Abstract

HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN DOMINICA:
A DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIP

by Jean-Yves Merilus

The literature on Western hemispheric migration suggests that Haitian immigrants have been overtly and broadly discriminated against in the Caribbean and beyond (Ferguson 2003; Lawless 1992:132; Amnesty International Report 2007). This is due to a broad range of factors, from Haiti’s intractable poverty to cultural differences. Haitian immigrants typically face overt hostility, and formal and informal discrimination in the societies wherever they settle. Yet a more positive development is unfolding in the Eastern Caribbean island of Dominica, where the level of intolerance is minimal. This research explores the reasons behind this relatively positive picture, the key issues that have characterized the socio-economic relations, and the development of Haitian identity on the island. Barring major disruptions to recent patterns, the relationship between the two people is likely to improve in the future, as the economic and social contributions of Haitians become more evident, documented, and deeply linked into the Dominican economy.
HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS IN DOMINICA:
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Jean-Yves Merilus
Department of Geography
Miami University
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Advisor ________________________________
(Dr. Thomas Klak)

Reader ________________________________
(Dr. Elena Albarran)

Reader ________________________________
(Dr. John Maingi)
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Dedication

To my mother, Paulina, and father, Exantus, for their investments in my education. This thesis is the result of their investments.
Chapter 1

Introduction
Political, economic, and family decisions have resulted in millions of Haiti’s citizens leaving their homeland. Many have headed north, trying to reach the Floridian and Bahamian shores on rickety boats, which often capsize and result in thousands of Haitians losing their lives at sea. In July 2009, for instance, a Haitian unseaworthy sailboat capsized near the Turks and Caicos Islands with 200 people aboard. More than 100 people were rescued but 67 were reported missing or eaten by sharks (NY Times 2009). Haitians have also headed south or east to other Caribbean islands or crossed the border to the Dominican Republic, where they’ve often received brutal treatment, been beaten, burned to death, beheaded, or loaded onto trucks to be repatriated to Haiti (Amnesty International March 2007). In recent years, Amnesty International has reported “Dominican Republic citizens, armed with firearms, sharp instruments, baseball bats, and rocks attacking the home and property of Haitian migrants,” causing serious injuries and death (Amnesty International March 2007, np). In August 2005, El National, a newspaper in the Dominican Republic, headlined an article “Survivor narrates how Haitians were burned alive [in the Dominican Republic]” (Amnesty International, March 2007, np). In October 2009, the Latin American Herald Tribune reported that a Haitian migrant was beheaded in the Dominican Republic. The article explained “An undocumented Haitian immigrant was decapitated in the northwestern Dominican town of Mao….Haitians have been the target of mob violence numerous times in recent years, and the Dominican government has been widely criticized for its treatment of the migrants” (Latin American Herald Tribune 2009, np). That same month, the Taiwan News Online reported in a later article titled “Protesters decry Haitian decapitations in The Dominican Republic,” where four Haitian migrants were decapitated. Their heads bodies were burned in a coal pit. A fifth man was shot but survived (Taiwan News 2009). As these examples illustrate, Haitians have often become the target for violent repression and deportation in the Western Hemisphere.

Amnesty International reports cases of human rights abuses against Haitian migrants in the Bahamas, (BBC, 2009). Haitians have been shot, killed and rounded up and detained despite their legal status in the country. Reported opinions on Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas have mostly focused on problems created by Haitian nationals. “Rare has any feature articles explore
the issues with a significant degree of depth and reflection. Rare also have been reports on individual Haitian nationals’ situations such as might give them a human face” (Amnesty International 2008, np).

In the United States, Haitian immigrants have faced discrimination and often brutal treatments by the U.S Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) (Lawless 1992:132). The US Federal Court has documented the systematic violation of Haitians’ human rights in the United States at the hands of INS. Haitians who have reached the Florida shores have been rounded up, jailed and deported whereas Cubans have been accepted (Lawless 1992: 132). Steve William, a Calypso musician and singer, has summed up the treatment and discrimination Haitians face in the region in a song titled *The Haitian Lament*, in which he describes the exploitations, mistreatments and humiliations Haitian immigrants face in the Western Hemisphere. One of the lyrics goes: “just because [they’re ] Haitians, [They’re being] treated like a dog; just because [they’re] Haitians [they] get paid pittance for [their] job….Are they not a brother….?” (William 2009).

It follows that the scholarly literature on Haitian migration suggests that Haitians have brought the brunt of discrimination in the Caribbean (e.g., Ferguson 2003; Lawless 1992; Brodwin 2003; Stepick et al. 2001; Farmer 1992). Lawless (1992: 125-133) observes that Haitian migrants habitually face “formal and informal discrimination, and outright hostility.” Ferguson (2003: 4) also claims that Haitians are widely disparaged as a migrant minority. Yet, a somewhat positive picture is developing in the Eastern Caribbean island of Dominica, where I interviewed 42 Haitians and 25 Dominicans to better understand their relationship.

The chapters that follow in this thesis include chapter 2—the literature review and theoretical framework—which reviews the contribution of world system theory to international migration, provides some historical and geographical patterns of emigration from Haiti and examines the connections between neoliberal economic model and Haitian out-migration. Chapter 3 identifies the methods used for gathering data and the possible drawbacks associated with these methods. Chapter 4 reviews the findings on Haitian migrants in Dominica. Chapter 5 concludes that relations between Dominicans and Haitian immigrants can either improve or deteriorate in the near future depending on conditions on the ground. It then summarizes the migration literature and provides a framework within which the Dominican government can further derive immigration policies.
Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

*Contribution from world systems theory to understanding emigration*

Migration is complex and multifaceted. Many analytic models have attempted to explain its causes. The intent here is to elaborate on the most notable causes of migration. The discrepancy in income levels, employment and social well-being among people are the principal causes (Castle 2000), a notion that is explored deeper through the lens of World Systems Theory (WST).

Originated by Immanuel Wallerstein in the book *The Modern World System* (1974), WST argues that countries’ development conditions and prospects result from factors ranging from economic practices, commodity chains, divisions of labor to global geopolitics (Klak 2008). WST emphasizes a single world economy with a single division of labor. The world economy breaks down into spatial zones: core, semi-peripheral, and periphery states. Countries of the core are more economically advanced. They are the center of industrial power, wealth, political and military might. They collectively establish and enforce the rules of global order and, through these advantages, appropriate surplus from non-core countries. The semi-periphery is located between the core’s high capacity and the periphery’s economic weakness. It has attributes of both the core and the periphery. The periphery is the least developed, providing cheap labor and primary goods for industries elsewhere. It has entrenched poverty and depressing development prospects (Klak 2008). Clearly Haiti falls in the periphery category, providing a cheap labor force and being denied minimal labor rights, which at times have served as a lure for multinational corporations.

This capitalist economic relation with the periphery, from a WST prism, creates a mobile population that is likely to emigrate. The desire for higher profits and greater wealth drives owners and managers of capitalist firms to enter poor countries on the periphery of the world economy in search of raw materials, cheap labor, and market niche. As land, raw materials, and labor within the global peripheral come under market control, migration flows are inevitably generated. In the past, this market penetration was assisted by colonialism, where resources were extracted. Today, it happens through neocolonial governments and multinational corporations and with the help of the national elites, who often participate in the capitalist
exploitation process by giving out their nation’s resources to global firms on suitable terms and conditions (Massey et al., 1993).
Likewise, exploitation of the periphery by the core was initially achieved by force—the colonial era—in which natural resources were extracted at gunpoint. However, today, exploitation is achieved through neocolonial economic control, which is more subtle and therefore more difficult to detect and combat (Lawless 1992:124). Nevertheless, through careful analysis and through the prism of world systems theory, it is possible to detect the damages of global capitalism on peripheral Haiti and its contribution to millions of Haitians leaving their homeland. From the perspective of WST, while government policies are often an integral part of the migration process, emigration from Haiti is partly stemmed from the inequality and the imbalance in the international order that has existed between Haiti as a peripheral country and the global core, especially North America and France. The accounts of more than forty Haitian migrants interviewed for this thesis and the history of out-migration from Haiti reflect the disruption and dislocation that occur in the process of capitalist global development.

Out-Migration from Haiti: Historical and Geographical Overview

Out-migration from Haiti is multifaceted. A nexus of local and global forces often determine why Haitians emigrate. The first mass emigration from Haiti occurred during the Haitian Revolution in 1791-1803, when a brutal slave rebellion led by Toussaint L’Ouverture, forced thousands of Haitian nationals to flee their country for fear of losing their lives. In the wake of the bloody slave revolt, thousands of French colonial officials, white planters and middle-class Haitians fled St. Domingue (colonial Haiti) for safety elsewhere (Robinson 2007:6). The Haitian Revolution was the main force behind this emigration.
Anthropologist Michel Laguerre further explains that many of the early Haitian immigrants were settled in various American cities along the Atlantic coast. French colonists, afraid for their lives, also fled Haiti—in some cases with their slaves. Free people of color who were unsure about the direction of the revolution also left for the United States. Laguerre then notes this was not a planned mass migration but came rather suddenly as colonists and free people of color abandoned their property and rushed off of the island to save their lives (Laguerre 1998: 22). What can also be said here is that these early Haitian immigrants also generated fear in the society where they settled. There was the fear that those Haitian immigrants might encourage slaves in the US, neighboring islands and other parts of the western hemisphere to revolt. As Thomas Jefferson said to Louis Andre Pinchon, the French Minister to America: “If this
combustion (The Haitian Revolution) can be introduced among us under any veil whatever, we have to fear” (Robinson 2007: 8).

The United States’ refusal to recognize Haitian independence in 1804 until 1862 is a clear example of racial prejudice, primarily because of the threat that Haiti posed to the slave-based economy, as was the failure to invite Haiti to the Panama conference of 1825 which was meant for Latin American countries to form a unified front against European colonial powers (Lawless 1992: 65). Indeed, Thomas Jefferson made it clear to the French Minister to the United States, with regards to the progress of the slave rebellion in Haiti, “….Nothing would be easier than to furnish your army and fleet with everything, and reduce Toussaint [the Haitian slave leader] to starvation.” Furthermore, George Washington later added that “It was lamentable to see such a spirit of revolution among the blacks of Saint Domingue (colonial Haiti) (Robinson 2007: 8). These examples provide us with a sense of the origin of the racist ideology and the high level of intolerance towards Haitian nationals until today.

It is worth noting however that from the late 18th to the 19th century, Haiti was not just a land of emigration, but also a land of immigration for thousands of people in the Western Hemisphere who were fleeing colonial repression. Haiti was officially declared an asylum for escaped slaves, and for any person of either African or Amerindian descent (Farmer 2003: 65). In fact, in exchange for a commitment from the Great Liberator, Simon Bolivar, to liberate the slaves in South America from Spain, the new Haitian Republic, led by later President Alexandre Petion in 1806-1818, provided Bolivar not only with thousands of Haitian troops and a refuge in Haiti—twice—but also with four thousand guns, fifteen thousand pounds of powder, a quantity of lead, some provisions, and a printing press. The Haitian government rolled out an unconditional welcome mat to anyone fleeing European colonialism in Africa or fleeing bondage from slave plantations anywhere in the Americas—North, South, or Central (Robinson 2007: p6-7). Even President Abraham Lincoln, in his attempt to preserve the Union during the American Civil War, considered sending out-thousands of slaves from the United States to Haiti (Klingaman 2001: 85).

Another major wave of mass out-migration from Haiti happened during the era of the American occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and the Dominican Republic (1916-1924). Thousands of Haitians were encouraged by the American military to cross the border to work in the American owned sugar plantations in neighboring Dominican Republic. According to James Ferguson (2003: 10), by 1925, 11 of the 21 sugar mills in the Dominican Republic were American owned,
with 98 percent of exports going to the United States. The US military strongly encouraged Haitian workers to work in the American sugar owned industry across the border.

After American forces left the Dominican Republic in 1924 and Haiti in 1934, the emigration of Haitians continued. The 1935 official census recorded 50,000 Haitian residents in the Dominican Republic. Today, the number is believed to be over a million (Ferguson 2003: 10).

As the number of Haitian migrants who were encouraged to cross the border to the Dominican Republic grew, discrimination towards them also grew. In 1937, 13 years after U.S troops had left the island, Dominican strongman Rafael Trujillo, ordered the massacre of thousands of Haitians in eastern Dominican Republic, the area where Haitians were encouraged to settle. The number of Haitians killed during a three-day genocidal spree has been estimated to be between 18,000 and 35,000 (Farmer 2003: 89), a bloodbath that has been replicated in smaller numbers to this day in the Dominican Republic.

Discrimination facing Haitian immigrants is also evident in Haitian migration to the United States. During the Duvaliers’ era (1957-1986), thousands of Haitians fled the oppressive regime. In 1963, the first wave of Haitian boat people departed for Miami. They were fleeing the repressive Duvalier regime. These Haitians were either repatriated immediately or placed in detention center to be sent back later to Haiti, a move Laguerre has called “a double-standard in American immigration policy” (Laguerre 1998: 80).

Coincidentally, in the 1960s, thousands of Cubans were fleeing the repressive Fidel Castro’s regime in Cuba attempting to get to Florida. The Cubans were allowed to remain in the United States while the Haitians were sent back home. Cubans were quickly processed and released into US society, classified as asylum applicants. The Haitians were classified as being in exclusion proceeding. Some of the Cubans were given cash gifts by the American authorities, while the Haitians were detained in jails. The U.S government welcomed the primarily white Cubans who were fleeing a socialist state and deported black Haitians who were escaping from a right wing dictatorial regime (Laguerre 1998: 80). Clearly, this outright discrimination towards Haitian immigrants was a direct result of the cold war geopolitics and modern racism.

The Duvaliers’ opposition to communism in Haiti automatically made any Haitian who fled the regimes unqualified for political asylum in the United States despite the fact that the regime was repressive. Haiti is strategically located not far from the American mainland. An American open door policy towards Haitian immigrants, especially toward the first wave of Haitian
political refugees, could have possibly led to Duvalierists threatened to damage relations with the United States.

Since 1972, political authorities in the United States, motivated by domestic political groups, have attempted both to deter Haitian immigration and to deport those Haitians already in Florida. As Stepick (1982: 178-179) found, “Members of southern Florida’s political elite—including Democratic Party members, elected officials, and some Cubans—believed that the boat people were a disruptive force, destroying the community and draining public resources. They appealed to their local Congressmen, who apparently pressured the Immigration Naturalization Services (INS) to respond.” Haitians nationals have been stigmatized as a “disruptive force and welfare dependent” people, even though among Haitians in the United States, food stamps and welfare rates have been very low (Lawless 1992:132). In the 1980s, Haitian immigrants were blamed for carrying HIV/AIDS in the United States (Farmer 2006). In dealing with the Haitian immigrants, American government agencies are characterized by what Lawless (1992: 125) refers to as “entrenched ideological and racial bias.”

In short, as Sociologists Micheline Labelle and Franklin Midy (1999: 131) point out, it can be said that in the United States, the reception reserved for Haitians has been influenced by American geopolitical interests in the Caribbean, domestic economic worries, and racist ideology. These historical moments document the origins and evolution of Haitian identity in the United States.

As the Haitian reception in the United States is briefly discussed here, it is important to illustrate the relationship between identity and immigration. Immigration and identity often goes hand in hand in the migration literature. In fact, identity is a crucial matter for many immigrant groups (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Phinney, 2003). Individuals adopt identities through processes characterized by imitation and identification or by exploration, construction, and experience (Serafini & Adams, 2002). Thus, one of the functions of identity is “to provide the structure for understanding who one is” (Adams & Marshall 1996: 433). When society defines who we are, our identity becomes shaped and constructed by that society (Yeboah 2008: 168). The fact that Haitians in Dominica, as documented later in this thesis, have been defined as hard working and contributing to the social-economic well-being of the country and in Florida Haitians are characterized as “disruptive force” illustrates the construction of identity at different times and geographical locations. As an immigrant is exposed to the receiving culture, ideals, and interact with the new social environment, his or her identity will likely be constructed within that society.
(Schwartz, Montgomery & Briones 2006). Clearly this has been the case with Haitian immigrants wherever they’re settled. It must be said that the construction is two sided. Based upon their experience, immigrants also develop their own ideas about the host country. The military rule and coups after the Duvalier era also prompted mass emigration from Haiti. The 1991 military coup, which sent President Jean-Bertrand Aristide into exile, led to thousands of Haitians fleeing the country. The violence that ensued in the 1990s was intense and touched all spheres of Haitians’ life. Bishop Willy Romelus, the one member of the Haitian Episcopal Conference, reported that there were reports that 1500 people were killed in the first three days after the 1991 coup (Romelus 1992). Many of these killings were in the hands of Haitian military generals trained at the School of the Americas in Georgia in the United States. According to Catholic Church sources, officers of the Haitian military were seen at the U.S Army base in Fort Benning, Georgia, home of the notorious School of the Americas (SOA), as recently as October 1993 (Farmer 2003: 34). This follows a pattern as in other Latin American countries, where American trained military have been involved in mass killings back home (e.g., the massacre of El Mozote in El Salvador and the killings of thousands of Chileans by DINA, the notorious Chilean intelligence agency under General Augusto Pinochet after the September 11, 1973 military coup that led to the death of President Salvador Allende (Danner 1993; Allende 2005). Thousands of Haitians were being displaced from their home and forced to migrate for fear of losing their lives. “Ordinary people who desired land reform, better wages, improved health care, education, and the basic right of self-determination were labeled communists by U.S-backed regimes and murdered, tortured, and disappeared by shadowy paramilitary death squads and state security forces trained by the United States” (Gill 2004: 2). An outcome of this military repression in Haiti and other parts of Latin America has been mass emigration. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (1993) reported that an estimated 40,000 Haitian nationals had been intercepted by the United States Coast Guard, with 30,000 of them repatriated to Haiti under the military junta that followed the end of the Duvalier era. Over 100,000 other Haitians crossed the border to the Dominican Republic (Farmer 2003: 159), despite the high level of violence and repressions Haitians face there. Similarly, the second coup against Aristide in 2004 triggered a large wave of Haitian emigration. In February 29, 2004, Aristide was coerced (or kidnapped as he claimed) into leaving Haiti after an armed insurgency erupted in the port city of Gonaives earlier in the month and quickly enveloped the country. Various reports estimated that between March 2004 and the beginning of
2006, about 1500 people were killed. This number included police officers, United Nation peace keeping force (known as Minustah), journalists, and civilians, including men, women and children. Those responsible for the killings included armed supporters of Aristide, active and inactive police officers, members of the Front for National Reconstruction (FRN) that helped overthrow Aristide, former members of the military, people close to the interim government, MINUSTAH soldiers, and other armed gangs (Dupuy 2007: 189).

Despite an interim government installed after Aristide and the presence of a United Nation peace keeping force of nearly 7000, violence and repression continued throughout the subsequent years. Amnesty International remarked that killings continued to occur despite the UN presence mandated to secure the country and protect the population (Dupuy 2007: 189). What can be inferred here is that out-migration from Haiti is multifaceted, with many stakeholders involved, ranging from local to international forces. Yet, numerous sources (Ferguson 2003: 8, Catanese 1999: 1, 2) claim poverty as the primary factor behind out-migration from Haiti, a notion that needs to be rectified.

**The Neoliberal Economic Model and Haitian Migration**

No doubt poverty contributes a great deal to Haiti’s mass emigration. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere (Buss 2008:1; Ferguson 2003: 4). The correlation between poverty and out-migration increased during the American embargo—following the 1991 coup against Aristide in Haiti. “With a severe dip during the embargo period from 1991-1994, GDP fell drastically. During the first four years, it fell by an accumulated 31 percent, with over more than 150,000 jobs lost. Legal exports dropped from $202 million in 1991 to $57 million in 1994” (Rotberg 1997: x). Today, Haiti remains very much mired in poverty. “Over half the population of Haiti (54%) of 8.2 million people live on less than $1.00 a day; 76% live on $2.00 or less a day” (USAID 2007, np). Life expectancy in Haiti is 60 years, while in the United States it is 78 (World Bank Development Indicators 2010). In 2008, a food crisis, followed by violent protest, had caused thousands of Haitians to flee the country. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, migration from Haiti is complex. Contrary to the literature, which suggests that emigration from Haiti is mostly poverty related, a nexus of local and global forces often dictate why Haitians migrate.

Though migration stems from the desire to improve one's livelihood, it is seldom the poorest people who migrate (De Haas 2005: 1270-1271). As researcher Hein De Haas further mentions:
“Migration involves considerable costs and risks for those who migrate. Knowledge and social networks also require the necessary aspirations. This explains the paradox that socioeconomic development in the form of rising incomes, educational levels, and access to information tends to be associated initially with increasing migration. Rather than absolute poverty, a certain level of socioeconomic development, combined with relative deprivation in the form of global inequality of development opportunities, seems to be the most important cause of migration” (De Haas 2005: 1271).

Similarly, emigration from Haiti results from a nexus of global-local forces that have transformed the country politically, economically, and socially. Beginning in the early 1950s, and similar to most Latin American countries, Haiti forcefully entered a new exploitative economic phase: Neoliberalism. Practically, neoliberalism refers to the “policies and processes whereby a handful of private interests are permitted to control as much local economic assets as possible in order to maximize their personal profit. In many cases, assets are owned by foreigners, and profit are repatriated rather than reinvested in the national economy” (McChesney 1998: 7). According to McChesney (1998: 7), the consequences of these economic policies include a massive increase in social and economic inequality, severe deprivation for the poor of the global periphery, global environmental disaster, unstable global economy and more wealth for the rich.

A perfect example of this economic inequality can be found in Latin America, which has shifted from dependantista economic model to neoliberal economic. As Guillermo O’Donnell (1998: 49) notes, “the social situation of Latin America is a scandal.” There are more poor in Latin America today, more than 76 million more, than there were in the early 1970s (O’Donnell 1998: 49). The most distinguishing characteristic of the region has been the concentration of resources in the relatively small top of the pyramid (Hoffman & Centeno 2003: 373). Haiti has been no exception to neoliberal economic model.

In 1971, Haiti had experienced a transition in leadership from Duvalier Senior to Duvalier Junior. According to Lawless (1992: 160), this transition was the result of an agreement between Francois Duvalier and the Nixon administration during Vice President Nelson Rockefeller’s trip to Haiti in 1970. The United States would continue to financially support the Duvalier dynasty, and Jean-Claude, when he came to power, would open up Haiti’s economy to American businesses. The new program would feature American business investments that would be drawn to Haiti by such incentives as no custom taxes, a low minimum wage, repressed labor unions, and free profit repatriation for US companies (Lawless 1992:160). These reforms—trade
liberalization, deregulation, and privatization—were meant to create a transition in the history of the Haitian economy, making it even more dependent on global forces.
The cheap labor force, extensive government repression, and denial of even minimal labor rights made Haiti the most ideal place for American multinational companies and the maquilas, a Mexican term for an assembly factory (Burbach and Herold, 1984: 196). A decade later, the assembly sector was the most dynamic part of the Haitian economy. In the early months of 1986 before the fall of Duvalier, Haiti ranked ninth largest assembler of goods for the U.S—including the world’s largest producer of baseballs. Haiti also ranked among the top three among producers of stuffed toys, dolls and apparel, especially brassieres (Farmer 2003: 99-100). Haiti at one time produced up to 90 percent of all the world’s softballs and baseballs, even though baseball or softball is foreign to Haitians (Lawless 1992:118).

What this neoliberal economic model has to do with Haitians leaving their country? Clearly, one of the impacts of this economic model is what Michael Lipton (1977) has termed “urban bias,” the idea that people abandon the rural areas for cities—in this case Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital. As a result of government policies and the location of the manufacturing industry in Port-au-Prince, the city which was built for only 250,000 people, has become overcrowded with over 2 million, and filled with squatters, slums and shanty town settlements. The physical capacity of the city has far exceeded its limits. In January 12, 2010, more than 200,000 people died from an earthquake that struck Port au Prince (Le Nouveliste 2010). Clearly, this soaring death toll was related to high concentration of people per square kilometer living on poor settlements and construction.

Migration to the capital has created a high rate of unemployment. The manufacturing industry has not generated sufficient low level jobs and has declined in recent years. It creates a false impression that has triggered a flood of people from the rural areas and resulted in urban crisis—the tension between migration, urbanization and urban poverty (Frayne 2007) in rural-urban migration. “Everything from gangs and criminal cartels, narco-trafficking networks, mini-mafias and slum bosses, to community, grassroots, non-government organizations, to secular cults and religious sects proliferate” (Harvey 2005:171).

Furthermore, this neoliberal economic model has resulted in the collapse of the country’s agricultural sector. Millions of Haitians have abandoned agriculture to move to the city. “In 1972, Haiti was self-sufficient in food. In 1985, Haiti produced 123,000 metric tons of rice. By 2006, Haiti only produced 76,000 metric tons and imported 342,000 metric tons” (Chalmers 2005:171).
a decline that has continued to this day. For the first time in its history, Haiti has begun to import a large percentage of its food supplies (Lawless 1992:118). In April 2008, various newspapers and magazines around the globe reported food riots in the Haitian’s capital, which eventually cost the country’s Prime Minister his job from a no confidence vote from the Senate.

The food crisis should not be a surprise as the neoliberal economic model had already laid the groundwork for it to happen. Trade liberalism and structural reforms have made local producers uncompetitive as foreign goods invade the Haitian market, forcing farmers to abandon agriculture. On April 18, 2008, The New York Times “lectured” Haiti in headlines saying that “Haiti, its agriculture industry is in shambles, needs to better feed itself” (Quigley 2008: 1-2; New York Times 2008). But as human rights lawyer, Bill Quigley, mentions “Unfortunately the [New York Times] did not talk about the root of the shortages—the fact that the United States and other international financial bodies destroyed Haitian rice farmers to create a major market for the heavily subsidized rice from U.S farmers is enough to understand the crisis” (Quigley 2008: 1-2). There again, the end result of this neoliberal restructuring has been mass emigration. Haitians not only emigrated, but also abandoned agriculture to work in the manufacture and garment industry in Port-au-Prince. Port-au-Prince, overcrowded with slums, crime, and squatter settlements, became unable to supply the needs of such a large population. In turn, millions of people have sought to escape the entrenched urban poverty and terrible living conditions by risking their lives on rickety boats to neighboring islands or cross the border to the Dominican Republic. People first abandon the country side for major cities; then, from major cities they seek to migrate internationally. As Ronal Skeldon (2008: 63) explains, migration involves both movement of people from the towns to destinations in other countries and internal migration into local towns and then on to seek jobs in another country.

However, out-migration from Haiti does not always follow an urban bias, where people first move to the urban area and from there they migrate internationally. Personal experience has taught me that a number of Haitians who have left the island did so from the country-side, not from Haiti’s major cities. Haitians from the countryside often sneak away at night on rickety boats as a strategy to evade the authorities. Using the examples of Nigeria and Mauritania, Cris Beauchemin and Philippe Bocquier (2004) have also demonstrated that migration routes can be complex. Migrants move to the nearest small town before heading to larger cities. Therefore, small and medium-sized towns serve more as redistribution places than as steps on the way to
capital cities. Skeldon (2008: 68) also found that in some countries in Asia, at times migrants move from rural origins to international destinations. In this way, many towns on the periphery of the developing world may become short-circuited from their hinterland in the second urban transition and enter a period of stagnant growth.

In addition to the collapse of the agricultural sector and the urban bias, neoliberal economic models have resulted in the eradication of the Haitian pig population—something that can be seen as the “piggybank” of the Haitian peasants. One of the main consequences of the development and modernization of the Haitian pig industry has been to make Haiti more dependent on foreign assistance (Lawless 1992: 118-119).

In 1978, African swine fever was reported in Haiti at a time when the Haitian peasants held an estimated one million pigs. The viral disease may have killed four hundred thousand pigs, and another three hundred thousand may have been slaughtered. Perhaps three hundred thousand were still alive when the pig eradication program began in May 1982. It is not clear, however, if the remaining pigs were in any danger or the disease had run its course. Many farmers claimed that their pigs had not been sick and the pigs had stopped dying from the swine fever month before the eradication program started (Lawless 1992:119). Yet, a major campaign to get rid of Haitian pigs had begun. As Lawless (1992:117) further discovered, the nature of these policies can be found in the internal documents of the USAID. A revealing report prepared by the USAID field mission in the early 1980s recommended the complete restructuring of the Haitian economy—without any indigenous input.

By 1981, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, the Inter-American Development Bank, and various units of government in Mexico, Canada, and Haiti launched a massive swine eradication project. The United States provided over fifteen million dollars of the total project price of about twenty three million dollars, and the A.I.D played key position in the project to wipe out the entire pig population of Haiti. The pig eradication program was supposed to be followed by a repopulation project guided by A.I.D. And A.I.D officials insisted on importing American breeds into Haiti in an attempt to modernize the swine industry. White pigs from the State of Iowa were chosen for their high breeding capacity, good health, and high feed-conversion rate, despite their inability to adapt to the Haitian environment. These bourgeois pigs, as the Haitian peasants have labeled them, required the kind of care that is simply extraordinarily expensive in the Haitian context (Lawless 1992: p121). One critical question that can be asked is why Iowan pigs? If the ideas
were development oriented, why not imported pig from Jamaica or other Caribbean islands that share similar environment with Haiti? Clearly this was done to fully neoliberalize the Haitian economy.

The Creole pigs were the backbone of the rural peasant economy and might be thought of as their 401K. And in order for neoliberal economic policies to effectively implement their course in the country, it was necessary that the Haitian peasant be made economically dependent on a market economy, shifting their dependence from the Creole pigs. As the *Guardian* reported a Haitian peasant as saying:

“The Creole pig was our whole life. It was the pig that birthed us, the pig that raised us, the pig that buried us. Pigs were the island’s honking bank accounts. Pigs paid to put kids through school, paid for wedding, and paid for the scrap of land you wanted to buy.”


The eradication program affected “80% of the Haitian people for whom pigs represented an important source of animal protein, food security as well as a means of wealth storage, thereby bringing widespread hardship to Haitians” (Scarpa, et al. 2003), further forcing them out of their own country. Despite exploitations and damages being done by neoliberal economic policies, oppositions to it have always been met with state repression. As Harvey (2005: 117) indicates, “neoliberalism cannot function without a strong state…and the associated legal institutions.” And indeed the Duvaliers were strong men, willing to repress anyone who ventured to oppose their political economic approach.

The penetration of neoliberalism into Haiti, as Wallerstein also argues, is one of the leading causes of emigration from the country. “Migration is a natural outgrowth of disruptions and dislocations that inevitably occur in the process of capitalist development” (Massey, et al. 1993: 445). The exploitation of Haiti by the core, the restructuring of the country’s economy and the lack of an economic safety net that has resulted from it have forced millions of Haitians to migrate throughout the western hemisphere, including to the island of Dominica.

Chapter 3

*Methods*

A strict procedure for conducting ethical research involving human subjects, as established by Miami University Institutional Review Board, has been followed for this thesis. This Board abides by national guidelines for ethical research articulated by the Collaborative Institutional
Training Initiative or CITI (https://www.citiprogram.org/aboutus.asp?language=english). By acting in accordance with these protocols, I am making certain that informed consent and interviewees are not subject to any undue stress and that their confidentiality is safeguarded. Prior to my travel to Dominica, it was mandatory that I submitted an application for approval. I made it clear that my work will focus only on those Haitians in Dominica that have the legal right to be in the country. Haitians without proper documentation would not be interviewed. I also attached the list of questions to be asked with the application. In the field, each interviewee was presented with a written description of the research project, the confidentiality protection and contact information for the researcher and the university should they need to follow up. It is an obligation that participants in this research are ensured and that data cannot be traced back to individuals while concurrently and succinctly communicating the findings. The analysis in this thesis is drawn primarily from a total of 67 in-depth interviews, 42 Haitians and 25 Dominicans. This number results from the limited time period (Six weeks) to complete this project. Nevertheless, I did not turn down any opportunity to interview a Haitian that was willing to be interviewed.

The use of interviews helps give voices to Haitian migrants’ subjective experiences associated with their journeys and their time in Dominica (Kihat 2007), and directly challenge neutral objective social science which often dismisses interviews as invalid sources of academic knowledge Magubane (2004: 2). Additionally, the face-to-face interviews provide opportunities for a more appropriate context within which respondents have the confidentiality and relaxation to discuss their perceptions and experiences of the matter under investigation (Hannabuss, 1996).

Using the face-to-face interviews approach to track the key issues that have characterized the socio-economic contributions, transnational activities and identity of Haitian migrants made it possible to answer the research questions of this study: 1) Why do Haitian migrants come to Dominica? 2) How are they received by Dominicans? 3) In what ways have Haitian migrants contributed socially and economically to Dominica’s society? 4) Is a peaceful coexistence between Haitians and Dominicans possible?

Though the initial intent of this thesis was to interview only Haitians, I later decided to seek Dominicans’ perceptions to expand the insights on this developing relationship. Interviews were conducted from June to July 2009 throughout Dominica, but particularly in the capital city of Roseau where the greatest concentration of the country’s population is located. Secondary document analysis is also deployed. Interviewees were met in different locations. Many of them
were selling at the market place, working on the land, socializing at local restaurants, and working as barbers, while others were conducting their personal businesses at the Labor Division and Immigration Offices. Participants were 18 years old or older, and included both Haitian and Dominican men (n=44) and women (n=23).

Two methods were used to identify research participants. First, Miami University’s long term relationship with Dominica and the many contacts the university has in different villages served as a stepping stone to recruit subjects. Through these established contacts, I obtained access to potential interviewees in neighborhoods within the vicinity of Roseau and nearby villages where the Haitian community is heavily concentrated. Secondly, a snowball method was used, with one person leading to other interviewees. There are limits to this approach, as it may result in the bias of concentrating on some migrant networks over others (Kihato 2007).

A snowball method draws subject from a particular segment of the community which tends to share a similar social network or belong to the same group. Snowball method tends to exclude individuals who are not linked to the group. Snowball method also runs a high risk of revealing critical and potentially damaging information to members of a network or subgroup. As Jacobsen and Landau mentions, “simply informing a respondent how one obtain a name or contact information demonstrates a particular kind of link” (Jacobsen and Landau 2003).

Nonetheless, snowballing was the most appropriate method for this research. It provided access to the information that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. This method was used to identify interviewees in the villages of Delices, Salisbury, Mahaut, Marigot, and the towns of Portsmouth and Roseau (See map below). As mentioned earlier, obtaining and documenting consent took the form of a consent letter. All participants were presented a copy of the consent form for reference. In some occasions oral consents was sought as many participants rejected the form and asked for an oral explanation of the research purpose. There was no language barrier. The researcher was able to communicate in the Haitian Kreyol. The official language of Dominica itself is English.
In designing the interview structure, I was aware of my preconceived ideas about Haitian migrants’ marginalization. This reflects Geiger (1990: 170) and Kihato’s (2007) suggestion that “marginality cannot be assumed, nor will questions that predict the marginality of the person to whom they are put yield particularly interesting insights into the self-perceptions or life of the oral historian.” I am also aware of my positionality and relationship with the interviewees, as that can influence the type of information respondent reveal or not reveal. I am a Haitian immigrant living in the United States. I am aware of how topics such as differences in class, economic status, and language can shape answers. In fact, a number of Haitians refused to be interviewed, believing that I was working and spying for the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). They feared that I might persecute them if they try to go back to Haiti. Clearly this perception shapes the type of answer I got from some of my interviewees.

What they chose and chose not to tell me was shaped by how they assessed me. In total, there were seven Haitians (five men and two women) who refused to be interviewed. My sense was that they feared that their answers might be used against them. This number could have been higher if I had interviewed a larger number of Haitians for this thesis.

I am also aware of the problems associated with small scale studies. As Jacobsen and Landau (2003: 190) mention, “one of the most significant problems of small-scale studies is that while they yield in-depth and valid information, they are seldom representative of the target population.
about which the researcher wishes to make claims. As such, they do not allow us to make accurate descriptive inferences about the groups in which we are interested.” Although the sample of Haitian migrants used for this research is not representative of the Haitian population living in Dominica as a whole, its composition does represent a range of different experiences Haitians have had in Dominica.

Among the Haitians respondents, occupations range from construction workers, farmers, restaurant owner, tailor, barber, government employees, and street vendors. Among the Dominican respondents, occupations included employers, government officials, professors and employees of Haitians. The interviews ranged from thirty minutes to one hour and covered a variety of topics, including reasons for coming to Dominica, current work activities, integration into the Dominican society, ties with the homeland, experiences and attitudes towards the Dominican society. Dominicans, however, were asked about their experiences and perceptions of Haitian migrants (See the appendix for the list of questions). Interviews were recorded and transcribed. A pseudonym is assigned to each informant, and the researcher has the sole access to the data from the interviews.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

As mentioned earlier, the literature on Haitian migration suggests that Haitians have been widely discriminated in the Caribbean and beyond. This is due to a broad range of factors, ranging from Haiti’s intractable poverty to cultural differences. The literature further suggests that Haitian immigrants typically face overt hostility, formal and informal discrimination in the societies wherever they settle. Apparently, the economic disparity among countries that has contributed to international migration and resulted in xenophobia (Nyamnjoh, 2006: 6) partly explains this level of intolerance toward Haitian migrants in the Caribbean.

Immigration remains a contentious political issue. It is compounded by its perceived link with crime, job loss, and resource drain. In times of economic decline, immigrants become the easiest and most obvious target for resentment, and are often projected by citizens and the authorities as the cause of social ills (Nyamnjoh 2006). Immigrants are often seen as a threat in the host society (Crush and Frayne 2007). Yet a somewhat different picture is developing on the Island of Dominica, though not without fragility.
Haitian Migration to Dominica

Haitians migration to Dominica is very recent, beginning in the early 2000s when thousands of Haitians headed to the island. During the first year of the 21st century, 1,082 Haitian nationals arrived in Dominica, fleeing the social unrest and economic hardship that had plagued Haiti. Since then, over 20,000 more have followed suit (Chronicle 2009). Central Statistical Office Data further shows that in 2004, 7,391 Haitian nationals entered Dominica and more than 5800 arrived in 2005. As discussed earlier, these numbers coincided with the coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the political and economic chaos that followed.

Additionally, it must be said that initially Haitian migrants did not need a visa to enter Dominica. All they needed was the airline ticket alongside their passport. As the Dominica Central Statistical Office reported, close to 20,000 Haitians had entered the country from 2001 to 2005 and that was before the visa requirement was imposed (Bureau of Statistic 2009). However, in 2006 and 2007, the number of Haitians entering the country decreased. It dropped down to 1576 for the 2006-2007 combined, a clear result of the visa restriction that applied in late 2005 (see Table 1). The number further dropped to 743 in 2008 (Statistic Dept 2001-2009). It must be said that economic and political conditions in Haiti which is often link to Haitian outmigration and which is further discussed on the next section also improved.
Table 1: Arrival Date of interviewed Haitian migrants to Dominica

Table 2: Reason for immigrating to Dominica, N=42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Reason</th>
<th>In search of better economic opportunity:</th>
<th>Recruited by Dominican Farmers/Government</th>
<th>Religious Purpose</th>
<th>Personal Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Demographic aspects of interviewed Haitian immigrants, N=42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>28</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married to Haitian in Dominica</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married but Living with a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Cohort (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although Haitian migration to Dominica is understudied, several features ranging from migrants intended destination to their socio-economic contribution can be outlined. My data (see Table 4 below) suggest that the majority of Haitians in Dominica do not come to Dominica to stay. Despite the many Haitians who have entered Dominica during the 21st century, it is estimated that only 3,000 to 4,000 Haitian migrants live in Dominica (Charles 2009). Haitians are a transient population, waiting the right opportunity to traverse to wealthier neighboring islands and beyond. As Roland Desire, the president of the Dominican Haitian Friendship Association says: “at one point, for every four Haitians that come to Dominica, three had left for neighboring islands (e.g: Martinique, Guadeloupe, St Marteen, the British & U.S Virgin Islands) via smuggling route” (Desire 2009). And as my interviewees experiences reflect (see Table 4), economically Dominica is a tough country. There isn’t much economic opportunities. Another indicator that further corroborates Haitian transiency in Dominica is the number (n=34) of Haitian nationals without children in Dominica among my interviewees (see Table 3). Having children is partly seen as a hindrance for Haitian migrants in Dominica to make it to their final destination whenever an opportunity presents itself. Some Haitian migrants have told me that when they decided to leave Haiti, their children were left with their relatives. In Dominica, they do not have any relatives to take care their children for them. As a result, many of my interviewees do not have children. They perceive children as hampering their next voyage. Those who have children presumably would find it more difficult to transit or are the ones intending to stay in Dominica. Nonetheless, the majority of the Haitian nationals have not come to stay. Rather, they use Dominica as a stepping stone—a stepwise migration strategy—to get to a more desirable destination.

Table 4: Interviewed Haitians Perceptions of Dominica

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Conditions</th>
<th>Economic Opportunities</th>
<th>Dominica is Intended Final Destination?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unstable: 0</td>
<td>Good: 3</td>
<td>No: 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable: 42</td>
<td>All right: 7</td>
<td>Yes: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tough: 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Step-wise Strategy

Haitian migration to Dominica is step-wise, meaning that migrants go through various places as a strategy to get to their final destination. The notion of step-wise migration implies a spatial relocation by steps or stages from a migrant’s origin to an intended destination (Conway 1980). Before coming to Dominica, the majority of the interviewed Haitians were living in the Dominican Republic for a long period of time. Some of them were living there for over a decade, while others were there for just a few months. From there, they fly to Dominica. Once they reach Dominica, they intend to use another step-wise strategy to get to the Caribbean islands of Martinique or Guadeloupe, St Marteen, the U.S Virgin Islands or the British Virgin Islands. It must be stressed that smugglers have often played a key role in the step-wise process. A number of Haitian migrants have told me that they’ve been deceived by smugglers in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Dominica in the step-wise process. In fact, there are numerous newspaper reports (e.g., TheDominican.net) of smugglers using Dominica as a way station to bring in Haitian women to Martinique and Guadeloupe and other wealthy Caribbean islands. The step-wise strategy Haitian migrants have used makes it more difficult to quantify the number of Haitians living in Dominica. Haitian migrants have often left the island illegally for neighboring Martinique, Guadeloupe and other nearby islands while others have entered Dominica illegally. As Mr Desire said “no one knows exactly how many Haitians are in Dominica. The authorities might know how many Haitians have entered the country but not left.” (Desire 2009). This transcript further emphasizes the transient life of Haitian migrants. Nonetheless, many Haitians end up staying longer in Dominica for fear of risking their life on rickety boats. “Sharks are tired of Haitian meat” said one Haitian man from Delice. This statement also reflects the notion of fear and migration.

Haitian migrants’ step-wise strategy is partly meant to evade U.S blockades that are often set around Haitian waters. In an attempt to deter Haitian migrants on rickety boats from reaching Florida, the United States Coast Guard has regularly patrolled the Windward Passage, the body of water between Haiti and Cuba, in search of suspected Haitian vessels (Legomsky 2006). Being alerted of that, Haitian migrants have used the stepwise migration strategy to dodge U.S Coast Guards by heading south to Dominica. And once they reach Dominica, some have
attempted to reach the U.S Virgin islands, where they would not need a visa to fly to the American mainland.

In April 2007, The Dominican online newspaper reported 47 Haitians along with two Dominicans, including two babies, were dumped on a beach by smugglers on Norman Island, one of the British Virgin Islands in the Caribbean. They hoped to reach the U.S Virgin Islands, where they can easily come to the U.S mainland without passing through immigration checkpoints. All the Haitians were to be repatriated to Haiti and the Dominicans to Dominica (TheDominican.net 2007). This anecdote demonstrates the step-wise strategies migrants are using to get to their final destination.

Similar step-wise migration strategy has been used by various immigrant groups in the region. Afraid of being interdicted and repatriated, large number of Cubans head south to Central America. Their strategy is to pass through Honduras—the only Central American country that does not repatriate interdicted Cubans to Cuba—and then travel to the United States by land. This strategy often involves the aid of smugglers along the US-Mexican border (Legomsky 2006). Peculiarly, there have been claims that Pakistanis and Palestinians were using Haiti as a step wise process to get to the United States. In 2004, in his effort to deter Haitian migration to Florida, former Attorney General John Ashcroft claimed that Pakistanis and Palestinians were heading with the hope of smuggling in a boat to the United States (Legomsky 2006). Obviously, this is an odd case. While Haitians find it difficult to traverse from Haiti to the United States by boats, Pakistanis and Palestinians are hoping to make it by going through Haiti. Nevertheless, this further demonstrates the step-wise strategies migrants are using to get to their intended places.

Due to the many thousands of Haitian nationals that have used Dominica to get to wealthier islands or the global North, and due to the many fatal incidents that occur in the process, authorities in the region have stepped up efforts to curb the flow of Haitian migrants entering their countries. In 2005, authorities in St Marteen intercepted two boatloads of Haitians coming from Dominica. Earlier that same year, 10 Haitians reportedly drowned of the coast of Martinique after the boat in which they were traveling from Dominica was capsized (TheDominican.net 2006). The Dominican government has been pressured by neighboring islands to stop the flow of Haitians coming to Dominica.

Intense pressure from the French government has forced the Dominican government to reverse its policies towards Haitian migrants entering Dominica (Marie 2009). Today, Haitians must
have a visa to enter Dominica. Under an agreement with the French government which would allow Dominicans citizens to travel to Martinique and Guadeloupe with a visa for 15 days, the Dominican government has put in place a visa requirement for Haitian nationals. As anticipated, this policy has had some impacts on the number of Haitians coming to Dominica since initiated in the early months of 2005. It brought a declined on the number of Haitians entering the country.

Also, this policy coincided with events in Haiti—a time of political instability after the overthrow of President Aristide in 2004—that many Haitians sought to flee. Many Haitians were determined to leave Haiti. Thus, the impact of the visa requirement was minimal. As Table 1 indicates, the years 2004—2007 accounted for the largest number of Haitian nationals entering Dominica among my interviewees (see Table 1). It wasn’t until later when tougher immigration policies from France made it even more difficult for Haitians to traverse to neighboring islands that the migration flow of Haitians to Dominica began to dramatically curb. Corruption often complicates the visa system, making the process time consuming and difficult for migrants to get the visa at the $50 U.S dollars required. Though the visa only costs $50 US, migrants often pay much higher for quicker response. As Roland Desire says, though only $50 U.S is required to process the visa, smugglers and corruption have made the process so difficult and costly. It’s often costs Haitian nationals $800 to $1200 U.S dollars to get the visa (Desire 2009).

In addition to the visa, Haitians were required to deposit US$400 dollars upon arrival at the airport, which is refundable if they return within the time of their visas. The reality is Haitians often violates their visa to get a work permit which is a form of residency. Nevertheless, it is said that the process to get the money is complicated even if Haitian immigrants were to return home. This has created an outcry among Haitians in Dominica, calling it an unfair treatment of Haitian nationals. A number of Haitians have told me that Haitian immigrants have enriched the Dominican government. “Haitian money, the US$400 paid upon arrival, has contributed a great deal to the renovation of the Melville Hall Airport,” said a Haitian woman. Many Haitian migrants complain that it is unfair to pay a fee in addition to having a visa to enter the country. They are frustrated because the rules only apply to them.

Tight French immigration policies and the newly restrictive approach taken by the Dominican government to curb the flow of Haitians entering the country have severely brought a reduction on the number of Haitian nationals entering Dominica for the years 2008 and 2009, as my interviewee data suggest (See Table 1). But it can also be said that political and economic
conditions in Haiti had slightly improved, in the years preceding the earthquake of 2010. As demonstrated earlier, emigration from Haiti often coincides with negative events happening in Haiti.

The Rene Preval Administration in Haiti, which came to power in 2006, has brought some political and economic stability to the country and dramatically slowed the pace of out-migration from Haiti, specifically to Dominica. As the International Development Association and the World Bank (2009) noted, “in the period through September 2004 (Haiti’s fiscal year) [Haiti’s] economy contracted by 3.5 percent. Since then, the country has restored democracy and relative stability and has advanced in consolidating its institutional framework. Economic governance reforms have aimed to improve the legal framework, create and strengthen core public institutions, and enhance financial management processes and procedures, notably in national budget formulation, execution, and reporting.”

With an increase in government revenues and less government spending, the overall deficit of 2.5 percent of GDP in fiscal year (FY) 2004 led to a surplus of 0.2 percent in FY 2007. GDP growth resumed, reaching 3.2 percent in FY 2007. For the 2009, real GDP growth is projected at 2.0 percent, a big improvement from -3.5 percent in 2004 (IDA/World Bank 2009). The Haitian economy has made an impressive recovery in a very short period of time (Buss 2008:8). Apparently, this slight improvement has been accounted for the decline in the number of Haitians migrating to Dominica since 2005. As improvements came to the home front, less Haitians sought to migrate. In January 2010, a monumental earthquake devastated Haiti, yet there has not been any major wave of Haitian emigrants.

**A South to South Migration Pattern**

Haitian migration to Dominica demonstrates a pattern often lacking in the migration literature—south south migration. Much of the existing literature has focused on migration from south to north, whereas south—south-migration is under-researched. A recent World Bank study of country-to-country migration flows found that virtually half of the migrants from developing countries live in countries of the South (74 million); and remittances from the south are estimated to range from 10 to 29 percent of total remittances sent from developing countries in 2005 (Hujo and Piper 2007; Ratha and Shaw 2007:3). Migration from the south has been motivated by many patterns similar to south-north migration, ranging from ecological disaster and civil-conflict to economic crisis. However, the motivation that mostly stands out with Haitian migration to Dominica is the opportunity to transit to other wealthier islands and core
countries such as the United States and France. What my interviews suggest is that many Haitians settle in to work in Dominica longer than expected prior to coming. As mentioned earlier, Dominica receives Haitian migrants who are mostly in transit to more industrialized countries, a similar pattern with Central Americans using Mexico to transit to the United States (Castillo 2006). But the fact that Haitians are heading south to Dominica in large number—a two hours flight from Haiti—rather than north, in spite of its step-wise nature, reflects shifts that are occurring within international migration that the literature must take into account. Though there has long been Haitian migration to other islands in the region, large number of Haitians migrating to Dominica was virtually unheard of. Rather it was mainly to the United States Canada or neighboring Dominican Republic or Bahamas to a lesser extent. However, today it is extending further East in the Caribbean. And as this extension is occurring, it is important that it is taking into account to have a holistic understanding of Haitian migration.

**Circular Movement**

Many scholars (e.g., De Haas 2005; Vertovec 1999) and policy makers are specifically calling for circular migration, which is the movement of migrants to-and-fro between sending and receiving countries (Vertovec 2007: 4). They are advocating measures to facilitate potential benefits which include:

“a). (with reference to the interests of migrant sending states) encouraging circulation of human capital and ensuring flow of remittances for development; b). (with reference to the interests of migrant receiving states) plugging sectoral labor shortages, ensuring that temporary migrants leave, and mitigating illegal migration; and c). (with reference to employers’ interests) recruiting from a known and reliable pool of workers, retaining trained and experienced people, and keeping wages low” (Vertovec 2007: 5).

The argument is that circular migration is likely to expand “opportunities for trade and investment, reduce brain drain, by facilitating the international transfer of skills, and reduce negative social and familial consequences associated with illegal migration” (Vertovec 2007: 5-6).

Despite these positive claims, Haitian migration to Dominica does not so much involve circular movement. In fact, a number of Haitians in Dominica are well-educated and the home front could benefit from them if there were frequent circular movements. As the Dominica’s Chronicle newspaper reported, “Though most of the Haitian immigrants are engaged in low-paying jobs, some of them are highly educated or were professionals before migrating….Leaving
Haiti and taking on lower-paying jobs is a matter of survival for many émigrés.” (The Chronicle 2009). Most Haitians cannot continue their education in Dominica, sometimes due to language barrier and finance.

One Haitian woman from the Dominican village of Salisbury told me that she was almost done with university in Haiti. “My hope was to at least continue my education at a professional school, but Dominica is not like Haiti where almost in every corner one can find a professional school…. I also don’t speak English and that makes it even more difficult for me. Now, I’m just selling at the Roseau market.” These difficulties add to the crushing of expectations of Haitian migrants which is further discussed later in this thesis. Despite the difficulties facing many of them in their adopted country, returning home is an economically tough choice. Instead, what they hope for is migrating to other wealthier islands.

As we hear, Haitian migrants seldom travel between Dominica and Haiti, a dissimilarity with migratory movement in other parts of the world. In Southern Africa for instance, Crush and Williams (2005) found that the majority of migrants’ border crossing remain circular—migrants pay frequent visit to their home countries. And in the United States, Haitian immigrants are so much involved in activities happening at the home front (Laguerre 1998: p.160).

A few factors can explain Haitians’ lack of circular movements among in Dominica: first, there is no direct flight from Dominica to Haiti. Haitian nationals must first travel to the Dominican Republic to get to Haiti. I was told that in the early 2000s, Western Airlines, which no longer functions, had direct flights servicing Port au Prince and Dominica. But the flight was later suspended for unknown reasons. Today, LIAT, one of the Caribbean airline carriers, dominates the market. However, LIAT does not service Haiti, but the Dominican Republic. Haitians must go to the Dominican Republic to board LIAT for Dominica.

Another reason for this lack of circular movement is the difficulty for Haitian nationals to visit home. Many interviewed Haitians told me that the process of crossing through the Dominican Republic to Haiti is difficult and time consuming. They must send their passport to the Dominican Embassy in Haiti for a visa to allow them to cross. That process, I was told, usually costs around US$300 dollars, an amount that many Haitian migrants admit they do not have due to economic hardship in Dominica. And if their passport is expired, they must send it to either Haiti or to the Haitian Embassy in Chicago for renewal. There is a Haitian Embassy in neighboring Martinique but it refuses to renew passports for Haitian nationals outside of the French Departments.
Finally, the airline fare is a major impediment to Haitian circular movement. Many Haitians complain that the air ticket is too expensive relative to their economic circumstance. LIAT fare can vary between $1,500 and $2500EC (Eastern Caribbean currency) or US$700 to US$900 dollars, a sum that could take many weeks for Haitian migrants to earn in Dominica. In addition to that, there is the traveling cost from the Dominican Republic to cross the border into Haiti. These factors appear to be the main reasons behind the lack of circular movements. What can be said, however is that with little circular movements comes little brain circulation that could benefit both the source and receiving country.

“Brain circulation” refers to a situation in which educated immigrants invest in their home countries or when knowledge moves back and forth between the sending and receiving country (Saxenian 2005:36). The whole idea behind this concept in the global South is for nationals to venture out and obtain some socially produced cutting-edge knowledge, genius, and talent (i.e., economic capital); gain high compensation for mobilizing that intellect (i.e., economic capital); penetrate social and business networks to sustain further access (i.e., social capital); then bring some of this complex of capital back to their homeland via different modalities (Patterson 2007: 3). Among Haitian immigrants in Dominica, however, there exists little brain circulation. Unlike Haitians immigrants in the United States and Canada who return to Haiti to help with their expertise and open businesses, brain circulation appears to be non-existent among the interviewed Haitians in Dominica. This is evident in the very small number of them that visited Haiti (See Table 5). This is not a surprise since Haitian migrants in Dominica are mostly temporary residents. This is a similar case with Africa, where Rubin Patterson finds that brain circulation has yet to take place among African transnationals (Patterson 2007:5). However, whereas circular movements and brain circulation are not prominent among Haitian nationals in Dominica, their transnational relationship with the home land is generally strong.

**Transnationalism**

Transnationalism has been broadly defined as “multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states. It describes a condition in which, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they represent), certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified” (Vertovec 1999: 1). In the Caribbean, Thomas-Hope (2002) notes that the transnational nature of families and households are important elements in the significance and impact of out-migration.
Transnationalism can be analyzed through various domains such as economics, political, social, and cultural life (Levitt and Jaworsky: 2007). Economically, transnationalism is often studied via remittances that migrants send home. Political transnational practices involve electoral participation, political party associations, parties or campaigns in two different countries and lobbying the authorities of one country to influence its policies toward another. Socially, transnationalism involves transformation or changes in social life. Migrants’ cultural transnational practice encompasses the adoption or mixing of culture with the host society (Levitt and Jaworsky: 2007). Surely Haitian migrants have been involved one way or another in various domains of transnational activities. However, the most notable practices of transnationalism are in the economic and social realms.

The primary way Haitians migrants engage in transnationalism is via remittances. One Haitian woman who lives in Trafalgar, southwest Dominica, told me that “[she] often manages to send some money to her family in Haiti regardless how tough things are in Dominica.” Another Haitian woman had told me that she sends money to both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. “I send money to my children in the Dominican Republic and to my mother who is in Haiti.” This illustrates how home to many Haitians consists of both Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Out of 42 interviewed Haitians, 40 had admitted sending money to Haiti to family and friends via money transfers such as Western Union and Unitransfer which charge them a high fee to do so. Out of the remaining two Haitians who did not send money, one had just arrived to Dominica and not been working yet. The other migrant has most of her close families living in the Dominican Republic, and sends money instead to the Dominican Republic. This is not a surprise since the majority of Haitians living in Dominica were first in the Dominican Republic.

Table 5: Connection with the home land among interviewed Haitians, N=42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Send Money to relatives in Haiti</th>
<th>40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send money to relatives in the Dominican Rep.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive Money from Relatives in Haiti</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive Money from relatives abroad</td>
<td>U.S: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DR: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martinique: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guadeloupe: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Haiti</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay in touch with Haiti (phone, text message, music/radio program)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Though often missing in the migration literature and not recorded in sending country’s economy, goods and services migrants send home are also a form of remittances, not just cash. As Choucri (1986) points out, the impacts of remittances on sending countries are traced almost exclusively in formal recognized effects on the real economy, productivity, and output. Yet the hidden economy shapes many parameters of economic activity.

As part of remittances sent to their families, a number of Haitian migrants have mentioned school supplies, such as notebooks and pens, and items such as clothes that they find on sale. These items are often sent when friends or relatives travel to Haiti. There is no shipping freight servicing Dominica and Haiti. Reverse remittances, another rarely mentioned link in the migration literature, also happen when migrants travel to Haiti. Items such as CDs of Haitian music, Haitian rums and medicines are often brought back to the receiving country. However, these activities are very minimal since circular movement among Haitian immigrants is very low in Dominica, according to my interview data.

Another way Haitian migrants have forged and sustained multi-stranded social relations is via phone calls. Migrants frequently call Haiti to be informed about their relatives and friends. As one woman from Goodwill told to me, “I call Haiti sometimes four times a day to talk with my family.” Another woman from Salisbury said to me “I often call twice a day to check if everything is fine with my family. I miss my family and calling is the closest I can get to them.” Telephone companies such as Digicel have made it even easier for Haitian migrants to call home. Digicel often comes with promotions on certain days and hours that provide free minutes for anyone calling Haiti. This exemplifies the increasing role of transnational companies in facilitating transnationalism among immigrant groups. This level of sustained ties and maintained communication with the homeland is not unusual among wide range of immigrant groups.

For Ecuadoran migration to New York and Spain, for instance, Brad Jokisch and Jason Pribilsky (2002) have found a number of linkages and networks connecting immigrants with the home front. Ecuadorian migrants are linked with their villages via remittances, letters, audio, and videotapes, and community-wide directives. Courier services such as the Delgado has more than 20 branches in metropolitan New York and even more in south-central Ecuador linking the sending and receiving country together. Delgado’ services also include a news service which directly broadcast news from Ecuador (Jokisch & Pribilsky 2002). Likewise, in Spain, Jokisch and Pribilsky (2002) found that Locutorios (phone offices) and Ecuadorian banks have become
centered of Ecuadorian transnationalism. Locutorios offers fax, money transfer, telephone, and email services for Ecuadorians throughout Spain to connect with the home front. Ecuadorian banks have also worked in collaboration with Spanish banks in Spain where Ecuadorian migrants are allowed to transfer money directly to their account in Ecuador. Clearly, ties with the homeland are not uncommon, and they’ve been fostered by transnational companies. As communicated in Table 5 above, Haitian migrants have engaged in transnationalism not only via money transfer and telephone calls, but also text messages and music. Text messages are mostly used among the younger Haitians. Music and radio talk shows are other ways migrants stay connected with the home front. “I listen to the radio every day to know what’s going on in Haiti. There are times for news and time for Kompa (Haitian music)” said one Haitian man from Delices. Radio signals coming from neighboring islands also help some Haitians migrants to stay connected with Haiti. Some Haitians who live on the east coast of Dominica are able to receive radio signals coming from the Haitian community in Martinique and Guadeloupe. They are able to listen to the news and other programs that sometimes broadcast live from Haiti. Television broadcasting in Dominica however doesn’t really help in fostering transnationalism among the Haitians in the country. Unless some major news events are dominating the situation in Haiti, televisions stations in Dominica dedicate little coverage to events happening in Haiti despite a large number of Haitians living in the country. It is also easier and cheaper for Haitians to buy air time on radio than television in Dominica. This is understandable as television is only accessible through cable service in Dominica. There is no free television channel without cable. Also, there is no newspaper coming out of the Haitian community. This reflects the fact that a large number of Haitian migrants to Dominica is very recent, beginning in the early 2000s. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Haitian community media is at a nascent stage. Nevertheless, the small community media (mostly radio talk shows) that exist play an important role in the acculturation of Haitian migrants. As Laguerre (1998: 129) indicates, community media play a crucial role in the construction of diasporic citizenship and identity. They link the mainland with migrants in their host society. They are created to interconnect various diasporic sites to each other and to the mainland. In short they reflect the transnationality of the diasporic citizens. In the United States, for instance, the community media (newspaper, radio, television) play a major role in shaping Haitian public opinion. The ideas they promulgate project models of democracy for Haiti based on or influenced by American ideas and ideals (Laguerre
What can be said is that though important, the community media within the Haitian community in Dominica is yet to expand compared to Laguerre’s observations for the US above. The few Haitian businesses in Dominica, primarily the barber shops and restaurants, also help in fostering transnationalism with the homeland. In Haitians’ barbershops and restaurants around Roseau, Haitians often come to talk about politics and social issues, or musical bands or anything dominating both Haiti and Dominica. There they share news from Haiti and Dominica. There they also share information about the next boats smuggling Haitians to neighboring islands or sinking boats attempting to reach neighboring islands with Haitian migrants. It is also in these social gatherings that new Haitian arrivals to Dominica often have a better sense of life in their adopted country. As a young Haitian man told me at a barbershop, “I knew nothing about Dominica when I first came, but I learn how to manage my ways with help from group of guys gathering at the barbershops.”

Transnational businesses are known to play a crucial part in the social life of migrants. Transnational businesses are not simply involved in making a profit, but also an archive where the immigrants’ memory of their country is stored (Laguerre 1998:112). In the United States, for instance, Laguerre (1998: 123-124) notes that the Haitian stores often serve for the community a meeting place, a similar pattern with the above mentioned. Even if one does not want to buy anything, one goes there to say hello to the manager and engage in a bit of gossip. The store owner is the chief interpreter of news for passerby. People come to tell him what they have heard, and he synthesizes all the information he has received from various sources, produces his own interpretation, and shares it with whoever asks for news.

The orientation of Haitian migrants toward the homeland is not incompatible with integration into the Dominican culture. My data from the interviewed Dominicans reflects no opposition towards Haitian migrants’ transnationalism. In fact, a number of Dominicans said that they appreciate the Haitians for not forgetting the home front (See Table 8), though there are concerns with remittances Haitians send home. Nevertheless, this lack of incompatibility is partly due to the linguistic and colonial history Haitians and Dominicans share that have facilitated the integration and acculturation process. This finding is clearly contrary to the bias in the migration debate that claimed that “orientation of migrants towards their countries of origin is an indication of the lack of social and economic integration in the receiving countries’ society” (De Haas 2005: 1275). Haitian immigrants in Dominica suggest that paying loyalty to the home front is not necessarily in conflict with good citizenship in their new country.
Economic contributions of Haitians in Dominica

Haitians contribute more to agriculture than any other economic sector. In March 8, 2010, The Sun, one of the leading newspapers in Dominica, carried a headline “Haitians take over farming.” Historically, agriculture has been the most important sectors of Dominica’s economy. In fact, agriculture is implied in the country national symbol, “Apres Bondie C’est la Ter” (after God is the land). And in the Dominican flag, the black stripe is a symbol of the rich black soil of the island, upon which agriculture is based. In 1974, Dominica signed the Lome Convention, a treaty signed between the European Community and many of their former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP). Under that this treaty, Dominica enjoyed the preferential treatment of many commodities, primarily bananas, exported to the European Community. However, changes in the 1990s threatened the stability provided by the region’s banana industry. One of the changes involved the deepening of the EU, with the creation of the Single European Market (SEM) in 1993, which changed the conditions under which ACP’s exports, particularly bananas, entered the EU. The SEM ended the 12 separate systems under which individual EC states could import bananas from former colonies as institutionalized in the Lome Convention (Klak et al., 2010). These changes have brought a decrease in agricultural output, and accelerated the already growing number of Dominicans emigrating.

For instance, between 1959 and 1962, it is estimated that 14% of Dominica’s population of 61,783 migrated to the United Kingdom. The ravages of hurricane David in 1979 further accelerated the exodus process from the island. Between 1981 and 1993, one quarter of the population left the island, mainly for the United States and Canada (Sorhaindo and Pattullo 2009: p. vi). Dominica has more of its citizens living abroad than inside the country. It is thought that up to 200,000 adult Dominicans live outside the country, while the population on the island itself is only 70,000 (Sorhaindo and Pattullo 2009: p. vi). It is under these circumstances that Haitians have mostly been encouraged to fill in the void left behind by emigrating Dominicans. There has long been a program in place to bring in Haitian migrant workers to work in Dominican agriculture. According to Mathew Leblanc, the Labor Commissioner, there were talks since the Eugenia Charles Administration in the 1980s to bring Haitian workers to the country in an attempt to address the labor shortage in agriculture. But there wasn’t any concrete decision, nor was there any great wave of Haitians coming at the time. The few Haitians who came were mostly involved in art and sculptural work according to Leblanc. Large number of Haitians began to come well after Eugenia Charles, in the early 2000s. Currently, there is a
special program in place that allows Dominican farmers to bring in Haitian migrant workers to help revive the agricultural sector. A license is given to those Dominicans farmers to facilitate the process (Leblanc 2009).

And indeed Haitian migrants have revived the agricultural sector of Dominica. As suggested by my interviewees in the Table 6 below, more Haitian nationals are working in agriculture than any other sectors in the country. It must be said that many of my interviewed Haitians have more than one job, something that is common for immigrants and people across Dominica. However, agriculture remains the most permanent job. On farms across the country, in the Roseau market and almost every street corner in Roseau, Haitians are aggressively producing and selling agricultural produce. Manley James, Technical Officer (Extension) of the Ministry of Agriculture says many large farms on the island now depend solely on Haitians for labour as locals are no longer interested in farming (The Sun 2010).

Table 6: Employment of interviewed Haitian migrants, N=42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; Government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(roadside cleaning)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market and Street Vendors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service sector (hotel, bar,</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restaurant, maid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an interview with The Chronicle, a Dominican newspaper, Mr Leblanc also acknowledges the economic contributions of Haitians in Dominica. “Haitians [have been] a reliable source of labor for the agricultural sector. Our young people appeared to have lost interest in farming and many of the farms were being abandoned. Deforestation was taking place. Local farmers were complaining about not being able to get a reliable labor force. The Haitian immigrants were allowed to come in to fill in that fault that was created” (Chronicle 2009). In a later interview, the Labor Commissioner further acknowledged to me that out of all the Haitians who have migrated to Dominica, 50% of them are in agriculture, 20% of them work in construction, and the rest 30% are self employed—restaurant owners, vendors at the market, nurses, etc…(Labor Division 2009).
What is also evident in these discussions is the acknowledgement and a sense of appreciation for the economic contributions of Haitians on the island. In fact, each of the 25 interviewed Dominicans, characterized Haitians migrants as hard working and said that the work they do is often well done. All of them have acknowledged the socio-economic contribution of Haitian migrants. A number of Dominicans have said to me without the presence of the Haitians, the agriculture sector of the country, which accounts for 16.6% of economic activity in 2007, would practically collapse. Also reflected here is a mutual dependency. Dominica heavily depends on Haitian migrant labor to sustain its agricultural sector, and Haitians depend on Dominica either in search of economic security, political freedom, or transition to other wealthier Caribbean islands or the global North.

An interesting comparison is with the Braceros program that brought Mexican workers to the agricultural sector in the United States during World War II to replace the labor shortage of US males who went to fight in the war. This program also started a pattern of mutual dependency, but eventually led to this current immigration struggle in the United States as the Mexican population is perceived as of a lower class, doing the hardest work for the least pay. With that said, one might ask is there a similar pattern among Haitians. As mentioned earlier, Haitian migration to Dominica is too recent for any in-depth studies. What can be said, however, is that the relation between the two people is developing with a strong acknowledgement of Haitian migrants’ economic contributions.

Haitians have re-enlivened the Roseau market. As one Dominican man in Roseau told me, “At one point in time, I could get vegetable at the Roseau market only on Friday and Saturday. Now, with the Haitians I get produce from the market every day.” Haitian vendors sell various produce, such as passion fruit, papaya, lettuce, root crop commodities etc, as demonstrated in the picture below. In addition, they pay a fee to the local authorities. In order for vendors to occupy
a spot at the Roseau market or along the roadsides in Roseau, a fee of $5 E.C per day is applied, a source of revenue for the town. The more vendors the town has selling at the market place or along the roadsides in Roseau, the greater are the tax revenues. These findings clearly challenge some of the literature on the informal sector, which claims that those working in the informal sector do not pay taxes.

In their criticism against the informal sector, De Soto (1989), Portes, Castells, and Benton (1989: p12) and Loayza (1996) from the World Bank (to name a few), claim that:

“The informal sector does not comply with government imposed taxes and regulations. It arises when excessive taxes are imposed by governments that lack the capabilities to enforce compliance. An excessive regulatory system makes the formal economy unattractive by imposing high entry costs to legality—through license fees and registration requirements—and high costs to remain legal through taxes and red tapes” (De Soto 1989; and Loayza 1996).

What these authors fail to realize is that there are a variety of taxes imposed on street workers as we see with Haitian migrants selling at the Roseau market in Dominica. Additionally, the informal sector is necessary. It is not just a livelihood, but also a survival strategy for many people.

Other economic contributions of Haitian immigrants have been in the form of rental incomes and social security payments. Due to the mass exodus of Dominicans from the island, a large number of houses have become vacant in Dominica. Haitian migrants, however, have reduced the level of vacancies and provided a source of income to many Dominican landlords.

Additionally, an increase in housing occupancy means more business for Domlec, Dominica’s Electricity Company, and to some degree the Cable Television Company. In the process of getting electric and media services, migrants bring a source of revenues for the utility and service companies in the country. Based upon my interviews, Haitians are concerned with the high cost of electricity on the island. As one Haitian man from Roseau said “I find it unfair to pay $200EC every month for electricity…” Statements such as this tell us that Haitian migrants have shared the burden of high cost of living in Dominica, and has helped circulate money throughout the island’s economy.

Haitian migrants have also contributed to the economic well-being of Dominica via taxes. All interviewed Haitians noted that there is a sale tax in virtually everything they purchase or for the services they get. They also pay income tax depending on their occupation. For instance, Haitians who sells at the Roseau market do not pay income taxes, except for the $5 EC fee. But
one woman who works at a hotel told me that for every $300EC she earns, $10.00EC goes towards taxes. A number of Haitians also told me that they pay social security. According to Dominica’s social security department (2009),

“The social security system is designed to partially replace or supplement income lost by insured individuals during periods of sickness, maternity, employment injury, and old age. When an insured person dies, provisions are also made to pay a pension to the eligible spouse and children. In the absence of an eligible spouse and children, surviving parents or grandparents over the age of 60 stand to qualify for such benefits.”

Out of 42 interviewed Haitians, 29 admitted paying social security. Out of the 13 remaining who had said no, five of them were street vendors (self employed), four were unemployed, and the rest claimed they were not covered by their Dominican employers or their Dominican employers did not collect social security out of their pay checks. They were paid cash for their work.

Haitian migrants’ contributions to social security is important to Dominica. Dominica is not only dealing with mass emigration but also an aging population. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2009), 12.2 percent of the population is over the ages of 60 or older. This figure is a concern not only because the country has a small population, but also the younger population is emigrating in greater numbers, causing the elders to be on their own. As the elderly population comes to retire, a younger generation is needed to fund the country’s social security system. However, with the younger generation increasingly leaving the country, Haitian migrants have helped fill the void, providing a source of income for the government to sustain the country’s aging population and other services.

In fact, according to McArthy Marie, an Economist at the Dominica State College, there have been talks on how to incorporate Haitian nationals as members of the Dominica Credit Union. The concern is that saving is decreasing as the aging Dominican population withdraws its money. The Credit Union sees the younger Haitian population as a possible market. However, to be a member of the Credit Union, one must be a Dominican citizen. The majority of Haitians are not citizens (Marie 2009). They only have a work permit as proof of being legal in the country. It remains unclear whether there have been any lobbying efforts to change the rules for Haitian nationals to become members. Haitian migrants’ contributions to the Dominican economy are many. As relations between the two people continue to develop, the economic contributions of migrants is also expanding.
Social contributions of Haitian migrants in Dominica

Haitian migrants have also contributed socially and culturally to the island. One of the recurrent themes from the 25 interviewed Dominicans is the love for Haitian music. As one Dominican construction worker from La Plaine said to me “I love Haitian music. They always send a message of consolation for people…and that helps a lot when I feel discouraged in life.” A government worker had also told me

“Kompa (the name for Haitian music) has its followers in Dominica. Some radio broadcasters and DJs are in love with Haitian music. In 1997, during the World Creole Music Festival, Tabou Combo (one of the Haitian bands that performed at the festival) had kept the crowd up until 6:30 the next morning…something that had never happened at the World Creole Festival.”

Each year during the World Music Creole Festival—an event that attracts the most renowned musical groups and soloists from the Creole-speaking world in Dominica—both Haitians and Dominicans gather to dance, celebrate and socialize. Major Haitian musical bands and artists such as T-Vice, Zenglen, Sweet Micky, Djakout Mizik, Tabou Combo, and Wyclef Jean from Haiti have been invited to perform. In other occasions such as Haitian Flag day on May 18, both Haitians and Dominicans, sometimes along with some government officials, join to celebrate the event.

A number of Dominicans interviewees have also told me that they love Haitian food. Haitian food is not so different with other Caribbean islands, but Haitian cuisine is closely related to Creole and French cuisines. The flavor of strong pepper can be found in many Haitian dishes—such as rice djon-djon or legume to name a few—making it different from other islands. “I love Haitian food, especially the legumes (a combination of vegetable),” said a Dominican woman from Mount Daniel. A Haitian restaurant owner has also confirmed to me his Dominican clients’ love for Haitian food. “…though I serve a lot of Haitian customers who come to sell at the market in Roseau, a large number of my clients are Dominicans…They love the food…I have so many clients but I don’t have a big place to accommodate all of them.”

Evident here is a sense of the appreciation towards Haitians’ culture and the relatively positive development between the two people. Though there are differences in the relationship as we’ll
see later, the relationship between Dominicans and Haitians does not reflect widespread fear of being swamped by fellow Caribbean people, a product of the nationalist era that is evident today in many parts of the Caribbean (Honychurch 2003). Rather, the relationship reflects more of a restricted anti immigration policy which is not at odds with globalization and global skills markets as well as local economic development needs. “Though many migrants-receiving countries do not explicitly or implicitly recognize the value of immigrants to their own future national, regional and local economic development, and though migrants are commonly viewed by states and citizenries as a threat to their economic and social interests” (Crush & Frayne 2007: 2), my data for Dominica suggest more of a positive, something that’s worth contributing to the literature on Haitian migration.

My interviews also suggest that Haitians immigrants are not fully engaged in Dominican politics and other civic organizations. Out of the 42 interviewed Haitians none of them indicated any political affiliation. Five expressed religious affiliation and three expressed involvement with a civic organization (see Table 7). Out of the three Haitians who expressed affiliation with a civic organization, one of them is the President of the Haitian-Dominican Association, who describes his role as representing the Haitian community in Dominica. To what extent greater political participation of Haitians would have influence the relationship remains unknown. Nonetheless, it is no surprise that political affiliation among Haitian migrants is very low. As mentioned earlier, the majority of Haitians are not only a transient population but also non-citizens.

Table 7: Interviewed Haitians Social Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church Engagement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Engagement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of my interviewed Haitians are also aware of the warm welcome received in Dominica. A number of them have expressed to me their gratitude for the hospitality received in the
Dominican society as well as the peace of mind they feel. As one Haitian woman said to me, “I have nothing against Dominicans. They are nice people and Dominica is quiet. I go to a Dominican church. The people from the church often check on me to see if everything is fine. In fact, the godmother of my boy is a Dominican woman from the church…” The vast majority of interviewed Haitians said that no one bothers them. There again, we must not overlook the small scale of this study as it doesn’t necessarily reflect the Haitian population as a whole.

Table 8: Interviewed Haitian Perceptions of the Dominican Society N: 42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Un- Favorable</th>
<th>Mixed Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrative Comments</td>
<td>“Dominicans are nice, friendly, and peaceful.”</td>
<td>“Haitians are treated like animals here”</td>
<td>“Dominicans are nice but Haitians are not really treated well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, the majority of interviewed Haitians have characterized Dominicans as friendly and peaceful. Dominicans are ready to help them whenever they need help. One Haitian living in Delices told me that her Dominican neighbors always assist her whenever she needs help. Her neighbors often provide her with local provisions so that she doesn’t go hungry. When she is sick, her Dominican neighbors even bring her bush medicines to drink. They often check on her to see if everything is fine. If she ever turns to them for help, she says she would get more help than needed. Clearly, this might be a personality issue. But it deserves to be taken into account after hearing similar stories from other Haitians.

On another occasion, a Haitian woman who worked as a maid for a Dominican family describes Dominicans as nice and friendly people. “My husband was in Dominica by himself while I was in the Dominican Republic for 11 years. A Dominican Pastor helped him secure a visa for me so that I could join him. When I first came to Dominica, I was working for a Haitian employer, but I did not feel comfortable. The boss would often give me a hard time, making me do work that he himself did not want to do even though I wasn’t working for a lot of money. After a few months, I left the job for another one I found as a maid at a Dominican’s house. I have no complaints about the Dominican family. They treat me very well….”
This story is similar to that of many immigrant groups. The new arrival group of immigrants often faced harsh treatments, prejudice and discrimination from those who had come earlier, forgetting if they themselves were immigrants. What is also apparent here is the relationship between migration and identity. Whereas elsewhere in the region a negative identity is associated with Haitian immigrants, this has yet to fully develop in Dominica. This further explains how migrants acquired different identity depending on their geographical location. As mentioned earlier, there are multiple approaches to identity and multiple aspects of identity may also be identified (Schwartz, Montgomery and Briones 2006). According to Hedberg and Kepsu (2008: 95), “Identities change in a process of shifting relations towards groups and persons, which influence a migrant’s identification with the nation-state and the host society. Identity construction thus occurs within the context of a person’s self-definition and membership of a group, and in relation to other individual and groups.” The fact that a majority of interviewed Haitian immigrants in Dominica have expressed a positive view of Dominican society, and the fact that Haitians have been characterized by most Dominicans as hard working folks and contributors to the social and economic well-being of the country reflect how migrants’ identity is constructed over time and geographical location.

The identity immigrants acquired from the receiving country is often shaped by racial ideology and pre-conceived notions. For instance, in the Dominican Republic, the way Haitian migrants have been characterized is for the most part rooted in the racial history between the two countries. Citizens of the Dominicans Republic have perceived themselves as related to white Europeans and thus superior to Haitian immigrants because of their African heritage. Intensifying this racial ideology is the fact that Haiti once occupied the entire island of Hispaniola for over twenty years. Many citizens of the Dominican Republic regard this history as a disgrace and thus allow it to shape not only political relations between the two countries but also individual relations and the identity Haitians acquired.

In the United States, the identity that Haitian immigrants acquire is also engrained in the racial ideology that has characterized relations between the two countries for over two centuries. The abolition of slavery in Saint Domingue (former Haiti), which was a blow to the slave system in the western hemisphere, including the United States, is reflected on the identity Haitian immigrants acquired (See Lawless 1992: 38-48). The end to slavery brought about by the Haitian Revolution to France’s richest colony was seen as a threat to both global capital and what has
long been perceived as the superior race. Clearly the identity Haitians acquire has been shaped by various forces, including the one from Dominica where it is unfolding more positively.

**Concerns about Haitian Dominican relationship**

There are various concerns that might shift the overall relationship from the positive to negative. First, Dominica is a country of emigration. As pointed out earlier, Dominica has many more of its citizens living outside of the country than within. This mass emigration means the loss of tax revenues for the government and the likelihood of impairing vibrant sectors, such as agriculture, of the country’s economy. Though one can also argue the opposite, the loss of human capital can hold back economic growth (GDP). As Lindsay Lowell and Allan Findlay (2001: 6) indicate, “emigration can slow economic growth and adversely affects those who remain. As a consequence, poverty and inequality are likely to increase.” Therefore, it can be said that Haitian migrants are not really seen as a threat in Dominica because of the labor shortage that exists on the island. There is a need for human capital. Haitian migrants contribute tax revenues for the government as the country’s population shrinking. Relations with Haitians migrants may have been different if so many Dominicans did not emigrate.

Secondly, the fact that Haitian migrants are a transient population may partly explain these positively developing stories. Haitian migrants may not be vying for the same amount of resources as elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere where they intend to stay. In the Dominican Republic and The Bahamas, for instance, where Haitian migrants have been permanently settled for over half a century, there is the notion that Haitians migrants are draining resources. Haitian nationals are “blamed for every social and medical ill imaginable” (Fielding, et al. 2008: 39). There again, relations could have been different if the majority of Haitians living inside Dominica were not a transient population with a recent migration history.

There are also other factors that help explain the integration of both Haitians and Dominicans. They both share a Creole based language and a colonial history from France. The culture is similar. The food staples are familiar and even the music has the same African roots. Clearly, these similarities could to some extent explain these positive developments. We should not also underestimate the fact that people tend to get along better when there is commonalities. How different or similar migrants are with their host society often impact the reception they receive and the way they assimilate.

My interviews suggest that the level of intolerance and animosity towards Haitian immigrants is very low compared to what the literature tells us about the treatment of Haitians elsewhere in the
region. Out of 25 interviewed Dominicans, 21 expressed a favorable view about Haitians living in the country. But of course one must take into account the limited size of my sample. As mentioned earlier, it is representative of neither the entire Haitian nor the Dominican population. Additionally there is a slight difference in perception among locations in the country. In Roseau, for instance, it appears that perceptions of Haitians are harsher compared to the countryside. This might be a result of high competition between Haitian and Dominican vendors to sell their goods. Nonetheless, major positive trends seem to be unfolding.

The Labor Commissioner told me that, “…Haitians are not characterized as drug dealers, they do not steal….Haitians are incorporated into the school system in the country. Neither they nor their children are deprived of education as long as they are in Dominica. They are required to bring their children to school, provide access to health care and everything that Dominicans have access to. Haitian migrants’ families are also allowed to join them if they choose to settle.” (Leblanc: 2009). However, this is not to say that there aren’t differences between the two people. In fact both Haitians and Dominicans have expressed discontent in the relation as Table 7 and 8 indicate.

Table 8: Dominicans’ Perceptions of Haitians, N: 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive n=21</th>
<th>Most commonly heard comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Haitians are very good and hard working people. They come to work, not to disturb anybody or do crimes.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Haitians keep the Roseau market running. We can get any produce we want at the market now with the Haitians.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Agriculture now improves more than 50% due to the presence of the Haitians.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Haitians men work hard to take care take care their family. They don’t abandon their family.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skepticism n=4</th>
<th>“We welcome the Haitians but we can’t forget the voodoo they practice”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Haitians leave the country without notifying their employers”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Haitians try to avoid any contact with immigration”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Gender | Male: 14 | Female: 11 |

Inconsistencies in the relationship

Despite the positively developing picture, there are issues between Haitians and Dominicans to be addressed. As demonstrated in Table 7 and 8 above, both Haitians and Dominicans have expressed trepidation over the relationship. Whereas the majority of Haitians has said to me no
one bothers them, others have expressed the contrary. They have said that a number of Dominicans are jealous of them when they harvest food. They claim that some Dominicans have sometimes cursed them out. A number of Haitians have said that a number of their Dominican employers have sometimes exploited them, refusing to pay them for their labor. A Haitian man who works for a Dominican patron told me that:

He [the patron] always asks me to stay longer after my regular hours. He would even ask me to report to work when I’m not scheduled to work. Yet, he refuses to pay me for the extra time that I work. I don’t like conflict. I refuse to argue with him for my money. In addition, finding another job is not easy in a small country like Dominica. However, my wife is more aggressive. She wants me home at a certain time, especially when she knows that I don’t get paid fairly for the time I work. She would pick up the phone and call my boss and tell him very straightforward that it’s time for me to come home, or else she would come and drag me from the field. And she had done that before. My boss never dare says anything because he knows it is difficult to find another guy like me. He also knows that he is abusing me.

Here, we see not just an example of the differences that exist in the relationship between Haitians and Dominicans, but also the dilemma and the sense of fear that often characterize some immigrants groups in their adopted country. Some immigrants are afraid of losing their job, especially when family is depending on them for remittances. Therefore, they think that they should quietly endure an exploitative relationship.

Similar examples can be found in Caroline Wanjiku Kihato’s work with migrants in Johannesburg, South Africa. She finds that in South Africa, other Sub-Saharan African migrants often tolerate abuses in order to access basic materials goods or a job. They rather silently endure the often terrible consequences just to earn a living (Kihato 2007). This is of course not true for all immigrant people, as hinted out in the case of the Haitian man’s wife. She is more aggressive and willing to confront any abusive relationship.

Many Haitians have also expressed to me that some of their Dominican employers have refused to renew their work permit for them. Legally, in order for Haitian nationals to be granted a work permit in Dominica, they must have a Dominican employer to accompany them to the Labor Division Office so that permits can be issued. A large number of Haitians had told me that many Dominican employers take the opportunity to exert influence, dominance and authority over them as a way of showing that they have the power to do anything in the relationship. Haitians see this form of dominance as discrimination. Haitians would like the government to put an end to this so that they don’t have to go through their employers to secure their work permit. At the
Roseau market, a number of Haitians told me their merchandise has been confiscated in numerous occasions by the police despite having a permit to sell there. This appears to be an abuse of power by the authorities. However, many Haitians don’t see it as abuse of power but discrimination against them. They complain it is only their merchandise that has been confiscated, not the merchandise of Dominican vendors.

Remittances are also becoming an issue in Dominica. There are concerns even among some government officials about remittances Haitian nationals send to Haiti. In fact, it is believed that data on the amount of remittances sent to Haiti are not made public mainly to avoid uproar among some Dominican citizens around the country. I learned that three to five years ago, the amount of remittances Haitians sent home was made public, and it created an outcry throughout the country. Many Dominicans complained that Haitians are draining the country of its money. A Haitian street vendor told me that despite having a permit to sell at the tourist market in Roseau, he is constantly being denied access partly because of money he sometimes sends to Haiti. He once went to the city administrative office to prove that he is legal to sell at the market; a political figure told him that “he sends all the money he earns to Haiti, why should he be granted a permit to sell at the tourist market to further exploit Dominica of its money?” At the Roseau market some Dominicans have also expressed discontent towards remittances Haitian migrants send home. “That’s enough, Dominica is not a big and rich country…” said one Dominican woman (The Chronicle 2009).

It is ironic that while some Dominicans might not like the idea of Haitians sending money back home, others welcome it. One Dominican man from Roseau had said to me “I appreciate the Haitians because they take care of their folks back home. Haitians know they must take care of the family they left behind.”

While Haitians do send money to relatives in Haiti, some of them have also received money from relatives living in the United States. Seven (7) Haitians told me that they received money from family and friends in the United States to help them with their expenses in Dominica. One Haitian woman said to me that her relatives in the U.S have often sent her money which she uses to pay towards utility costs in Dominica. This suggests that money is not only leaving Dominica for Haiti, but also coming in as a result of the many Haitians who receive remittances from family and friends abroad. Nevertheless, this reflects that jalousies about remittances are legion around the world.
Another instance which suggests there are contradictions and differences in the relationship between Haitians and Dominican occurred at the Melville Hall Airport, Dominica’s main airport. On two occasions during the week of February 17, 2006, Haitian nationals on board a LIAT flight at the airport were asked to identify themselves or be immediately returned on the outbound flight to Antigua where the flight originated. The action of the immigration authorities prompted LIAT General Manager, Gerald Cools Latigue to take action. He called for a clear government policy on Haitian visitors to Dominica. In an interview with local reporters, Latigue made it clear that the action of the immigration officers was a huge embarrassment for LIAT. He further said that the Haitians deserve better treatment. They are not cattle, he said. In opposition to the treatment of the Haitian nationals, Latigue informed his staff to refuse selling tickets until there was a clear policy, an action that brought a decline in taxes revenues collected at the airport (TheDominican.net 2006). Clearly, these examples have demonstrated that the relationship could have been better.

Other Dominicans have also expressed to me their discontent with the presence of Haitians immigrants. As one Dominican woman said during my fieldwork, “there are too many Haitians on the island. We have enough!” This brings up issues of nationalism and territoriality. It can be said that nationalism in Dominica comes from a sense of colonial heritage and strong tie to the land. And thus, Haitian presence might be to some a threat to self-identity. But clearly, this reflects the contention surrounding international migration. On one hand, we find those who benefit from the labor of immigrants; and on the other hand, there are those who feel that their interests are threatened.

One of the main worries many Dominicans have expressed about Haitian migrants is that they are bringing vodou to the island. Despite some cultural similarities between the two people, vodou is arguably the main reason that Dominicans fear Haitians (Personal Communication from the field 2010). Vodou has been characterized as part of Haitian identity. Some people even believe that the Haitian Revolution was successful mainly because of vodou. Thus, some Dominicans fear that Dominica will become a land of vodou practice with the many Haitians migrants living on the island. In early June 2009, while I was conducting this research, I witnessed a crowd of people gathering around two female Dominican Soo Coo Yahs (witches) in Roseau. With all the mysticism involved, it happened that the Soo Coo Yahs, as they are known in Dominica’s Creole, could not pass each other on the street because they happened to pass on the wrong side of the road. That created a scene where hundreds of people gathered to watch.
Both Haitians and Dominicans had said to me that if these Soo Coo Yahs women were Haitian nationals, there would have been a major outcry in the country over Haitians bringing witchcraft and vodoo to the island.

One might question why Dominicans perceive Haitians association with vodou as a problem and not of Dominican nationals. Part of the reason could be derived from the fact that vodou has a longer history in Haiti. It is deeply embedded in Haitian culture. Before the brutal slave rebellion against the French in 1791 in Saint Domingue (former Haiti), a vodou ceremony was organized to give the last instruction (C.L.R James 1980: 87). So clearly vodou has a deep-seated history in Haiti than in Dominica. What is evident here is that the relationship has inconsistencies. As Crush and Frayne (2007: 7) mention:

“Whatever the policies of governments may be, immigration can lead to strong reactions from some sections of the population. The belief that migrants undermine development for citizens is extremely pervasive in migrant-receiving countries, often shading into attitudes and acts of intolerance and xenophobia.”

It cannot be denied that all migrants are susceptible to harassment and exploitation either from police, government officials, or ordinary citizens. Unpredictable changes, particularly economic downturn, in ordinary people’s lives often lead to immigrants being blamed. Migrations and minorities are often perceived as a threat to life styles, social cohesion and living standards, especially in terms of employment opportunities depress wages and scare public resources (Crush & Frayne 2007). Immigration often leads to changes that sometimes are perceived as threats to the receiving society. Yet, based upon my data, the overall picture of the relation between Haitians immigrants and Dominican nationals reflects more of a positive relation than what the literature on Haitian migration to other countries suggests.

**Haitians’ Crushed Expectations**

Upon arrival to Dominica, many Haitian migrants find the opportunities they expected are far scarcer than imagined, as is so typically the case with migrants. They thought that flying in an airplane to a foreign country would mean better opportunities and improve living conditions. This is not surprising as airplanes are often perceived as a symbol of modernity, progress, and a promise of improvement. Thus, many Haitian migrants had sold their belongings and left their jobs to come to find their dreams crushed. A number of them told me that in some cases they
were better off in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but they were deceived by their own misunderstandings and the false promises from smugglers.

One Haitian man living in the Dominican village of Mahaut said to me that he and his wife had their own business in Haiti. He had two college degrees, one in electronics and the other in electrical engineering from the University of Canado in Haiti. He also did accounting in Haiti. However, after he and his wife had some difficulties with their store business, they started to look for other opportunities. They heard from smugglers about coming to Dominica under little restriction and the possibility of transiting to Martinique and Guadeloupe. They both bought their tickets and decided to come to Dominica in 2004, hoping for better opportunities. When they came to Dominica, it was a shock to them. They did not see the opportunities the smugglers had told them about. They were confined in a small room at a friend’s house.

Later, a friend took him to a patron at a dasheen farm in search for jobs, but he did not know how to farm. The first time he went to work, his Dominican employer said to him that he wasn’t ready yet, meaning he did not know how to work the land. He let him go. His wife complained and cried every day, wanting to return to Haiti. He encouraged her to sell at the Roseau market, but she felt that was too low level job compared to what she used to do in Haiti. Then his wife divorced him, complaining that she’d been humiliated in Dominica. He wished he had known the reality before he came to Dominica. As he further mentioned, “I would have saved my marriage. But I was totally deceived.”

Examples such as this suggest that coming to Dominica was a crushing blow to many Haitian migrants. As a young Haitian man from Delices who was in the Dominican Republic before coming to Dominica said to me, “I was doing construction and selling juice in the Dominican Republic. I was doing fine. Then I heard through a group of Haitians about the opportunity to fly to Dominica and the possibility of getting to Martinique and Guadeloupe for a better life. I never flew in an airplane before and I thought flying here would mean a better future. Additionally, there was little restriction to fly….So I sold all that I had to come to Dominica, and now I am stuck and can’t move to any of the other islands. It is not that easy to cross to Martinique or Guadeloupe. I am also afraid of sharks, because too many Haitians have lost their lives at sea. Dominicans are nice but not too much opportunities here. There are more opportunities in the Dominican Republic. Some of the main concerns Haitians have with the Dominican Republic is discrimination, mistreatment and killings.”
Out of 42 interviews Haitians, 32 have said that Dominica is a tough country to work in (see Table 4). They wished they had known more about some of the economic difficulties they now face. And because Dominica is not close to Haiti, where they can go back easily, it is now a matter of survival for many Haitians. I was told, however, that many Haitians had decided to go back home upon arrival. Haitians whose visas and tickets are not expired are able to return home. As part of the current rule, Haitian nationals are required to have a round trip ticket and visas to enter Dominica. They can return home easily if these documents are not expired. However, as mentioned earlier, most Haitians have let their visas expire to later get a work permit, which serves as a residence card. In the process, they miss the opportunity of going back to Haiti without paying for the airline fair again. It is a hard decision since many of my interviewed Haitians had spent all they had in Haiti or the Dominican Republic to come to Dominica.

This notion that a priori expectations have been dashed is apparently typical among many immigrant groups. In the United States, many Mexican immigrants are crossing the border back to Mexico as the better opportunity they expected vanished away as a result of economic difficulties. As the *Houston Chronicle* (2009) reported, the U.S. Economic crisis and tougher immigration policies have caused a dramatic shift in immigration patterns. Millions of Mexicans and other Central American immigrants who initially left their country for a better life in the United States have given up and returned home.

In her study on migration in Sub-Saharan Africa, Caroline Wanjiku Kihato finds that many southern African migrants heading to Johannesburg are returning with expectation unmet. Horrible living condition, limited economic opportunities, with few households able to make ends meet are forcing many migrants to return home (Kihato 2007). For migrants who only have to cross a border to get to their receiving countries, unmet expectations often lead to seasonal migration. They migrate only when they’re sure of better opportunities.

In South west Asia, Nepalese farmers migrate each year to northeast India to work during the planting and harvesting season (Khadria 2005). Likewise, in West Africa, temporary migration is increasingly the principal form of cross-border labor mobility due to the agricultural season (Ratha & Shaw 2007: 19). Though seasonal migration appears to be more prevalent in south-south migration due to porous borders and the greater share of agriculture to the economy of the global periphery (Ratha & Shaw 2007: 19), it is not the case with Haitian migrants going to
Dominica. The distance and costs involved make it very difficult for seasonal migration to take place, not to mention that Dominica is not their final destination.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis has revealed some of the positive developments associated with Haitian migration to Dominica. The socio-economic contributions of Haitian migrants are widely appreciated. Haitian immigrants are known to have revived the agricultural sector, and help fill the agricultural labor shortage in Dominica. They’re known to bring businesses and tax revenues to Dominica. The Dominican government appreciates these contributions, and therefore Haitians only need a visa and a work permit to legally work and stay in the country. Their children are incorporated into the country’s school system and provided access to health care services.

As the socio-economic contributions of Haitians nationals are made more public and documented, it is likely this will not result in “The Refugees Nobody Wants,” as Stepick (1992: 57) had found with Haitians in Florida, but rather the immigrants that have revived Dominica’s economy. Barring major disruptions to recent patterns, the relationship will likely get better as more Dominicans become aware of Haitians’ socio-economic contributions.

Conversely, if Haitian immigrants turn to illegal activities or if they’re being blamed for many societal problems, relation can quickly deteriorate. Involvement in crimes, fraudulent activities and the associated scapegoating can easily downgrade respect and ruin the mostly positive relationship between the two people. The possibility of a severe economic crisis affecting relations between the two people is also possible. History has proven that immigrants are often blamed in times of severe economic crisis. But it should be noted that Dominica is currently facing an economic crisis and Haitian migrants have not been held liable for that crisis, even though there are concerns among some Dominicans that Haitians are becoming too economically prominent in farming.

Elsewhere in the hemisphere, Haitian immigrants bear the brunt of discrimination. Seldom do we hear positive impressions as in Dominica. It is true that there are apprehensions and even discrimination in Dominica, but we must acknowledge some of the positive developments if we are to have a holistic understanding of Haitian migrants’ identity in the Caribbean region. The failure to do that will only generate biases and undermine the validity of the literature on Haitian
migration. This thesis has opened up an avenue for more research on the reception of Haitian migrants in the region. This thesis also briefly highlights some understudy issues, such as south-south migration and reverse remittances in the migration literature. The welfare implications of Haitian’ southward migration, mainly to Dominica is yet to be fully analyzed. More research is needed to further assess topics on the socioeconomic dimensions of Haitian migration to Dominica. Topics such as wages, migration flow, health, gender, to name a few, need to be further explored. A model-based analysis is needed for complete understanding. These suggestions clearly demonstrate that data on south-south migration are spotty and scanty compare to South-North migration. Nevertheless, as Ratha and Shaw (2007:33) mentions, “the stock of south-south migrants is large and economically important,” in other words, it cannot be overlooked in the migration literature. This thesis also challenges the notion that it is often the poorest people of the sending country that emigrate. Haitians must have money to fly to Dominica, and it is not inexpensive to fly there. Furthermore, this research has contributed to understanding south-south migration, a topic underrepresented in the migration literature. Finally, this thesis presents a framework within which the Dominican government can derive further immigration related policies. It suggests that the skilled Haitian immigrants in Dominica could be better deployed. Employing migrants with a background in engineering in agriculture is not as productive as it could be in Dominica, where there is a dearth of expertise in the field of engineering. It would be to Dominica’s advantage to first identify the skilled Haitian immigrants and then deploy their needed skills. Migrants skills can easily be identify on the visa or work permit form they have to fill out before entering Dominica. Such an approach would result in Dominica making more effective use of its Haitian immigrants. Overall, this thesis has opened up an avenue for future research. What does the undocumented Haitian population have to contribute? What is their perception of the Dominican society? How do they perceive their social and economic contributions? Additionally, how is Dominica being portrayed to Haitians in Haiti? What are some of the tactics used by smugglers to transport Haitian migrants? And what is the clear link among smugglers in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Dominica? These are all possible questions that can be pursued. At the same time, however, caution should be taken not to expose anyone to any danger while pursuing answers to these questions.
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Appendix

Interview Questions for Haitian Migrants

1. How did you come to Dominica?
2. How long have you been living in Dominica?
3. Where do you live?
4. Do you own your own house?
5. Why did you come to Dominica?
6. Do you have family here with you? Explain?
7. How well are you integrated into the Dominican society? Are you involved in any social, civic, religious, or political organization?
8. Do you vote and pay taxes?
9. How is life for you in Dominica compare to Haiti? What it the greatest challenge you face in the country? Explain?
10. Do you visit Haiti? How often?
11. Do you retain your ties with family and friends in Haiti? How?
12. Do you send money home? How? And to whom?
13. What type of jobs do you do? Which jobs provide the greatest share of your income?
14. What else can you tell me about your experience in Dominica that we have not yet spoken about?

Haitian Kreyol Version

1. Koman’w te fe` vinni la Dominik?
2. Kombyen tan’w genyen la Dominik?
3. Ki kote’w rete?
4. Eske’w gen prop kay ou?
5. Pou ki sa’w te vini la Dominik?
6. Eske’w gen fanmi ak ou la?
7. Koman’w mele’w nan sosyete Dominik la? Eske ou fe` pati pyes oganization. Eske ou peye tax?
8. Koman vi a ye kounye la ak jan’l te ye Ayiti?
9. Eske ou vizite Ayiti? Souvan?
10. Eske ou kenbe relation ak fanmi e zanmitay ak zanmi? Ki jan’w fe` sa?
12. Ki travay ou fe`? e ki travay ki ba’w plis kob?
13. Ki lo’te bagay ou ka di’m de ou ke’m pat konn pou’m mande’w?
Interview Questions for Dominicans

1. Do you have any experience with Haitian immigrants in Dominica? Explain?
2. What is your perception of Haitians migrants in Dominica? How do you view them?
3. Do you have any concern about Haitians on the island? Explain?
4. What is the message would you like to send to Haitians in Dominica?
5. What else can you tell me about your experience with Haitians in Dominica that we have not yet spoken about?