did not expand on that topic.

### *Self-starters*

The five study participants were self-aware enough to recognize a major interest in their lives. They took steps to develop their interests and then applied them professionally. As such they were self-starters with a strong sense of agency. Sony and Philippe exercised their entrepreneurial bent to begin their businesses. Through his exposure to community projects, Sony met people from the expat community and built upon those relationships to begin his Kreyol language institute. Philippe used his artistic talent to begin his street business. Becky followed her educational course in linguistics with a goal to open a translation service in the future.

Unlike Sony, Philippe, and Becky, Success and J9 were not strictly entrepreneurs, yet they were ready when opportunity presented itself. For example, Success was with friends who attended a dance class at the local YMCA and he inquired as to how to become a part of the program. Success recalled, “They say, ‘You can come do whatever you can with the youth.’ ‘I say, okay, and I just get registered.’” That was the beginning of Success’ professional community advocacy. Similarly, rather than refuse to produce music with which he was unfamiliar, J9 exhibited confidence in his abilities and took the challenge to create a successful Kompa set. Each of the participants displayed the agency, self-confidence, and enthusiasm for life to push themselves toward new experiences, evidence of the successful self-starter sense of agency.

### ***Multiple responsibilities***

Sondy, Success, and J9 handled multiple major responsibilities in their work. Sondy was a private Kreyol language instructor and also acted as a guide for his touring company. As a guide he responded to the many and varied questions visitors entertained. In this capacity and as an instructor, his knowledge of languages, Haitian culture, and history were strong assets. Success was involved in several community endeavors. He taught English and computer classes to elementary school students, trained farmers in new techniques to increase their capacity, and worked with youth at the YMCA in Haiti and in upstate New York. Success also ran a camp for Haitian youth through his own organization. In his position as music mix/master, J9 collaborated directly with management, writers, and actors. As a mental health educator and counselor, J9 worked with family clients, corporate clients, psychologists, and other educators and counselors. In contrast, Philippe was occupied solely with his art and Becky with her studies. All of the participants were immersed in their work, no matter how many major responsibilities they had to handle.

### ***Persistence***

The participants demonstrated the ability to recognize their strengths and areas that could use added assistance toward their goals. What networks, alliances and institutional spaces did the participants utilize to continue on their path to economic self-determination? The major theme that emerged in response to this question was persistence - a resolve to remain focused on their goals through highs and lows of the participants' paths. This question elicited salient responses that I sometimes did not expect. The participants discussed the opportunities, challenges, and mitigations necessary to develop

their professional lives, according to their personalities and as they saw fit.

### ***Opportunities***

***Support from others.*** In relation to opportunities presented to them, three of the five participants credited other people who helped them achieve their professional goals. One ascribed their path to their goal to themselves, and one was not sure. Sony attributed his success to the exchanges he incurred with the expat and university communities before and since he began his business. For instance, if he told one of his expat colleagues about a plan for his business, they suggested methods of implementation. Sony related that there were,

A lot of supportive people in my life who taught me a lot about businesses, and who taught me a lot about how to deal with people. And they told me a lot about life generally and management skills. So, I'm very grateful for that. (Sony, January 12, 2016)

Sony also observed how his supporters handled visiting groups. During one of our conversations he said, "I see the way they manage those groups when they come here. I see the way they manage certain things, and I follow them."

Success acknowledged that without help from members of his community, he would not be in his present position. In a vein similar to Sony, Success opined, "I'm so grateful for my parents and for everybody's whose involving in my education...I didn't have any opportunity to go to school, and some other people were thinking about me, and seeing me and sent me to school."

Along with Sony and Success, J9 benefited from others' aid. J9 referenced the opportunity to learn from his colleague and his manager when he worked at the TV

station.

He taught me a lot about music, because at this time, I didn't know a lot of things. He taught me how to mix, how to master, and I love that. The guy who owned the TV [station], he used to produce music in the states at the age of 15. He taught me about music too. And I love that. (J9, February 12, 2016)

Even though J9 did well at the jingle production company, he welcomed the manager's advice. J9 said, "Here's the way he starts talking to you... 'I'm not talking to you as a boss, I'm talking to you now as a mentor, as a friend.' That's how he starts. And I love that."

Unlike Sony, Success, and J9, who recognized other people's influence in their enterprises, Philippe credited himself for the opportunity to begin his business, "I would say my intelligence. That's the only thing and nothing else." That response surprised me, since earlier Philippe had noted his sister financed his business start-up; she provided the opportunity for him to begin his business. I pressed him further and Philippe elaborated,

It's when you don't hide what you have or what you know. No one directed me toward painting or the business. If I would sell a painting today, I would always make a way to save money, so that if I don't sell anything the next day, I can still survive. (Philippe, January 18, 2016)

Becky said, "Honestly, I'm not really there yet. I don't know what I'm going to do to get there." I believe Becky's father was supportive by giving her the dictionary and buying her the mirror that she requested to improve her language skills. Support from others helped the participants persevere.

**Education.** Success recognized the importance of education to achieve his goals. He trained to be a plumber and an electrician. After high school, Success took courses in engineering at Universite Shakina d’Haiti and then attended ETS, as did Sony, J9, and Becky. In addition, Success shared educational opportunities with his farming, religious, and schooling communities. For example, he was trained by USAID on updated farming techniques, which he then in turn trained the farmers to improve their produce yield. Success expressed his thoughts about schooling, “Without education, there’s no way you can go forward. Even though you have a lot of money, with no education you are going step back, because you can’t manage money without knowledge.”

Distinct from Success’s certainty, when I initially asked Becky about important opportunities for her path, she demurred, “I know I’m working on it. I don’t really see the opportunities yet, but I know they will come. I know.” I then touched on her beginning studies at the state university. Becky took the entrance exam and remembered how she felt afterward, “I was stressing about the result because state universities are different from private universities. Only the best of the best are chosen. It could be out of thousand students, yes.” Becky passed the exam and that relieved some of the pressure she felt about her future. She also learned something about herself, “That made me feel...that revealed something to me, something that I forgot about myself: that I am able to do things that I really, really want to do.”

Education was important for J9. He studied psychology at ETS and impressed a former instructor enough that she requested he work with her at Espire, a Haitian NGO devoted to addressing mental health issues. J9 was able to develop his ability to work

with people on sensitive emotional issues into a position as a mental health counselor and educator.

While Sony did have formal schooling, he noted, “I observe people.” Sony utilized his observation skills to self-educate in the expat environment: “I take whatever is positive and reject the negative things...every time I meet new people, I would call those people teachers for me, because I learn from them, I learn from my environment.” As an entrepreneur, Sony was curious and opened himself to possibilities in various situations. He exercised his ability to utilize his informal learning skills to size up a situation or a person and grasp that would best benefit him and his priorities toward attaining his goals.

The study participants took advantage of the opportunities presented to them by accepting support from colleagues and community. They also believed in their abilities to progress on their own volition and the benefit of educational pursuits. Such actions are emblematic of the participants’ commitment to create a better future for their economic viability.

### ***Challenges and obstacles faced***

Four sub-themes emerged in response to this question. Lack of finances was a reflection of the difficulties encountered to improve economic status in Haiti where most people live below or at subsistence levels. Marketing was a hurdle to mitigate as competition to attract the public was fierce. Name recognition is an important indicator to distinguish and build any business. Lack of governmental infrastructure is a problem in Haiti. Whether it was solid road construction, or product protection from the elements, lack of good government infrastructure posed obstacles to participants’ realization of

planned business outcomes. Finally, class issues represent the dissonances of wealth disparity and skin color complexities in Haitian societies.

As entrepreneurs, Sony and Philippe shared the first three challenges. They addressed the implications of not having enough money to move their businesses forward. Sony and Philippe also faced challenges of marketing their business to the public in a crowded field and finding that the lack of governmental infrastructure affected their abilities to establish their enterprises as they saw fit.

Success, J9 and Becky encountered class issues in various manifestations including community self-doubt and colorism. Success confronted a community mindset of being unable to accomplish anything without outside help. On his job at the jingle production company, J9 had to acknowledge the division between Kreyol and French speakers. Becky's medium brown skin color accounted for her reactive conflicted emotions on identity with her fellow university students. In most communities of color, a person's status and beauty can be defined by how light or dark their skin color is. Descendants of Africa, most Haitians, are dark-skinned and poor. The business and government elite in Haiti tend to be lighter-skinned. When the two meet, it is not uncommon to notice the other's skin color and make assessments. Colorism happens in the U.S. and anywhere there are persons of color. The sad thing is that we do to ourselves what everyone else does. This is an enduring result of colonization.

***Lack of finances.*** Sony explained the biggest obstacle to beginning his business, "When I started this Kreyol Institute and Touring Company about two years and a half ago, I literally had nothing, like zero money. That was my primary concern." Philippe too grappled with a scarcity of financial resources, as he disclosed, "I would love to set

up my business another way, but because I don't have enough for that, and also...because I have responsibilities, I can't set up my business the way I want it to set up." In a country that struggles economically, Sony and Philippe's experiences are to some degree to be expected. It is how they move forward that is important to the development of their business success.

**Marketing.** As entrepreneurs, Sony and Philippe found that marketing their businesses was difficult. There were several establishments like Sony's, as he referred, "It took me a really, really long time for the company to really...I mean right now I'm still having this problems, 'cause we do have a ...there are a lot of other companies, and right now it's really competitive." If he could not be in the right place at the right time to increase revenue, Sony opined, "I would definitely have to shut it down."

A challenge to Philippe was the lack of a cohesive understanding among his fellow street-artists. Philippe disclosed, "We do have an organization...to move forward all of us together." Several factors needed to be addressed, such as how to distinguish the artists from the general public, to have ID and T-shirts, and a uniform pricing code. "We wanted to see, we wanted to find a way to orient ourselves, so we can change the way we are functioning here, so we can change the way we are living here."

**Lack of government infrastructure.** The Haitian government does not have many rudimentary systems in place to keep a country running smoothly, such as garbage cans on street corners to alleviate trash, nor reliably available hot water. Ineffective government oversight negatively affected Sony's and Philippe's businesses. Sony's challenge was the dearth of good roads to drive. He stated, "I would love to explore the places in Haiti that have even much more touristic potential but because of infrastructure,



I really can't." Sondy, a proud Haitian, was frustrated by his country's inattention to details, "This is a big obstacle, not just for me, but for the country as well because we do have a lot more to offer, but unfortunately, we're not able to."

As with Sondy, Philippe also had problems with lack of government infrastructure. Street art by definition is exhibited outside, exposed to the elements, natural and manufactured. During my observations, I noted the scene: a long narrow street, a constant abundance of cars, trucks and motos, people walking by. The noise and the fumes created a cacophony ill-suited to appreciating the hundreds of paintings hung in several rows on the block-long hurricane fences.

In our first interview, January 18, 2016, Philippe told me a story. One morning in 2011 during the Presidential elections, he and the other artists arrived to find their paintings destroyed. The night before there had been a demonstration against Michel Martelly, candidate for president of Haiti (and elected president in 2011). At that time, the artists left their work piled up every night on the sidewalks of the street they occupied, as they did not have a secured place to store them. Apparently, the demonstrators moved up the street and set fire to the unguarded paintings. Philippe said, "When our paintings were burned, the government didn't support us." Philippe saw their art as something to attract visitors, a benefit to Haiti. He wanted the government to designate a sheltered, secured setting to exhibit and protect the street artists' work, but that did not happen. Despite the disappointment, Philippe expressed this sentiment, "Because we are artists, we managed to gain our strength and continue."

*Class issues.* Success and members of Sentinel Ministries wanted to do something to help their community in a mountain village situated above the city. The village was

known for its cemetery and Vodou rites. Many members of the population were indigent. Armed with ideas to improve their neighbors' quality of life by starting a school, Success met with a challenge that he elaborated below,

People in this community didn't think they could develop themselves. They didn't really believe that there was a way they could have anything to live without somebody giving it to them. I think that was something they had in mind, 'I can't do anything for myself'. (Success, January 27, 2016)

Success's statement led me to recall a conversation with a friend of his - a young Haitian woman. She told me confidence had been stolen from the Haitian people, or they had forgotten how to be confident, but that it was not always this way. Her statement forced me to ask, "Are they just used to being told that others know better, and just believe that's the way it is? Or, do they believe trying to do for yourself is a futile enterprise?" The tentacles of colonialism in a so-called post-colonial world remain long and vicious.

Alice Walker (1983) defined the term 'colorism' as "prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their color." In Haiti, a country of African descendants, the class divide is palpable between people with dark skin tones and those with lighter skin tones [mulattoes]. J9 had several challenges due to his dark skin when he began his position as mix-master as he acclimated to a new workplace culture. One problem that came to the fore was his resistance to fraternizing with the young mulatto women in the company. J9 commented,

One of the things that made me uncomfortable is because they are, in Kreyol, mulattoes. That's a class, social class, like the lower class and the higher class.

They're like the higher class. They always underestimated people in the lower class. And I didn't want to face that [a little laugh]. (J9, February 12, 2016)

J9 was quick to point out that he avoided the women because if they said something negative about him, "I make you feel that I don't like it. I make you feel uncomfortable. I embarrass you. I want to go into all these things."

Two aspects of the mulatto women's behavior challenged J9: they spoke French, not Kreyol, and they looked down on those not in their class if they did not have relationships. J9 said, "They love speaking French...they like to know that you are somebody that...that you have knowledge, and you respect yourself." J9 felt he had two things going against him: he did not think he spoke French well and he was new at the company without many already formed relationships. For awhile he was in limbo.

Becky's challenge was the opposite from J9's, but also distressing. She encountered class difference at the university, finding that many of the students in her linguistics program came from economically challenged backgrounds. They lived in a different neighborhood and had fewer resources than she did. Becky shared, "I'm getting to learn how to understand them, how to cope with the difference. It's crazy...On a scale from 1 to 10... they believe I'm 8 when they are 4 or 5. See what I mean?" In part, what distinguished Becky from her fellow students was that her medium brown skin tone was lighter than theirs. The students told Becky that she was 'different'. Becky recounted, "They even said I'm not Haitian. And I was like, 'Yes, I'm Haitian.' That was like a huge argument, and I was like, forget about it, it's not even matter."

When I asked Becky if she had encountered this attitude before, she responded, "No...people always said that I look different for a Haitian, but they never pretend that I

am not Haitian.” When asked why the students would say she was not Haitian, Becky replied, “I don’t know [light laugh]. I was like, Haitians come in all shapes. It’s not only about the manners, or the behaviors, or the skin colors. There is like much more to that.”

### ***Mitigations to obstacles***

The study participants did not let obstacles deter them from their paths. Instead they confronted the challenges in their own manner, some more successfully than others. The sub-themes that emerged in response to the challenges the participants faced were networking, education, and behavioral adaptation. Sony and Philippe drew on networking to address their financial and marketing worries. Sony and Success utilized education to address their infrastructure and class issues. J9 and Becky employed social behavioral changes to assuage the class issues they encountered.

***Networking.*** To address his lack of finances, Sony relied on his charismatic personality and talent to build up financial resources to begin his business, “I am really, really positive and creative...I embrace it [a problem] like it was really positive.” Sony knew his previous reputation for teaching Kreyol to expats while working for the community groups would garner clients. He reinvested the money earned from teaching, into the business, as Sony said, “Then I really started the company and started the touring company.”

Sony solved his marketing problems by networking among the expat community. He notes, “Where there are like, a lot of expats come. And now, one of the things that I do for my network, like I offer jobs to people whether Haitian or expats living abroad.” Sony explained,

So, let’s say they [expat] would send me a client. They [client] would spend about

\$3000 and automatically they [expat] would get about \$300 out of it. So at the same time I'm creating jobs and those jobs are creating network for me. And then, that's one of the ways I'm trying to overcome certain of these challenges. (Sondy, January 12, 2016)

Philippe's financial and marketing challenges go hand-in-hand. He wanted to do business in a more efficient manner. The street artists attempted to come together to attain more benefit from their work. Philippe intimated, "The organization has been created in order to move forward all of us together," but he found,

Everybody don't see things the same way. We don't have the same ideology. We don't see business the same way. I might want to do something, but the others might not want to do it. So, this is not right. [Frustration? My note] (Philippe, January 18, 2016)

To address the lack of infrastructure affecting security for the artwork outside of working hours, Philippe and his fellow street artists received help from the Haitian management of a small hotel located across the street from the artists' workspace. They provided shelter for the artwork. Philippe noted, "There is small bungalows by the street over there, we just let them stay there. They are covered, but it's still risky because they are right by the street. There's no door, no lock." It was not a perfect solution, but their paintings were off the street and not too susceptible to the natural elements. The community, not the government, stepped in to help street artists protect their livelihood.

***Education.*** Sondy and Success employed educational practices in response to their challenges. To address the lack of government infrastructure affecting his business, non-drivable roads, Sondy was realistic concerning his ability to effect change in that

space, yet he continued forward to educate and build community. Sondy noted,

For the infrastructure, there is almost nothing I can do about it, other than talk to certain communities to understand how developing tourism in the community could be beneficial. In my involvement, I need to create possibility for other people in order to gain possibility for myself. (Sondy, January 12, 2016)

Success found a solution to the class issue of the mountain community inhabitants' reluctance to believe they were their own best resources. In alignment with Sondy, Success used the power of speech to help the residents shift their view of their place in the world, and the power to effect change in their circumstances. Success said, "And we just come into the area and let them know that's false. You can do it for yourself." He and his colleagues from Sentinel Ministries executed a two-fold plan to address first, the adult community members, and then the children and young adults who were not in school. He explained to the adults how they could help establish a community school,

I just let them know, you can help a kid. How? If you have five goudes, if you save one cent of it, in some days you're gonna have one dollar. If you say I'm going to help a kid with one dollar, you know you're going to be able to do it. (Success, January 27, 2016)

Success encouraged the young adults who thought they were beyond school age to get an education. He said, "We just talk to them like a counseling, so they can be aware that they have to go to school." The young people enrolled in classes, some in elementary grades. Success' efforts were productive, "We just collect money together and pay school for them...we involve and show...working on changing people's lives. Show them how

to work by themselves. Something interesting about it, I'm seeing now some lives getting changed." I believe that Success' early experience of a community paying for his education when his family could not, informs his dedication to paying that act forward to others in similar situations. As he opined, education helps change your perspective, something he ultimately witnessed in the mountain community. They came together to self-support opening a school for their children, rather than thinking they must rely on others from outside Haiti.

*Social behavioral changes.* J9 and Becky adopted new attitudes and behaviors to mitigate the classist environment they faced at work and at school. To mollify the situation at his job, J9 responded to the mulatto women in their preferred French language and with respect. Becky decided to try to learn from and fit in with her new student colleagues.

J9 thought he had a problem with the young mulatto women at his job who spoke French and did not think highly of people who did not develop relationships or respect themselves. It turned out, J9 never encountered objections from the women. In fact, J9 admitted that in the beginning, "I was okay with the guys, with the men, but the girls. I was a little shy, not that shy. Instead of going upstairs to the cafeteria to eat, I eat here (in studio)." I asked why he thought he did not have his anticipated problems with the mulatto women, he responded, "They speak French to me, I answer. And I show them respect, maybe it's because I show them respect, they show me respect back. But I don't really know."

J9 continued wondering why he was spared the denigration of classism by the

women. Maybe it was because he was friends with an employee who was, “really, really, really important here.” J9 told me the women assumed he and the important man were old friends before J9 began work at the company, but J9 said when he started with the company, “it was the first time I met him. They think that, just because I’m cool with him.” The women asked J9 if he was also friends with another employee and he was. Then J9 said, “maybe because I am good at what I am doing. Well, I never think about it.”

Since classism works both ways, maybe J9’s assumption about the women’s attitude concerning him was incorrect. Or, it could be that he was spared the mulatto women’s attitude because he answered their questions correctly for their peace of mind. I observed J9 three times. My notes collaborated what J9 said about his work ethic.

J9 seems in command of this position, completely engaged...I think J9 really enjoys his work because he is focused, joyful and has what seems like a good working relationship with his coworkers.

In the beginning, J9 was uncomfortable with the presence of the mulatto women at his job; yet he maintained his personality which was respectful and he eventually built relationships, avoiding complications on the job.

Linguistics was Becky’s major, and she was surrounded by like-minded people, no matter how they tried to differentiate her. She found the students to be quite bright. Becky was excited,

I met this guy; he speaks nine languages! Can you imagine that? They are smart; they know a lot of things. And they make me feel small. It’s like...I...sometimes feel like I don’t know nothing. When I hear them speaking...I’m really lucky to



be there. (Becky, February 2, 2016)

At first, when Becky said she felt small, I thought it was her personal insecurity speaking. Then I realized she was experiencing what many students do when they arrive in a new program. They are in a milieu of peers (in her case, fellow language acquisition lovers), and it was overwhelming and exciting. Becky embraced the students' intellects and allowed herself to exchange ideas with them. Becky told me, "I'm going to be able to learn a lot of things from them. I want them to influence me that way. That's cool."

Becky wanted to try fit in with her peers, despite the colorist attitude they imparted to her. She was aware of some grain of truth in what the students said, "Yeah, they make me feel...and I see somehow." Becky's response was, "I try to behave like them, you know? Because I don't like that people be saying that I'm different all the time...I want them to believe that I'm not really that different. I want them to realize that." Becky began to make acquaintances with some students. She intimated, "Uh-hmm. I have two friends. They live in Carrefour and I live in Petyonvil. I don't really see them out of school. But we talk on the phone." When I asked if they visited each other's homes, Becky said, "No, we're not there yet." It's a process.

### ***Desire for global mutual respect***

From the onset of my research, I wanted to examine the level of participant engagement with INGOs international and domestic, given the considerable numbers of organizations operating in Haiti. I combined two questions, "Have you had any interaction with international or Haitian organizations?" and, "What has your experience been with these organizations?" to understand what participants' interactions with INGOs were. Responses would likely incorporate both questions.

The theme that manifested for this question was the search for respect from INGOs. The church groups with their logoed t-shirts go to Haiti to do their missions, to ‘help the helpless’. Some of these organizations do not bother to ask those they are to help, what they need, they just do. I was looking forward to the participants’ recommendations for international INGOs when they work in Haiti.

### ***Participant experiences***

Four of the participants interacted with international and/or Haitian INGOs. Philippe did not have experience with any organizations. He did talk about how he would like to partner with INGOs. The sub-theme that emerged in this instance was that working with INGOs and Haitian organizations was a positive experience for all four participants.

***Positive engagements.*** Sony, who had the most extensive experience with INGOs, including foreign embassies, foundations, and university student groups among others, said, “So far good experiences...cause the needs are mutual and the moment you find a way to understand each other, and respect each other then everything should be all right.” Sony explained what a good experience meant to him,

It means that what they’ve been looking for has been found. It means I have been providing them with the services they want. And then, so far, I don’t think I haven’t been paid by any of the organizations so far. I’ve been paid by all of the organizations I have been working for. And most of them are doing good work here too. (Sony, January 12, 2016)

Sony also referred to Haitian organizations who host INGOs personnel to conduct as he said, “...trainings, or to implement some kind of project.” Some of the

personnel want to experience Haiti apart from the trainings they offer. The Haitian organizations will call Sony “so that I can provide them with either transportation, or cultural orientation, or touring, or Kreyol classes.”

Success credits an upstate New York church community, not an NGO, for their partnership with his Social Organization for the Development of Humanity, “Christmas, summer, I have camp for kids. Those people involving and supporting the camp.” His connection to the YMCA Youth Ambassadors took him to upstate New York to talk to troubled kids, some of whom were Haitian. Success disclosed his experience,

I had to go share my life, my whole life with them, and let them know that they are in a better place than some other kids in Haiti...And that was a good experience for me to try to enter into people’s consciousness and to let them understand things different than they did before. (Success, January 25, 2016)

J9’s mental health work is through Espire, a Haitian NGO, that has been very fruitful for him. He offered, “[experience with them has been] ... really good.” Espire partners with Respire an international NGO of psychologists. In a twist on Haitian / international NGO dynamics, J9 said, “We went to them first, because we offer all services to everybody...we offer them [and their clients] support groups and counseling.” Respire trained Espire staff to employ sand tray therapy, a non-verbal activity applied to discover types of trauma children experience. J9 said, “We learned it, and it’s really useful... we use it, but not very often, but we do it in orphanages.”

J9 talked about the relationship with Respire,

It’s been a good experience. They welcomed me ...because of the way they welcome me. Does that make sense? They smile, they talk to you, they ask you

what do you want? so they can...they make you feel comfortable. How do I say this? There is a word for it...they make you feel like home. (J9, February 12, 2016)

In 2012 or 2013, Soudy recruited Becky to translate Kreyol into English for a group of Chicago students for five days. Becky stated, "They were learning [teaching] people to survive earthquakes, or to help people when they are injured." In congruence with Soudy, Success and J9, Becky's experience was a good one. She exclaimed, "It was amazing! It was my first time working with foreigner, so I realized how good people can be. They were really into what they were doing. It was amazing!"

Unlike the rest of the participants, Philippe had no experience with INGOs - Haitian nor international. While he expressed an interest in partnering with an organization, he said of the fledging street artist association, "but the other ones are not really into it." Philippe had a business vision of what partnership with an NGO would entail, "We would want to have a tourist market. Let's say they would give us a space...to create a market for tourists to come and buy our stuff, and that would be perfect." In another nod to the lack of government infrastructure, Philippe noted, "We just want our products to be safe and not having to go through all of the misery outside."

### ***Participant recommendations for INGOs***

The Haitian people are recipients of a great deal of help from international communities. Yet very rarely is their response to that help, or how they feel about it, discussed. In this study, the participants exercised the opportunity to record their opinions. Soudy, Success, and J9 expressed similar thoughts concerning cultural acclimation. Success and J9 discussed the dynamics of a true partnership with INGOs.

Sondy and Success considered a more realistic picture of Haiti in the international media. Becky felt she did not have enough experience in general to respond, and Philippe did not have any experience with INGOs. Below are the participants' recommended actions for INGOs interested in helping Haitian communities.

***Cultural acclimation.*** Sondy, Success, and J9 agreed that it would benefit expats and Haitians alike if expats would educate themselves about Haitian culture and language before they arrived in-country with harmful stereotypical notions about the people and place they professed to aid. Sondy, who had extensive opportunities to work with the NGO community, advised,

I would...encourage the international partners to come in Haiti and orient themselves culturally, cause a lot of the times a lot of the expats who are living in Haiti do not know anything about Haiti. They've seen things, and they give their own interpretation, which for most of the time is wrong. Culture here is really complex, also really beautiful, and in order to understand it you need to be directed to the right direction. So, I would say that as a recommendation make sure that even before the people come here, they learn some Kreyol. And also that they know about the culture, and afterward they will have a much better time in Haiti. (Sondy, January 12, 2016)

Success was involved with several organizations Haitian and international. He had an advantage of perspective in that he represented Haiti as an expat in upstate New York through his work with the YMCA, consequently he had been the recipient of aid in his country and given aid in the U.S. Success responded, "They have, when they come to do something in Haiti, they always need to have Haitians involving in their organizations,

because you can't know a country by yourself.”

J9, a mental health educator in a Haitian NGO run by “foreigners” with Haitians and foreign workers and volunteers, was intimately partnered with an INGO. J9 said:

What we do, according to the training program, we ask questions, and they get to learn what are the Haitian stereotypes; what is the culture about, and how do we live; what's the need, and what do we already have. Like that we can have better interaction with them. (J9, February 12, 2016)

J9 agreed with Sony's idea that expats need to acquire knowledge of Haitian culture and said, “I think it would be better if they would come here, and learn a little bit about Haiti, about the people [claps fist to hand] in any way.”

*Partnership - work with us, not for us.* Success articulated a definite viewpoint regarding INGOs intentions for the Haitian people they purport to aid. He had a message for INGOs to work effectively within the Haitian community, “They can come to help us with to build a better community, but not to come to build a community for us...I need some partnership.” Success was averse to someone coming from outside the country to do whatever they felt was best for a community they did not know. Success stated,

When somebody come into a community, you have to say what do you want me to do for you? What are you doing? And from what you are doing, I can give you a hand to go forward... Just think about how to help people change themselves, instead of saying you going to change for them. (Success, January 25, 2016)

During one of our conversations, Success used an allegory to illustrate his point: a man was walking along the road when he came upon a house and encountered a woman struggling to move a refrigerator. He told the woman he would help her, and he

proceeded to singlehandedly move the refrigerator into her home. The woman looked perturbed. He did not understand. The man asked her why she was not happy. The woman replied that she was trying to move the refrigerator outside of the house because it no longer worked. The man, with all good intentions, did what he assumed the woman wanted. He never asked her what she was trying to accomplish.

J9 talked about a common characteristic of some INGOs: ill-spent funds that could have been better used for Haitian projects. This is what J9 recommended to improve NGO fiscal responsibility,

They come, invest the money, and it's a waste of time and money, because it's not the real problem. If they would interact with a Haitian organization, that would help them find the real problem, and then invest the money in a better way. This is interaction. (J9, February 15, 2016)

J9's sentiment was similar to Success's idea of INGOs incorporating "Haitians in their organization" to understand what people really need.

***Realistic media representation.*** Haiti is an island nation in the Caribbean. Although the country has its rough sectors, Haiti is lush in flora and culture. The international media's sole focus on problems confronted by Haitians only hurts the people and the country's standing in the world. Sony and J9 had advice for expats.

As previously remarked, Sony described himself as an "Ambassador for Haiti." He believed his business and Haiti would benefit from a more balanced view of his country. Sony had this advice for INGOs who bring expats to Haiti,

If they could bring them here to see and to understand and become an ambassador for Haiti and talk about it in the future to other people so they could come and

visit, that would actually help the country a lot more than anything else they could have done here. (Sondy, January 12, 2016)

Success too advocated for better media coverage of Haiti. Success recommended a more expansive view of his country.

For international organizations, I just want them to...when they come to Haiti...sometimes they come to Haiti and publish things.... We have some bad places in Haiti, but it's also a beautiful place. What they are going to share from their website, they should share the good and the bad ways of Haiti, so other people can know the real story. (Success, (January 25, 2016)

The participant recommendations for INGOs were: 1) to acquire a bit of cultural knowledge about Haiti preferably before they arrive in-country, 2) to form equitable adult partnerships rather than that of parent-child, and 3) to paint a more balanced narrative of Haiti in the media. All these recommendations tied to a wish for or notion of respect for the country and its inhabitants.

### *Frustration with negative images*

In the previous section, I presented the participants' considerations for how expats could improve their perspectives on and experiences in Haiti. The reason their recommendations were necessary was not lost on them. The historical and current narrative on Haitians in the international community is derogatory at best. What had they heard about themselves as a people, as a country? Were they affected by how non-Haitians thought of them in relation to the rest of the world? If the participants were affected by outside considerations, how did that manifest for them? I wanted responses to these questions directly from the participants as Haitians rather than through



intermediaries and I did not want someone else's take on how they were affected by the unflattering narratives about Haitians and their country. Below are the study participants' responses.

### ***Reflections on Haitian negative imagery***

All five of the participants acknowledged a negative narrative bestowed upon them and their country from the international community. Sony and Success agreed that the good points of Haiti should also get attention. J9 focused on country comparison and national pride. Becky simply acknowledged the narrative, and Philippe responded with a self-critique of Haitian behavior. Therefore, a dominant theme in the responses to this question is frustration for the stereotypical trope afforded Haiti and its citizens. What follows are participants' views on this trope.

### ***Show both sides of Haiti***

Sony and Success were concerned that only one aspect of Haitian culture gained traction with the international community. Sony sounded frustrated when he said, "like if you would go on Google right now and would type Haiti, 60% of the images, or information that you will see, [is] about violence in the country, earthquake." Sony stressed the fact that "the culture, the history, or the, the beauty of Haiti" like the Citadel a monument to liberty, or Laberde, a coastal resort near Cap Haitien in the north, among other places were overlooked. Sony continued, "The most of the focus of the media is war." Sony noted that because of Haiti's reputation, people who visit the country are surprised by what they find, "They expect to come in a jungle where people are killing each other. But, that's not true. We are one of the [safest] countries in the whole Caribbean." Sony noted Haiti had been misrepresented in the media, "Yeah, I definitely

aware of that, and that's really unfortunate because we deserve much more. Haiti deserves to be seen. Haiti deserves to be visited."

Success had similar objections as Sony to Haiti's reputation as a backward country. He shared a personal anecdote with me. When he was in upstate New York for the YMCA, Success was featured on a church program to sing and talk about his life. Success used an electronic tablet when he sang. Afterward, he stood by a congregant who asked him if he knew of a Haitian person who was going to attend the service. Success picked up the story,

I said, "I'm the Haitian." He said, "I can't believe so, because you were singing in a tablet." He said, "I can't believe a Haitian can use that, because I see Haiti as a very poor country, and with no technology. I don't think a Haitian can use it."

Because that's what he sees from the website. (Success, January 25, 2016)

Like Sony, Success is not happy with online depictions of his country. Success said, "I see some pictures of very dirty places, kids with no clothes on, no shoes on. That's all they share." Success too suggested that visitors not only go to the places they hear are poverty stricken, "Go also to the mountains, Jacmel, to Port Salut, and to see the good ways, the good adventure that people can have from Haiti."

In contrast to Sony and Success, Philippe blamed Haiti's poor reputation on the Haitian people and the government itself. He contrasted the Haiti of 1986 and the present mood in the country. Philippe explained,

At that time in '86 all Haitians were in love of Haiti. Now, it's all about power.

People are in love with power, instead of falling in love with the country. So, they see themselves, they see power, but they don't really see Haiti as a piece of land that they can develop and make more beautiful. (Philippe, January 18, 2016)

Philippe addressed the lack of sustainable government infrastructure, noting that if Haitians kept the streets free of debris, the country would be lovely. Philippe said, “the internationals see Haiti the way Haitians present the country.”

J9 related an anecdote about people from other countries in Haiti. A co-worker from the Philippines, a person with whom J9 was friendly, wrote a book about foreigners visiting Haiti. J9 read the book and realized, “This is racist!... I told him...I hate this...why would you do something like that?” His co-worker’s premise was that when Haitians see foreigners, they see money and a possible visa to another country. J9’s response to his co-worker’s fear of being accosted walking down the street was, “But it’s not totally true. Not everybody needs a visa to go to the States; not everybody see a bag of money when they see a foreigner; not everybody...no it’s not.”

J9 shared that all countries have some bad environments, in the U.S. and other countries. To tackle the problem areas J9 offered, “They have security, and we have security too.” So why the disparity for visitation? J9 exhibited his national pride to counter the false safety narrative,

I would always go to another country and say that I am Haitian. I know they will see through me what Haitians are really like. Haitian is not the image they have in their mind. It’s not a good image. (J9, January 12, 2016)

Becky’s reaction to the question of awareness of negative stereotypes was a distinct fatigue. She responded, “Yes. [sounds weary] Yes. Ummm.” And that was all.

Each of the participants demonstrated their awareness of Haiti’s negative image in the world. They conceded that Haiti has problems. They expressed disappointment or frustration that in the wake of a lack of government infrastructure, a failure of the people

to exercise their power to find their own solution to the debris that sometimes fills the streets is evident. That goes to the active love of country that Phillippe remembered and the sustained difference he would like to see. Even J9 said, “But it’s not totally true,” in response to his friend’s impression of Haitians looking to foreigners for money and visas to other countries. His statement implies that he recognizes that this scene sometimes does happen. Yet, Sony and Success championed the many things right with Haiti including the beaches, the monuments, and things that engendered pride in country and themselves. They wanted the rest of the world to experience that too. The participants want Haiti to be elevated and appreciated. How to get there is something they grapple with.

#### ***Impact of negative images on participants***

The participants were asked how the internationally propagated negative images of Haiti and Haitians affected them. This question was designed for the study participants to reflect on how outside opinion of Haiti impacted their personal and professional endeavors. The responses were of course varied; the participants are individuals with differing responsibilities. Sony and Philippe believed that the negative images hurt their businesses. Becky acknowledged confusion concerning reaction to Haiti. Success responded with a call to community action. The image of Haiti led J9 to express skepticism of foreigners.

***Frustration.*** Sony’s immediate response was that when he saw Haiti pictured in the media, “They impact me a lot, because as a Haitian, young Haitian, who has a lot of *pride*, and a lot of love for this country... of course that hurts me a lot.” The reality was Sony did not have the number of clients he would like. He observed that a better

reputation for Haiti would bring more clients to his business. When Sony needed extra help to service a client, he employed a tactic similar to J9 in that he called colleagues for temporary assignments:

If we had more clients, we could provide much more jobs, and then the business itself would be much more sustainable. It means that the employees I would have, would have financial stability. They would be in the office every day, and then they would have plans for like a month, or six months, or whatever it is, but that's not the case for now. (Sony, January 12, 2016)

Sony was a pragmatic business person. When I asked him how long he estimated it would take him to be established as he wished, he made a point that I was not expecting. Sony drew in a long, slow breath, then considered, "I think it might take a long time, I think based on how they present the image of Haiti on the world." Sony estimated, "about 5-10 years... cause now tourism is not really sustainable. That's the reason sustainability is just a project for now." Reflecting on how much energy and passion Sony put into his enterprises, I was a bit taken aback by his statement. But that was his reality. In agreement with Philippe, Sony acknowledged that Haiti could do better,

We need to work on certain things like infrastructure, increased security in the country, and to make sure we have a better way to welcome people. We do have that better way to welcome people, but we have to *show* it; we have to *sell* it. And we're not doing a good job doing it right now. (Sony, January 12, 2016)

In spite of the realities of Haiti's standing in the world, Soudy remained optimistic about Haitians' ability to achieve economic viability, as he declared, "We know for sure this will happen, because we're fighting, we're fighting for it."

While Soudy's business revolved around expats and tourists, Philippe's business depended solely on tourist traffic. Philippe expressed his frustration with Haiti's projected image, "I'm getting sick of it, because my whole business is in tourism. If there is no tourists coming in, so I'm out of business." I asked Philippe to tell me about the implications of Haiti's reputation for him personally. He painted a scenario of stress and frustration as he detailed someone being in the streets and witnessing authorities chasing a possible robber, shooting at him, and inadvertently the onlooker is shot. Philippe wanted, "Haiti to be peaceful." These observations brought Philippe back to the lack of infrastructure in Haiti, "That's why I want Haiti to be different. I want Haiti to be beautiful, I want Haiti to be clean, I want Haiti to be safe for people who are coming."

Becky too expressed confusion and frustration with the persistent negative images of Haiti, but wasn't sure that she was impacted by them, "I just never pay a lot of attention to it." Yet, Becky still questioned why it happened.

I don't know what to think about it, because I don't really know why people put this tag on us. What... do they...what if they really have a reason to treat Haitians like this? What if...? What if...? I don't know what to think about it. I don't know why they say these things about Haitian people. It's really complicated. (Becky, February 2, 2016)

### ***A call to community action***

Success' response to Haiti's global image was to cite his work as a way to change

the narrative from a negative to a positive. Success stated, “That’s why I’m working hard in the community teams. When I see those images, I see myself. Haiti is me. I just don’t like it.” Success used a ‘don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater’ analogy to explain why he worked with the communities. You don’t give up; you work to improve what you have. Success explained,

I go and help people change the way they are. If there’s no trash all over the streets, everybody can have something to eat every day, they have good education, people stop set fires in tires all over the country; how can other people find those [negative] pictures? Nowhere. That means we are working to have this population getting educated. (Success, January 25, 2016)

Success’ statement concurs with similar sentiments by Philippe and Sony concerning infrastructure and continued to emphasize educating Haitian communities, which he and Sony actively practiced in differing environments to achieve a more productive Haitian citizenry.

### ***Skeptical of foreigners***

The treatment of Haiti by the rest of the world made J9 skeptical of foreigners. J9 would flesh out a foreigner’s views about Haiti, before he would openly engage. J9 put it this way,

Before to go into deep conversation with them, I have to find out what they think about Haiti and what they feel about Haitians. I can’t be friends with somebody who thinks that Haitians are bad, like trash or anything like that. I don’t think I would be able to get along with them. (J9, February 12, 2016)

This sentiment confused me because J9 was “cool” with the Pilipino co-worker who

wrote a derogatory book about Haitians. J9 reflected that the results of Haiti's negative image did not hurt his economic stability. In his mental health occupation, J9 had a good relationship with expats; however, he stated, "If I would have to work with an NGO where they don't respect Haitians, it would be hard for me. I would have to quit."

Again, along with Sony and Philippe, J9 cited Haitians as a main component of the problem. J9 began,

I know it's Haitians' fault too. I know it's our fault because, most of the people I meet, when they talk about Haiti, they be like, 'Well Haitians are not ready for this, Haitians are not...' I'm like, [voice rises] 'How can you say that you are not ready for this?' No. They are always doing that. (J9, February 12, 2016)

J9 encouraged his fellow Haitians to talk about the positives rather than concentrating on the negatives, as so many foreigners do. This reflects another instance of an historic colonizer mindset, and an interesting interplay between reliance on foreigners on the one hand and skepticism on the other.

### **Summary**

All five of the study participants incorporated their personal interests into plans to further their careers and communities. Their considered drive to achieve their goals of economic security was reflected in four themes: 1) passions to flourish in their interests, 2) persistence in pursuit of meshing their passions with professional goals by embracing opportunities and mitigating obstacles, 3) the desire to be appreciated as a people and a country with mutual respect from the rest of the world for the culture and beauty that is Haiti and 4) frustration with the incessant negative images projected in the media that ultimately impede their goals for economic security.



The findings echo the voice of a Haitian person whom visitors see but do not recognize because of preconceived notions influenced through depictions in the media and U.S. government. The findings point to is the participants' overall concern for improving not only their own lives through utilization of their passions, but also the lives of their communities. The participants love their country and expressed the importance of contributing to the uplift of Haiti's standing in the world. To that end, they acted to incorporate their immediate communities into their work as well as to build equity and pride in their country with varying degrees of success. They acknowledged the obstacles they faced, including the lack of finances and government infrastructure. The participants also recognized the obstacles they present to themselves, such as the occasional communal lack of self-confidence to improve their circumstances, the self-destructive aspects of colorism, and the self-ownership of not presenting Haiti's best face to the world through unkempt roads and streets. The participants actively met the challenges as best they could and moved on toward their goals.

The fact that the majority of the participants had positive experiences with INGOs did not prevent them from expressing reactions to the broader negative experience of other Haitians. Overall, they were frustrated and hurt by the unflattering images found in the media and realized the damage those images can do to their goals of economic security for themselves and Haiti's standing in the world. Consequently, the participants offered advice to INGO personnel: learn something of Haiti's culture before arrival in-country and incorporate Haitians in endeavors to improve conditions for the Haitian people. The participants revealed themselves as human beings with dreams and goals for their futures, something not often ascribed to them.

In the next chapter, I discuss the tension between the perceived notion of who the Haitian people are and the humanness of the five study participants' actual lives in pursuit of economic self-determination. Furthermore, I also recommend avenues of future research in this vein.

**CHAPTER V:  
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION AND  
REFLECTIONS**

**Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to explore the life events and influences that have led a group of Haitian people under the age of 40 on their individual paths to expand their economic capacity in pursuit of an enhanced quality of life for themselves and their communities. In addition, this study delineated the types of partnerships Haitian young people are interested in pursuing and examined what effect (if any) negative racial stereotypes have had on their efforts to configure satisfying lives.

Through interviews, observations, and documents, this study found that in the pursuit of economic stability, the participants worked diligently to meld their passions with their goals to earn a decent living. They were persistent in capitalizing on opportunities and mitigating obstacles to their goals; they expressed a desire for themselves as Haitians and their country, Haiti to be respected by the global community; and they acknowledged the deleterious impact negative media images have on their ability to realize their economic goals. This study's findings brought a personal representation to and echoed the present literature devoted to Haitians and their abilities to have self-fulfilling lives.

In the next section of this chapter, I discuss this study's findings in relation to the research presented in the literature review. To that extent, the study presents the personal, individual consequences of five Haitian young people's refusal to be bound by the U.S. and the Haitian government's "common sense" narrative depicting Haitians as incapable

of making gainful life decisions for themselves and their communities. In the subsequent section, I also engage in recommendations for scholarly practice to represent Haitian people in their recognizable light. In addition, I encourage prospects for further research in this vein. Finally, the study concludes with a reflection on obstacles the participants continue to face and the worthiness of foregrounding research that features people of African descent in the academy.

### **Discussion**

The overarching question for this study was, “How do five Haitian young people under the age of 40 navigate their positions in the global and local economies?” The participants in this study are Haitian individuals with diverse personalities and interests. They contradict the U.S. stereotype that Haitians are a monolith of disarray and ignorance. The participants are purposefully goal-oriented. They acknowledged factors that both promoted them on their journeys and made their pursuits difficult. They also shared their thoughts on improvements they as Haitians and the outside community can contribute to enhancing their endeavors and Haiti’s global standing to become self-sufficient. In this section I discuss the participants’ early circumstances with their interests; how they handled opportunities and challenges to their goals; their ideas on partnerships with INGOs; and their reflections on the personal and economic impact of media images of Haitians and Haiti.

### ***Beginnings***

The first sub-question for this dissertation was, “What circumstances have convened to lead this group of Haitian people to their work and/or educational choices?” Each participant recounted a childhood fascination with a particular subject matter. They

all invested the time to explore their passions, be it foreign languages, art, music, or a sense of community advocacy on their own and /or through formal education on the college level. Eventually each person determined to apply their interest to forge a meaningful career to earn a dignified living.

### *Passion as work*

The entrepreneurial spirit was evident with several participants. Through their self-taught love of language acquisition, Sony intimated that he organized tours, translations, and Kreyol language classes for visitors to Haiti. Becky determined that attaining a Linguistics degree would best benefit her goal to become a translator. They targeted the tourist and expat communities to leverage their abilities to grow their economic capacities. Also self-taught, Philippe parlayed his love of making art into becoming a street artist. He too targeted the tourists who visit Haiti as his clients. Sony's reasoning for his target clients selection reflected that of all the participants, "I've understood what people really needed...here...then I dedicated myself to provide them with those kinds of services."

Success, the community activist and educator, and J9, the music mix-master and mental health educator, utilized their talents to provide opportunities to their immediate Haitian community of friends, neighbors, and local concerns. As Success opined, "If Haiti is more educated, more people would be willing to come in Haiti."

This study found that in accordance with Vallerand (2008), the participants' personalities were commensurate with his Dualistic Model of Passion; they all actively pursued their passions and conflated them with careers and education to afford a better life for themselves and their communities including Haiti itself.

### ***Opportunities, challenges and mitigations***

The second sub-question asked, “What networks, alliances, and institutional spaces are these participants using in their quest for economic stability and self-reliance?” The study participants parlayed their passions into a work ethic. They capitalized on the opportunities, met the challenges, and provided mitigations presented as they began their journeys to economic fulfillment.

#### ***Networks***

The participants acknowledged the role friends, community alliances and NGO contacts played in providing opportunities to further their objectives. J9’s friend paved the way to a new position at a music production company that paid a sustainable wage. Success early on accepted his community’s ability to provide him with funds for a formal education. As a community advocate, he taught elementary school children computer basics and trained farmers on new techniques to increase their capacities. Becky turned her father’s gift of a bilingual dictionary into a university major. Sony was open to learning good business management practices from his contacts in the expat and university communities.

By the willingness to take advantage of the opportunities presented them, the participants were in accord with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1976) as they pursued their right to self-determination for their economic status. They also reflected the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 22 right to free development of their personalities, as their passions in large measure defined who they were to themselves and to their immediate communities.

#### ***Challenges and mitigations***

*Absence of government infrastructure.* Study participants discussed a myriad of challenges to realize their goals. Lack of government infrastructure prevented Sony from expanding his touring business. However, he went into “certain communities” to explain how they could benefit from developing tourism. Nonexistent infrastructure affected the security of Philippe’s artwork. As Philippe noted, “...the government did not support us.” These systemic obstacles to economic success for Sony and Philippe underscores Fanon’s (1963) argument that a core concept of decolonization - reclamation of their humanity - is thwarted by the governmental, business, and intellectual elite when they conflate their interests with that of the former colonizers, not with their own masses. The failure of the government to provide safe roads to drive and to protect street artist’s work, places the participants on the outer periphery of business success and hinders their progress toward economic viability. Philippe expressed a vision that success was not just for himself, but, as Sony stated it was “for the country as well.” Philippe and Sony’s challenges are in line with Fanon’s (1963) argument that indigenous governments and elites capitulate to the European belief in individual success rather than the Haitian personality and character of communal deliverance.

*Financial and marketing difficulties.* Sony successfully addressed his financial challenges. He began his Kreyol language service with, “zero money.” Sony utilized the good will and reputation he built with the expat community as a Kreyol language tutor to reinvest those funds to expand capacity. To meet his marketing difficulties, Sony collaborated with his expat and Haitian diaspora clients. He brought them into his business by giving them a percentage of funds from clients they provided to him. Through his network, Philippe was able to meet his security challenge when Haitian

management from an adjacent small hotel offered and provided covered, yet unlocked bungalows for the artists to store their work overnight.

### *Class*

***Self-doubt.*** Success' ministry's proposal to institute a school to educate village residents was initially met with resistance from the inhabitants. The villagers seemed to have negated their power, identity, and succumbed to the influence of colonial racist attitudes that reverberate in a post-colonial world. The villagers' self-doubt and the belief they needed the assistance of someone from another country to move forward with the project is reflected in Grosfoguel's (2016) notation that "racism [is] an institutional/structural hierarchy related to the materiality of domination" (p. 11). Their auto-world view combined with systemic government intractability made it more difficult for Success and his colleagues to work with village residents on an enterprise that eventually brought an enduring benefit to the community. Success mitigated the reticence of the village residents. He and his colleagues implemented a two-tiered explanation of how the residents could rely on themselves to establish a community school for their children by saving a little of their money on a daily basis. Those combined savings would provide funding for their children to attend school.

***Colorism.*** Colorism is a complicated issue. When J9 began his new job as a music mix-master, he was unsure how to interact with his young mulatto female co-workers. The fact that he was shy around women in general complicated his reaction in this situation. They were lighter skinned than he and the women spoke French - the language of business, government, and the upper classes. In contrast, Becky experienced the opposite challenge. Her medium skin tone was lighter than her fellow students, which



made for a fraught relationship. While Becky was by no means fiscally well-off, she knew her colleagues had fewer resources than she, which combined with her skin tone put her in a higher socio-economic class.

To mitigate the effect of colorism at his job, J9 maintained his naturally respectful personality and spoke to the women in their preferred French language even though he was unsure of his fluency skills. Yet, seemingly because of his shyness, J9 kept his personal distance from the women by having lunch with his male friends only, eventually moving to the deck to do so. Becky met the colorist attitudes her fellow classmates imparted to her by first acknowledging their point of view that her lighter skin tone put her in a different class than they. She then opened herself to learn from their intellectually challenging linguistic abilities and eventually became friends with two of her classmates.

The colorist violence this study's participants endured is reflected in similar racist attitudes that Belique Delba (2019) in the Dominican Republic and Knowles (2018) in the Bahamas found toward fellow African descendants, Haitian immigrants to their country. Belique Delba (2019) and Knowles (2018) exposed the institutional maze the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas respectively produced to strip Haitian immigrants of their civil rights, simply because Haitians had darker skin tones than they. Both governments enacted laws to revoke citizenship for generations of Haitian immigrants and their children.

Similar to the DR and the Bahamas, Stepick (1982) found that entrance to the U.S. was refused to Haitian boat people who were political refugees, simply because they were black. He also noted that the Haitian government did little to improve their citizens' stability, consequently they fled Haiti. This study adds to and builds on the literature of

Frelick (1993) and Stepick (1982) since this study's participants face a similar challenge in the present day: the lack of a government infrastructure that supports their attempts to flourish in their chosen fields, and the backlash of being dark skinned in a postcolonial world. Philippe remarked that he eventually may have to move his family to another country that values art.

Walker (1983) defined colorism as discrimination by same-race people based on the lightness or darkness of their skin. Colorism symbolizes the harmful tentacles of the European colonial attitude toward those darker than they, present in the postcolonial milieu. Fanon (1963) described this polarization of white as good, black as bad, and the colonial use of those concepts to dehumanize the colonized as "a quintessence of evil" (p. 6). Fanon and Philcox (1967) cited the Manichean concept of the division between black and white as "poles in perpetual conflict" (p. 79). Similarly, Said (1979) pronounced the effect of the European and American dismissal of people from the East as "a negative value" (p. 861), while Spivak (1988) noted the postcolonial discourse effect of "epistemic violence." This study's participants experience of colorist attitudes corroborates the above citations.

***Language erasure.*** Another challenge for the participants was the aspect of colonial influence in the postcolonial: the systematic attempt to officially erase the colonized's indigenous language and culture to substitute it with the European colonizers' language and culture. Knowles (2018) found Bahamians trivialized Haitian Kreyol as a rudimentary form of French commensurate with the Haitian elite that J9 encountered. In postcolonial Haiti, most people speak Kreyol, a signifier of the mostly dark-skinned poor and uneducated class, yet the designated official language was French

until Kreyol was added in 1987. J9's reticence to speak to his mulatto colleagues in French was a self-preservation effort to avoid perceived embarrassment from them. His reaction was commensurate to the disquiet noted in the Keys, Kaiser, Foster, Burgos Minaya and Kohrt (2014) study on the effects of discrimination, in this instance against the Haitian Kreyol language.

The ability of the study participants to face and mitigate their challenges is a rebuttal to the idea they are 'less than.' This belies "common sense" beliefs about people of African descent noted in the literature for this study and supports the premise of postcolonial theory to aspire to better in difficult circumstances. As Trouillot (1995) asserted, to those who consider themselves atop the hegemonic ladder, it is "unthinkable" that black people have the cognitive ability to want better. The participants' actions also contradict James' (1989) finding that the stolen Africans were considered "cargo" (p.9) and not thinking, feeling human beings.

### *Partnerships*

The third sub-question asked, "In what ways do these Haitian young people under the age of 40 express a desire for international and/or Haitian partnerships vis a vis their quest for economic stability?" Most of this study's participants entertained interactions with INGOs and expressed positive experiences with them. For Sony that included consistent payment for his services. Success could rely on a U.S. church to help support his children's camp activities. J9's mental health organization exchanged trainings with an international NGO. Becky's first experience with an NGO was, "amazing."

### ***Participant Recommendations***

Although this study's participants had positive experiences with INGOs, they nevertheless had recommendations for the effective comportment of individuals from the international community who wanted to aid Haitians to improve their circumstances. Participants' recommendations for NGO personnel included: 1) cultural acclimation - educate themselves through a bit of Kreyol language acquisition; study something of the culture and the people; incorporate Haitian personnel into the organization; 2) effective partnerships: work with the Haitian people – ask what they are doing and what do they need to eliminate wasted NGO dollars; and 3) counter media representation – individuals from INGOs could act as ambassadors for Haiti to present what they actually see and experience in country when they return to their home countries to counter the media driven negative Haitian image.

### ***Counter- narratives***

The positive personal experiences this study's participants described with INGOs is in contrast to those portrayed in the literature. However, their recommendations mirror the conduct of INGOs noted by Edmonds (2012), Katz (2013), and Schuller (2012) on international organizations who took advantage of the neoliberal privatization of services in Haiti. Their research found that during the aftermath of the earthquake, INGOs were more concerned to line their pockets with donated funds than to actually help Haitians affected by the disaster. Their research also found that even when INGOs did provide the aid needed, they did not remain long enough to complete the job.

### *Participant Reflections*

The fourth sub-question for this study was, “What are the reflections of Haitian young people under the age of 40 on the impact of historical and current negative images of Haitian people?” The participants are aware of the negative images of the Haitian people. Media representation of Haiti and Haitians is a source of frustration for this study’s participants. Some find it difficult to understand and are hurt; all have to battle those negative images in order to conduct their lives as they see fit. Sony noted that in an online search for Haiti, “60% of the images...[is] about violence.” He noted, “The culture...the history...the beauty...” is often ignored. During a trip to New York as a representative for the YMCA, Success encountered a white man who expressed shock when he witnessed Success demonstrate the ability to use an electronic tablet for his presentation.

The participants feel the impact of these negative images. They feel the very real effects of the international community’s attitude toward them and their country. Sony, who loves his country and is proud of being Haitian, says, “of course that hurts me a lot.” The fallout from the media images in the international community negatively affected his business. Haiti’s reputation resulted in comparatively fewer people opting to visit and do business with Haiti than the rest of the Caribbean. Ever persistent, Sony was optimistic, “...we’re fighting for it.” Philippe acknowledged Haitians complicity toward their reputation. He wanted, “Haiti to be peaceful... I want Haiti to be safe for people who are coming.” Becky was confused and frustrated, “I don’t know what to think... I don’t know why they say these things about Haitian people.”

Deleterious media images also garnered a different type of reaction from the participants. Success cited his work as a means to change his community's comportment. He encouraged people to keep the streets clean, and discouraged destructive behaviors when demonstrating against detrimental government policies. Success opined it would then be difficult to find those negative images. The jaundiced eyes of the world made J9 skeptical of foreigners. Before he would befriend someone from another country, they would have to prove to his satisfaction that they regarded him as a human being, not the media-enforced Haitian myth of innate immorality, or less than.

Sommers, Apfelbaum, Dukes, Toosi and Wang (2006) stated that the media criminality trope utilized for people of African descent is a familiar construct directed toward their target demographic - white people. However, as Sommers et al. (2006) also noted, that trope is one that minority groups seldom recognize as depicting their actual lives. The participants in this study expressed the difficulty they find with the media portrayal of Haitians. In congress with (Sommers et al. 2006), they are unable to recognize themselves in the media tropes presented to the world at large.

The study participants' actions support Rukundwa and van Aarde's (2007) view that postcolonial theory "allows people emerging from social-political and economic domination to reclaim their negotiating space for equity" (p. 1190). They showed that they do in fact have interests and dreams of a better life. They also demonstrated the capability to incorporate plans and actions to realize their economic goals.

The participants' stories support Pressley-Sanon's (2011) goal to counter the narrative of Europeans as a dominant hegemonic force. They represent themselves not as the "silent other," but rather as people capable of speaking for and wanting more for

themselves than the predetermined assumptions of forces removed from their culture. This study on agency, self-determination, and autonomy builds on Pressley-Sanon's (2011) efforts to provide a space that affords the participants the power to speak their narrative in their authenticity.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Future practice for educators***

A significant event in Haitian history is often overlooked in the U.S. educational system. Therefore, I recommend the following for educators: Investigate the Haitian revolution that lasted from 1791-1804. The treatment given the Haitian Revolution in the U.S. curriculum is an example of the traditional "erasure" of the successes by people of African descent that Trouillot (1995) discussed. For instance, Dozono (2016) investigated the depiction of the Haitian Revolution from a program designed by a prominent manufacturer of historical curriculum. He found that through student role play, the revolution was "made understandable by and to a mainstream white American public through the terms of the French Revolution, but this ignores the importance of the Haitian Revolution within a specifically black and Caribbean context" (p. 42). Educators may be able to mitigate this obstacle to the truth of the Haitian Revolution and impart the agency of the Haitian people to serve their goals of self-determination.

### ***Future Inquiry***

The scholarly literature shows a gap in not portraying enough positive stories concerning Haitian people. This present study was designed as a contribution to closing that gap. It explored the narratives of five Haitian young people under the age of 40 who were engaged in following their passions to economic security. Anchored to the theory of

postcolonialism, the participants exhibited agency in an atmosphere of a colonial ‘no’ to their efforts. Accordingly, I offer below several recommendations for future research.

I recommend conducting research on questions not usually associated with people of color as people with agency. It was previously noted in this study that 2015-2024 is the U.N. Decade of People of African Descent “to celebrate contributions of People of African Descent to societies in which they live and to humanity” (Hussein, 2015). This present study shows multiple examples of young Haitians’ contributions to their communities. Increased study to investigate how this demographic contributes to societies in unorthodox or unexpected approaches could prove enlightening. Results may also present an unanticipated perspective on who we are and what we do for the common good.

The participants in this study noted that they would like Haiti and its inhabitants to be treated with mutual respect for its culture and beauty. Perhaps studies that focus on those aspects of Haiti are in order. What was the purpose of and what did it take to build the Citadel and other forts? What is the significance to the everyday Haitian person in the present? What cultural practices would young Haitians want highlighted to enhance Haiti’s reputation? While the participants in this study touched on these aspects of Haiti, a more in-depth study would help to round out literature on the country. I think if a researcher hired someone who knew and understood the history and culture of Haiti and was able to show those places and explain the culture, that action would do Haitians and Haiti a great service.

Former President Aristide’s University of the Aristide Foundation (UNIFA) graduates students in medicine, nursing, law and physical therapy. One of the university’s



objectives is for graduating doctors to serve in outlying rural communities. There is little academic literature that examines the curriculum at UNIFA (Mullin, 2018), and I was unable to find research that has looked at what happens with students after graduation. A study that follows up on graduates who applied their practice to underserved communities might gauge the practical success of the university's stated goals. What were the new professionals' expectations for practice vs. actuality? How does their practice differ from those in urban areas?

### *Conclusion*

This dissertation aimed to explore the life events and influences that have led a group of Haitian people under the age of 40 on their individual paths to expand their economic capacity in pursuit of an enhanced quality of life for themselves and their communities. This study also endeavored to delineate the types of partnerships Haitian young people under 40 are interested in pursuing and what effect (if any) negative racial stereotypes have had on their efforts to configure satisfying lives. Viewed through the framework of postcolonial theory, the participants demonstrated their narrative in a continuum of agency from the actors in the historical Haitian Revolution through their actions in present day Haiti. The resolve in both instances was to live lives of freedom in economic sustainability counter to their "common sense" place in the world. The study participants disclosed their early lives, traumatic in some cases, and their interests that would eventually develop into passions. They shared optimism that they could incorporate their passions into a path to economic security. Each participant embraced opportunity when presented and mitigated obstacles to their success in varying modalities.

The participants were quite aware of the negative images of Haitians and their country; they were also cognizant of the global reaction the images engendered. INGO personnel were subjected to the media portrayals and the participants had recommendations for the manner they expected INGO personnel to work with them in partnerships. I was surprised to learn that the participants had positive perceptions of the INGOs they encountered. Given the literature on INGOs general attitudes toward Haitians, I expected the opposite. The participants were also aware of their government's complicity with the neo-liberal policies grounded in a European colonial ethos to keep them down. They are proud Haitians who love their country and admit their countrymen sometimes contribute to the way Haiti presents itself to the world. The participants want Haitians and Haiti to be respected in the global community. As Sonyd stated, "We're fighting for it...we deserve it."

### **Personal Reflections**

I encountered surprises through my research. I was surprised by the verbalization of the participants' love of Haiti. It's not that I expected them not to love their country, but the fact that their actions included not only their success, but also Haiti's success, was a revelation. Their part in Haiti's success was at the top of their minds. In the U.S., I don't believe that our individual success is tied to making the country a better place; we want to make our lives better and maybe that of our community. That may be the difference between a society built on individual accomplishment vs. community well-being.

The prominence of colorism was a surprise, only because it is not something that is often spoken out loud. It's a fact of life for people of color within our own

communities. I had previous knowledge of how Dominicans discriminated against Haitians because of their skin color, but I had no idea that something similar occurred in The Bahamas. It was saddening to do that reading, and it forced me to reflect on those dynamics within my own family. I identified with J9 in my preemption to negate feelings of being perceived as less than, when ultimately, I was projecting those feelings onto my lighter skinned relatives.

I referenced the incident that led Success and his family to escape Cite Soleil. The story Success told was harrowing; his family was targeted for murder. It is one thing to read the stories of violence associated with Cite Soleil, yet quite another to hear it from someone who experienced it. Haitians almost lost someone who cares so deeply about his community and his country's welfare.

Becky surprised me. Her love of languages was evident, but I was taken aback when she told me that she wanted to learn the science of language and how it develops in people. As an undergraduate I briefly majored in linguistics, but the science of it was too much for me. I quickly returned to English literature for my love of words, not how they came to be. Becky is a true linguist.

They say, 'never assume,' but I did assume that the participants would have negative impressions of INGOs through personal experience. To my surprise, with the exception of Philippe who had no experience with INGOs, the participants all had positive things to say about them. I suppose through my readings combined with conversations with people in the Haitian diaspora in the U.S., I was unprepared to hear about successful engagements with INGOs. It forced me to acknowledge my built-in bias and that good things can come from such entities' efforts.

Conducting this research also reminded me of the common saying, “The more things change, the more they stay the same,” (“Plis bagay yo chanje, plis yo rete menm jan an”). Haiti is a very complex place. The effects of U.S. neoliberalism continue to affect the people. Last February a number of people died in demonstrations against President Jovenal Moises. The turmoil continues as of this writing in 2020. In autumn of October 2018, I was in Potoprens for a conference and ran into Sonyd at the hotel. He was there to take a group of tourists nightclubbing. He told me that if the demonstrations did not end by March 2019, he planned to leave the country. I thought that was frustration speaking. I understood demonstrations or *manifestations* would probably continue throughout 2019. Since then, I have seen photos of Sonyd in different countries. I am not sure if he has moved, but I do know that the political climate of the country aggravates him. On a brighter note, in 2011, UNiFA continued its goal to educate the masses. In 2019, students graduated in law (19), medicine (153), and physiotherapy (8) as Comissiong (2019) notes.

While going through my notes to gather my thoughts for this reflection, I realized I had met so many people and had so many discussions and experiences to consider in Haiti that I thought it would be difficult to choose which to highlight. And then I ran across the last observation for Success when he took me to a meeting of the Sentinel Ministry board. It was in one of the school rooms that they worked with village residents to establish. The school itself was situated atop a hill in the mountains. The room must have held about twelve adults and several students who, I believe, were expecting me. Success introduced me to each person, noting their position on the board, and each student’s grade level. I introduced myself and explained why I was there. All but one

person spoke in Haitian Kreyol, I spoke in French and English; Success provided interpretation for us all.

This experience was extraordinary. Each board member stood, introduced themselves, and acknowledged my being with them. As the students began to introduce themselves, I recognized something familiar - a pattern that filled me with emotion. Each student stood and began by expressing some version of "*I am very thankful to God...*" In my late grandmother's Baptist church services, when someone had something to say, they stood and began with "*Giving honor to God...*" I felt those words denoted some sort of connection between them and me as people of African descent, worlds away from each other culturally, yet not. It is not lost on me that the words of both the people from Sentinel Ministries and from my grandmother's church are rooted in the colonial and post-colonial enterprise that removed us from our original African methods of worship.

I had to go to Haiti. I had to be there to have conversations, to listen to their stories, to record them on paper. I learned that you do not really know anything or anyone unless you listen to them, hear their stories and put aside your pre-conceived opinions and conjectures to make space for their narrative of their lives and believe them even when they counter what you thought you knew. This is a lesson that humbles me.

We as Africans are a strong-minded people, maybe too strong for the European myth of superiority. At that meeting one of the board members asked me if I was afraid of them, afraid of Haitians. You know when you hear something stark? You hear it, but you are not sure you hear it correctly, or you do not want to know you heard it correctly. I turned to Success and said I did not understand. I did understand. I was just stunned and maybe I did not want to confront a question that comes from centuries of pain and hurt.

Success explained the person's question. I responded that no, I was not afraid. Why would I be? With a smile and a look of relief from him, this was the Sentinel member's and my ensuing dialogue:

Speaker: Before all, we want to congratulate you for your strength, because a lot of people use to see us in a negative way. We thank the Lord that permit you, that allow you to see it differently.

PB: O, oui. Je suis Africaine aussi, non? ( Oh, yes, I am African too, no?)

Speaker: Dako! (Okay!)

PB: Toujours le meme chose, non? (Always the same thing, no?)

Speaker: Since you are doing to publish something different, and that's going to make us stronger, so we can doing hard work to change our community, may all the blessings of God be on you. (Success OB3)

My work, my purpose, is to expose the narratives of who we as people of African ancestry are, in our voices, be it through the written word, or video conferencing, or some other environment, in communities with little expectation that we are viable human beings. Unfortunately, that is practically everywhere in the world, including sometimes our own spaces. I found this quote in one of the journals I kept during data collection for this study:

How we are represented impacts how we construct our worldview. Seeing ourselves—the complexities of identity, including our families—positively reflected in the world around us is a source of important affirmation and self-worth. When our representation is limited, our existence and relevance is called into question. (Mia Birdsong, 2015)

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## APPENDICES

### *Appendix A*



### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

#### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. You should read this information carefully. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Patricia Barthaud, a graduate student in the Department of Education at the University of San Francisco. The faculty supervisor for this study is Dr. Susan Katz, a professor in the Department of International & Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco.

#### **WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:**

The purpose of this research study is to explore the life events and influences that have led a group of Haitian young people under the age of 40 on their individual paths to expand their economic capacity in pursuit of an enhanced quality of life for themselves and their communities.

#### **- WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:**

During this study, the following will happen:

- For one week the researcher will observe you at your work space observing, listening, videotaping or audio recording, and/or handwriting field notes, and participating when possible. Videotape or audio recording will be used to retain information obtained during observation sessions. All videos, audiotapes and field notes will be contained in secure online files.
- Two formal one-two hour interviews, and if necessary, one follow-up interview for clarification purposes, will be conducted at a location of your choosing. The interviews will be tape recorded, video recorded, or handwritten, depending on your comfort level. Videotape or audio recording will be used to retain information obtained during interview sessions. All videos, audiotapes, and notes will be contained in secured online files.
- You may provide any documentation you think will be appropriate to enhance your story. All documents will be privately secured in my Haitian



living quarters. Upon my return to the United States, all documents will be contained in a secure file cabinet in my home.

- **DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:**

Your participation in this study will involve:

- One week: two 1-2 hour interview sessions; three 1-hour observation sessions. The study will take place at your work site, and any other location you think will be appropriate to tell your story.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:**

We do not anticipate any risks or discomforts to you from participating in this research. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty.

- **BENEFITS:**

The possible benefits to you of participating in this study are:

- You will be able to voice your story to an audience unfamiliar with your reality.
- You may offer suggestions as to how your participation in this study would benefit you.

- **PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY:**

- Any information you provide in this study will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law. In any report we publish, we will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant.
  - We will use pseudonyms for all participants. Collected documents will be kept in a secured file that only I have access to.
  - A master list that will include your name and its code will be kept in a separate secured file that only I have access to.

**COMPENSATION/PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION:**

- There is no payment or other form of compensation for your participation in this study. However, there will be a culminating dinner for all participants at the end of the data collection period.

- **VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:**

- Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate without penalty. Furthermore, you may skip any questions or tasks that make you uncomfortable and may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. In addition, the researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

**OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS:**

- Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact the principal investigator: Dr. Susan Katz at [katz@usfca.edu](mailto:katz@usfca.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at [IRBPHS@usfca.edu](mailto:IRBPHS@usfca.edu).

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION. ANY QUESTIONS I HAVE ASKED HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM.

---

*PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE*

*DATE*

---

*RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE*

*DATE*

## Appendix B

### KONSANTMAN POU PATISIPE NAN YON ETID POU RECHÈCH

Pi ba la a, gen yon deskripsyon pwosedi rechèch yo, ansanm ak espikasyon sou dwa ou genyen kòm patisipan nan rechèch la. Ou dwe li enfòmasyon sa yo avèk atansyon. Si ou dakò pou patisipe, w ap gen pou ou siyen nan plas yo kite pou siyati a, pou deklare ou li epi ou konprann enfòmasyon ki nan papye konsantman sa a. Ou gen dwa resevwa yon kopi papye sa a, kidonk ou pral resevwa yon kopi.

Yo mande w patisipe nan yon etid pou rechèch; moun k ap mennen etid la, se Patricia Barthaud, ki se yon etidyan nivo siperyè nan Depatman Edikasyon nan Inivèsite San Francisco. Sipèvizè fakilte a pou etid sa a, se Doktè Susan Katz, ki se yon pwofesè nan Depatman Edikasyon Entènasyonnal ak Miltikiltirèl la, nan Inivèsite San Francisco.

### SOU KISA ETID LA AP FÈT:

Rezon pou fè etid pou rechèch sa a, se pou chèche enfòmasyon sou sikonstans nan lavi ak sou enfluyans ki mennen yon gwoup jenn Ayisyen ki te fèt anvan fen syèk pase a, nan chimen yo swiv pou devlope mwayen ekonnomik yo, pou rive jwenn yon pi bon kalite lavi, pou pwòp tèt yo ak pou kominote yo.

#### - KISA NOU PRAL MANDE OU FÈ:

Men sa ki pral rive nan etid sa a:

- o Pandan yon semenn, moun k ap fè rechèch la pral gade ou nan kote ou travay la, pou wè, pou koute, pou filme, ak pou anrejistre odyo ak/oswa ekri nòt nan kote li ye a, epi pou li patisipe lè sa posib. Film videyo ak anrejistreman odyo yo pral sèvi pou konsève enfòmasyon moun k ap fè rechèch la pran pandan l ap gade sa k ap pase. Yo pral kenbe tout videyo, ak anrejistreman odyo, ak nòt ki pran sou teren an nan fichye anliy k ap rete konfidansyèl.
- o Yo pral fè 2 entèvyou fòmèl 1 èdtan avèk ou nan yon kote ou chwazi; si sa nesesè, pral genyen yon lòt entèvyou avèk ou pou mete tout bagay byen aklè. Entèvyou yo pral anrejistre nan odyo, oubyen filme nan videyo, oubyen ekri sou papye, dapre jan ou pito pou sa fèt. Film videyo ak anrejistreman odyo yo pral sèvi pou konsève enfòmasyon yo pran pandan seyans entèvyou yo. Yo pral kenbe tout videyo, ak anrejistreman odyo, ak nòt ki ekri yo nan fichye anliy k ap rete konfidansyèl.
- o Ou mèt pote nenpòt dokiman ou genyen, ki ka ranfòse sa ou gen pou di. Mwen pral kenbe tout dokiman yo konfidansyèlman nan kote m ap rete a pandan mwen Ayiti. Lè mwen tounen Etazini, m ap mete tout dokiman yo nan yon klasè konfidansyèl lakay mwen.

- **KONBYEN TAN ETID LA AP DIRE, EPI KOTE L AP FÈT:**

Tan ou pral pase avèk mwen pou etid la:

- o 1 semenn: 2 seyans entèvyou k ap dire ant 1 ak 2zèdtan; 3 seyans obsèvasyon k ap dire 1 èdtan pou chak. M ap kontre avèk ou pou etid la nan kote ou travay la, oubyen nenpòt kote ou kwè ki bon pou w di sa ou gen pou di a.

- **ÈSKE KAPAB GENYEN DANJE OUBYEN PWOBLÈM:**

Nou pa kwè pral genyen okenn danje ni pwoblèm pou ou, si ou patisipe nan rechèch sa a. Si ou vle, ou mèt deside ànile konsantman ou bay la, epi sispann patisipe nenpòt lè nan etid la, san sa pa gen okenn move konsekans pou ou.

- **AVANTAJ:**

Men avantaj ou ka genyen si ou patisipe nan etid sa a:

- o Ou pral kapab esplike nan ki sikonstans w ap viv, pou fè moun ki pa konnen w aprann reyalyte w ap viv yo.
- o Ou kapab bay konsèy pou di kouman patisipasyon w nan etid sa a kapab ede w.

- **ENTIMITE / KONFIDANSYALITE:**

- o Tout enfòmasyon ou bay nan etid sa a ap rete konfidansyèl, sòf si gen yon ka pou lalwa mande nou bay yo. Nan okenn rapò nou pibliye, nou pa pral mete enfòmasyon ki pèmèt konnen ki moun ou ye, ni ki moun yon lòt patisipan ye.
  - Nou pral sèvi avèk lòt non pou tout patisipan yo. Dokiman nou resevwa yo pral rete nan yon fich konfidansyèl, pou se mwen sèlman ki ka gade yo.
  - Pral gen yon lis referans, kote nou pral mete non w ak yon kòd idantifikasyon nou ba ou, men n ap kenbe lis la nan yon fichye konfidansyèl separe, pou se mwen sèlman ki ka gade li.

**KONPANSASYON / PEMAN POU PATISIPASYON:**

- o Pa gen okenn peman ni okenn lòt kalite konpansasyon pou patisipasyon w nan etid sa a. Men sèlman, pral gen yon dènye resepsyon n ap ofri pou tout patisipan yo, nan fen peryòd nou ranmase enfòmasyon yo.

- **KARAKTÈ VOLONTÈ ETID LA:**

- o Patipasyon w nan etid la volontè, kidonk ou mèt refize patisipe san pa gen okenn move konsekans pou ou. Epiou, ou mèt pa reponn yon kesyon oswa pa fè yon bagay, si ou santi sa deranje w, epi ou mèt sispann patisipe nan etid la nenpòt lè, san sa pa lakòz okenn move konsekans ni fè w pèdi okenn avantaj. Yon lòt kondisyon, se moun k ap fè rechèch la ki gen dwa deside nenpòt lè pou w sispann patisipe nan etid la.

**OU MÈT POZE KESYON:**

- Tanpri, poze nenpòt ki kesyon ou ta genyen kounye a. Si ou vin gen kesyon pi devan, ou mèt kontakte anketè prensipal la: Doktè Susan Katz nan adrès [katz@usfca.edu](mailto:katz@usfca.edu). Si ou gen kesyon oubyen nenpòt pwoblèm sou dwa ou genyen kòm moun k ap patisipe nan etid sa a, ou mèt kontakte University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board [Konsèy Revizyon Enstitisyonnèl Inivèsite San Francisco] nan adrès [IRBPHS@usfca.edu](mailto:IRBPHS@usfca.edu).

MWEN LI TOUT SA KI EKRI PI WO LA A. MWEN RESEVWA REPONS POU TOUT KESYON MWEN POZE. MWEN DAKÒ POU PATISIPE NAN PWOJÈ RECHÈCH SA A, EPI MWEN PRAL RESEVWA YON KOPI PAPYE KONSANTMAN SA A.

*SIYATI PATISIPAN AN*

*DAT*

*SIYATI MOUN K AP FÈ RECHÈCH LA*

*DAT*

*Appendix C*

*Participant Questionnaire*

***Interview questions***

The following open-ended questions are meant to allow the participants space to tell their stories of economic agency in their own words without too many prompts from me. I may ask follow-up questions for clarification of familial background and mentor influences that led them to their present status.

***The overarching research question is: How do five Haitian young people under 40 navigate their positions in the global and local economies?***

***Research question a:*** What circumstances have convened to lead these Haitian young people under 40 to their work and / or educational choices?

***Interview questions***

1. How did you end up doing this work? / What led you to this field or on this path?
  - a. Where / how did you grow up?
  - b. Tell me about your work

***Research question b:*** What networks, alliances, and institutional spaces are these young people under 40 using in their quest for economic stability and self-reliance?

***Interview questions***

1. What opportunities have helped you get to where you are?
2. What kinds of obstacles have led to challenges along the way?
3. How have you navigated these challenges?

***Research question c:*** In what ways do these five Haitian young people under 40 express

desire for international and/or Haitian partnerships vis a vis their quest for economic stability?

***Interview questions***

1. Have you had any interaction with international or Haitian organizations?
2. What has your experience been with these organizations?
3. Based on your experience, what recommendations would you make for any partnerships with international or Haitian organizations?

***Research question d:*** What are the reflections of Haitian young people under 40 on the impact of historical and current negative images of Haitian people?

***Interview questions***

1. Are you aware of the negative images of the Haitian people?
2. How have these negative images impacted you?