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“Pa Manyen Fanm Nan Konsa”: Intersectionality, Structural Violence, and Vulnerability Before and After Haiti’s Earthquake

Not a single night goes by when you don’t hear women crying for help.
—Malya Villard-Appolon

ON JANUARY 12, 2010, AN EARTHQUAKE in Haiti sent shockwaves across the world, triggering an unprecedented international response. Not even counting the outpouring of solidarity from within Haiti, which largely went uncounted and unacknowledged, the outpouring of international aid was unparalleled in recent memory: at a March 2010 United Nations conference, world governments pledged \$10 billion, with over half of those funds earmarked for the following eighteen months. Private citizens around the world contributed \$2 billion in cash donations, and thousands of solidarity actions and trips to Haiti were made, most visibly by celebrities but also by people from many different walks of life.

What has resulted from this singular display of world solidarity? Numerous studies have documented the many unfortunate consequences of the humanitarian response to the crisis.¹ One arena of progress, however, has been the transnational effort to confront gender-based

1. See, for example, Jonathan Katz, *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Assistance Mortelle*, directed by Raoul Peck, (Paris: ARTE France, 2013), DVD; Mark Schuller, *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid and NGOs* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

violence. By all accounts, instances of gender-based violence increased in the aftermath of the earthquake, and international news, legal, development, human rights, and solidarity agencies have each highlighted the issue prominently.² Following the earthquake, gender-based violence was considered important enough to merit its own humanitarian response “subcluster.” International humanitarian crisis coordination is organized by what is known as a cluster system, with different aid agencies working within their specialized field—health, food security, water and sanitation, shelter, for example. Unlike most of these other clusters, the gender-based violence subcluster was coorganized by the Haitian government: it met outside of UN military bases and held meetings in French, one of Haiti’s national languages.³ Attesting to the prominence and importance of the gender-based violence work that followed the earthquake, Malya Villard-Appolon, cofounder of KOFAYIV (Commission of Women Victims for Victims), a grassroots organization that helps victims of sexual assault in Haiti, was named a “CNN Hero” in 2012 for her activism. In addition, after years of successful efforts by feminists to address women’s issues in development, the World Food Program adopted policies that targeted women for food assistance.⁴

These developments would suggest a degree of hopefulness in confronting gender-based violence. Yet, we need to better understand and evaluate both the increase in violence against women and the impacts of

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2. See Anne-Christine d’Adesky with Poto Fanm+Fi, *Beyond Shock: Charting the Landscape of Sexual Violence in Post-Quake Haiti: Progress, Challenges, and Emerging Trends, 2010-2012* (Oakland, CA: Poto Fanm+Fi, 2012); MADRE, CUNY School of Law, and IJDH, *Our Bodies Are Still Trembling: Haitian Women Continue to Fight Against Rape: One Year Update* (New York: MADRE, CUNY School of Law, and IJDH, 2011); Clancy Nolan, “Haiti, Violated,” *World Policy Journal* 28, no. 1 (March 2011); NYU School of Law Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, *Sexual Violence in Haiti’s IDP Camps: Results of a Household Survey* (New York: NYU School of Law Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2011).
 3. Melinda Miles, “Assumptions and Exclusion: Coordination Failures During the Emergency Phase,” in *Tectonic Shifts: Haiti since the Earthquake*, ed. Mark Schuller and Pablo Morales (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2012).
 4. Marilyn Porter and Ellen R. Judd, *Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Aster Zaoude and Joanne Sandler, “International Organizations: Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,” in *Eye to Eye: Women Practising Development across Cultures*, ed. Susan Perry and Celeste Schenck (London: Zed Books, 2001).

activist efforts to confront such violence. Through the testimonies and lived realities of Haitian women, this article highlights the continuities in violence, while also clearly demonstrating how life became worse for women following the 2012 earthquake.

First, a word about the term “gender-based violence,” the meaning of which has expanded since it first came into use in the 1990s. I am using this term because, first of all, it is the term—in English—deployed by the international agencies in their efforts within the gender-based violence subcluster, also titled in English. Several activist organizations in Haiti began adopting the English acronym GBV to refer to their work instead of, or in addition to, the *kreyòl*⁵ (Haitian Creole) *vyolans kap fèt sou fanm* (violence against women) or the less-common French *violence sexo-spécifique* (gender-specific violence).⁶ Despite its use in UN circles since 1993 and its signaling of a structural analysis, “gender-based violence” as a term risks losing specificity of women’s bodies, which is why some activists and agencies prefer the term “violence against women.” In their introduction to *Anthropology at the Front Lines of Gender-Based Violence*, editors Jennifer R. Wies and Hillary J. Haldane define the term as “violence against an individual or population based on gender identity or expression.” They go on to write

We understand gender-based violence to be violence occurring in the family or general community that is perpetuated or condoned by the state. Gender-based violence includes multiple forms of violence and reflects the political-economic structures that perpetuate gender-based inequalities among people and populations.⁷

Regardless of which term is preferred, the understanding of the phenomenon has certainly deepened. A May 2011 report by the UN Special

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5. The word *kreyòl* is not capitalized in its own language.
 6. Haiti’s two official languages are French and Haitian Creole (*kreyòl*), although only the wealthiest 10 percent of the total population speak fluent French and all Haitians speak Creole. I use Creole words and expressions in this article to reflect its broad-based circulation and to capture the essence of terms that do not have precise translations into English.
 7. Jennifer R. Wies and Hillary J. Haldane, “Ethnographic Notes from the Front Lines of Gender-Based Violence,” in their *Anthropology at the Front Lines of Gender-Based Violence* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 2.

Rapporteur on violence against women, for example, offers an intersectional analysis to the understanding of the causes and consequences of violence.⁸ Transnational feminism also approaches gender-based violence as structural and/or embodied violence against an individual or population based on gender identity or expression, often in tandem with other political, economic, and racial forms of violence and inequality.

Despite richer understandings of the phenomenon, the discourse of gender-based violence has also triggered troubling, albeit familiar, responses that involve either denial or demonization. Scores of reactionary articles either blame the victims, deny the seriousness of the problem, or cast Haitian men as predators. As Régine Jean-Charles has argued, this issue also provided a platform for white liberal feminists such as Eve Ensler and journalist Mac MacLellan to play the hero by deploying rhetorical strategies of exaggeration, victimhood, erasure of activism, and demonization of Haitian men.⁹ All of which, Black feminists point out, are familiar discourses regarding Black men generally.¹⁰

Complementing Jean-Charles's discourse analysis to answer these questions, this article offers long-term ethnographic engagement—and analyses from Haitian women gleaned from my interviews—to analyze how these discourses are embodied, materially, making an intervention in what disaster scholars term “vulnerability.”¹¹ I argue that understanding violence—and efforts to reduce it—alongside women's vulnerability requires attention to analyses of structural violence and intersectionality. Offering this context and bridging these literatures are the nuanced analyses coming from the lived experience of a diverse group of women,

8. Rashida Manjoo, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: UN General Assembly, 2011).

9. Régine Jean-Charles, *Conflict Bodies: The Politics of Rape Representation in the Francophone Imaginary* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2014). Eve Ensler raised awareness of gender-based violence in Haiti through the 2012 V-Day actions and again in the One Billion Rising campaign in 2014.

10. See Angela Yvonne Davis, “Rape, Racism and the Myth of the Black Rapist,” in *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); Hortense J. Spillers, “Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987).

11. See Greg Bankoff, Georg Freerks, and Dorothea Hilhorst, eds., *Mapping Vulnerability: Disasters, Development, and People* (London: Earthscan, 2004); Ben Wisner, Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon, and Ian Davis, *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability and Disasters* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

before and after the earthquake. This article resulted from my fourteen years of research in Haiti, begun as dissertation research in Port-au-Prince conducted with two women's nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Based on my years of collaboration with the NGO sector in Haiti, one of these organizations requested I make a documentary film, which became *Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy*. This engagement introduced me to KOFAYIV. Following the earthquake, I led three large studies of the internally displaced persons camps. The first two studies included a sample of 106 camps in 2010 and 2011. The third study, a three-year, comparative, mixed-method ethnographic study based on eight camps, began in the summer of 2011 and included over 130 recorded interviews. All quotes in the article are from interviews with women conducted between 2003 and 2012.

The title of this article, "Pa Manyen Fanm Nan Konsa" (Don't touch the woman like that), is the name of a song from one of Haiti's most popular performers, then known as "Sweet Micky," now Michel Martelly, president of the Republic of Haiti. However, in a landscape that is rife with contradictions, following his election to office in May 2011, President Martelly's first choice for prime minister publicly declared he would close the Ministry of Women's Condition and Rights. This very public gaffe, quickly reversed in response to a vocal outcry, shows the multiple ways Haitian women are treated. This article poses questions about how the issue of gender-based violence has been handled by international agencies and asks if the response has actually increased levels of violence experienced by these very women because of NGOs' single-issue understandings and because of consequences based on their foreign concepts of gender.

GENDER AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

My father hadn't lived with my mom since I was a baby. So my mother did everything for me. She sent me to school. In 1994, I couldn't go to school anymore because paramilitary FRAPH came inside my mother's house, they raped me, they beat me badly, and they killed my grandmother. Then they threw my mother and me out.

When I became a young woman, I couldn't go to school because they beat my skull, but I could still sew. I found a guy who loved me

because I wasn't an ugly girl. When I got pregnant, he said it wasn't his, despite the fact that my mother knew about him. I gave him two children like that: when I had the first child, he started helping out, but nine months later, he stopped supporting me. After he promised he would help raise his child, I consented to becoming pregnant with his second child.

After this, he beat me even though I didn't do anything. So he just up and left. Remember I had two children. For them to survive I had to work in the factory. I worked hard, but I didn't earn much money. I worked in the factory for 1050-1100 goud [per month, around \$70 at the time], and I had two kids. While working in the factory I found someone who loved me, and he told me he'd help me out and pay for my home. While I was with him I became pregnant with his [my third] child. He said he didn't want a child, and after ... and I had the child, and this person too said that it wasn't his.

— Simone,¹² *Òganizasyon Fanm Vanyan*

Dry-eyed and matter of fact, Simone held her head up high as she narrated these words in the school run by her women's organization. Simone's testimony may more properly be treated as her *istwa*, which means "history" in the sense of national histories written within prescribed parameters but also "story" in the sense of stories people creatively tell, as historical/political actors.¹³ Her *istwa* highlights the multiple forms of oppression Haitian women faced even before the earthquake: physical violence, in this case perpetrated first by the far-right paramilitary group FRAPH (Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti) and then by her partner, followed by structural violence in the form of the long-term, often invisible systems of inequality and poverty faced by Haitian women.¹⁴ In Simone's case, patriarchy and poverty together

12. All the names that are given as first names only in this article are pseudonyms, to protect their confidentiality.

13. For more on *istwa* as a term, see Beverly Bell, *Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995), 22; and Mark Schuller, "Haiti's 200-Year Ménage-À-Trois: Globalization, the State, and Civil Society," *Caribbean Studies* 35, no. 1 (2007).

14. See Paul Farmer, "An Anthropology of Structural Violence," *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 3 (2004); Faye Venetia Harrison, "The Gendered Politics and Violence of Structural Adjustment: A View from Jamaica," in *Situated Lives:*

limit her choices and confine her to low-paying work, abusive relationships, and the need to care for her children alone. The long-term, structural, historical forces in turn render Simone more vulnerable to physical violence.

To understand *istwas*¹⁵ such as this one, and indeed the realities that many Haitian women face, it is critical to understand how intersectionality, or the multiple forms of oppression based on distinct but overlapping identities, operates in this context.¹⁶ The earthquake fractured society along existing socio-cultural cleavages, such as the interlocking systems of oppression of gender, poverty, and *kouch sosyal* (socio-economic status).¹⁷ As in other contexts, pre-existing gender inequalities rendered Haitian women more vulnerable to disasters.¹⁸ Absent an intersectional analysis grounded in gender and structural violence before the earthquake, much of the discourse about gender-based violence either involves denial, arguing that claims are exaggerated, or a familiar “myth

Gender and Culture in Everyday Life, ed. Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragoné, and Patricia Zavella (New York: Routledge, 1997); and Gernot Köhler, “Global Apartheid,” in *Talking About People: Readings in Contemporary Cultural Anthropology*, ed. William A. Haviland, Robert J. Gordon, and Luis A. Vivanco (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1978).

15. Plurals are not formed in Creole by adding the letter “s,” but for the sake of readability, English conventions are used here.
16. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991); Angela Yvonne Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983).
17. J. A. Gracien Jean, in *Sociétés Civiles En Mutation*, ed. Philippe Fils-Aimé (Port-au-Prince: Centre International de Politologie Appliquée-Haïti, 2002).
18. Michael P. Anastario, Ryan Larrance, and Lynn Lawry, “Using Mental Health Indicators to Identify Postdisaster Gender-Based Violence among Women Displaced by Hurricane Katrina,” *Journal of Women's Health* 17, no. 9 (2008); Julie Cupples, “Gender and Hurricane Mitch: Reconstructing Subjectivities after Disaster,” *Disasters* 31, no. 2 (2007); Elaine Enarson, “Through Women’s Eyes: A Gendered Research Agenda for Disaster Social Science,” *Disasters* 22, no. 2 (1998); Jane M. Henrici, Allison Suppan Helmuth, and Jackie Braun, “Women, Disasters, and Hurricane Katrina,” (Washington, DC: Institute for Women’s Policy Research, 2010); Eileen Pittaway, Linda Batolomei, and Susan Rees, “Gendered Dimensions of the 2004 Tsunami and a Potential Social Work Response in Post-Disaster Situations,” *International Social Work* 50, no. 3 (2007).

of the Black, male rapist,” perpetuated by mainstream media and the authorities alike and demonized by some white feminists.¹⁹ Both discourses shut out the voices of Haitian women, and both dehumanize Haitian people in general, contributing to negative stereotypes that Haitians are to blame for the current misery.

In Haiti, gender inequality is grafted onto economic inequality and desperation, exemplifying the feminization of poverty.²⁰ As is the case in most societies, gender inequality begins at birth. A concrete manifestation of this inequality between boys and girls is unequal access to formal schooling. In turn, this educational discrimination shapes other types of discrimination later in a woman’s life. This inequality grows, with girls not matriculating at the same rate as boys: girls and women comprise 40.7 percent of sixth graders, 33 percent of *philo* (seniors), and 10 percent of science students at the public university.²¹ A more recent report estimates that only 20 percent of the students finishing high school are young women.²² Marie-Josslyn Lassègue, founder of feminist NGO Fanm Yo La and former Minister of Women’s Condition and Rights notes, “There is also a feminization of unemployment: most unemployed are women,” and Edele, a self-described “humanist-feminist activist” who worked for “Fanm Tèt Ansanm” (Women United), theorizes women’s condition in this vein: “There is no justice in the country.... I mean, everyone is a victim. Therefore, women are double victims of the situation.”

While Article 32 of the Haitian Constitution declares education to be a basic human right for all, daily practice falls short: in 2004, five hundred thousand children did not have any education, and only 35

19. See Davis, “Rape, Racism and the Myth.”

20. Johanna Brenner, *Women and the Politics of Class* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000); Sara S. McLanahan, Annemette Sørensen, and Dorothy Watson, “Sex Differences in Poverty, 1950–1980,” *Signs* 15, no. 1 (1989).

21. Mireille Neptune Anglade, *Fanm Ayisyen an Chif* (Port-au-Prince: Comité Inter-agences Femmes et Développement (CIFD) en Haïti, 1995), 62, 68.

22. Rebecca Adams, Gayle Morris, Patricia Martin, and Hannah Baldwin, *Gender Analysis of USAID/Haiti’s Strategic Objectives* (Washington, DC: Women in Development Tech, 1998), 1. This is the most recent publicly available report with this information systematically collected. For example, these data are not available in recent United Nations Human Development Index calculations nor in the World Bank’s World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development.

percent of children finished fifth grade.²³ The high cost of education—combined with poverty and income inequality—exacerbates gender inequality. As activist Marie-Jeanne underscores in the 2009 documentary film *Poto Mitan*, “Poverty is linked with discrimination because if the parents have girls and boys, they push the boys farther in school than the girls. My mother and father had eight children. And when I got to third grade my father said that he couldn’t pay for me to continue in school. Instead I had to work to help raise the others, so they could go to school.”²⁴ Such educational discrimination in turn shapes access to jobs. Women are overrepresented in the lowest-paid informal sector (77 percent) while vastly underrepresented in the professional private sectors (11 percent) and public sector (4 percent).²⁵ This inequality is also a holdover from traditional male “breadwinner” ideologies in Haiti’s peasant economy. Domestic labor, centering on reproduction, is traditionally seen as “women’s work.”²⁶ This traditional equation of women with reproduction reinforces the role of women as the primary caregivers in society. Women in Haiti—as in most other places—bear additional responsibilities in cultural reproduction, tethering them to their children. As in many other contexts, this unpaid labor is associated with lower wages. The phrase *poto mitan*, used in the title of the aforementioned film, is a Haitian expression that declares women to be “pillars of society.”²⁷ Women are often heads of households, “the mother and the father,” a common expression used across the Caribbean,

23. *Interim Cooperation Framework 2004–2006: Summary Report* (Washington, DC: Interim Government of Haiti in cooperation with the World Bank, United Nations, European Commission, and Inter-American Development Bank, 2004).

24. *Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy*, directed by Renée Bergan and Mark Schuller (Tèt Ansanm Productions, 2009), DVD.

25. Anglade, *Fanm Ayisyen an Chif*, 80.

26. Louise Lamphere, “The Domestic Sphere of Women and the Public World of Men: The Strengths and Limitations of an Anthropological Dichotomy,” in *Gender in Cross Cultural Perspective*, ed. Caroline Brottel and Carolyn Sargent (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993); Karen Sacks, “Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production, and Private Property,” in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975); Marilyn Strathern, “Kinship and Economy: Constitutive Orders of a Provisional Kind,” *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 2 (1985).

27. Marie-José N’Zengou-Tayo, “Fanm Se Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, the Pillar of Society,” *Feminist Review* 59 (1998).

characterized with having matrifocal households.²⁸ According to the Ministry of Women's Condition and Rights at a conference in 2004, 59 percent of Port-au-Prince households were headed by single women.²⁹ Men are likely to migrate for seasonal labor, especially to the *batèys* (company towns for sugar cane plantation workers) in the Dominican Republic.³⁰ This contributes to children being raised *san papa* (with unknown/non-recognized paternity).³¹ As "pillars of society," often single heads of household, it is the women who bear the brunt of both episodic and structural violence.

HAITIAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS: THE BACKDROP

Women's imbrication in multiple axes of inequality complicates their identification with "feminism," understood by many sectors in Haiti as middle-class, foreign, and — given that "feminists" are all members of the NGO class and therefore recipients of foreign aid — even imperialist.³² Naromie, an NGO staff person, identifies herself as a feminist, conditionally: "I am a feminist, [but] the principal problem I pose before women's rights (or men's), is what rights do the people [*pèp la*, understood in local idiom to mean the poor majority] have?" Naromie argued that radical economic changes are needed to begin to address women's

28. Edith Clarke, *My Mother Who Fathered Me: A Study of the Families in Three Selected Communities in Jamaica* (New York: G. Allen, 1957). For a revision of this conception for post-plantation US societies, see Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe."

29. Michel Cayemittes et al., "Enquête Mortalité, Morbidité Et Utilisation Des Services (Emmus Iii) Haiti 2000," (Port-au-Prince: Institut Haïtien de l'Enfance, Pan American Health Organization, 2001).

30. David Simmons, "Structural Violence as Social Practice: Haitian Agricultural Workers, Anti-Haitianism, and Health in the Dominican Republic," *Human Organization* 69, no. 1 (2010).

31. M. Catherine Maternowska, *Reproducing Inequities: Poverty and the Politics of Population in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006). In 2006, the Minister of Women's Condition presented a law to parliament recognizing paternity, which passed in 2007, officially ending this discriminatory practice.

32. Coralynn Davis, "Feminist Tigers and Patriarchal Lions: Rhetorical Strategies and Instrument Effects in the Struggle for Definition and Control over Development in Nepal," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 3, no. 2 (2003); Richa Nagar and Sangtin Writers Collective, *Playing with Fire: Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

conditions: “First, you need to start improving the people’s economic conditions. Only then can women find a situation to improve her conditions: equal work, equal pay. When there is work, she can demand her rights, things like this. But today, she can’t even do that because there’s no work.” For these and other reasons, Naromie and others are critical of self-described “feminist” organizations that tend to attract a middle-class constituency and focus primarily on formal political rights. They work instead for *òganizasyon fanm* (women’s organizations), with a broader agenda that implicitly acknowledges the intersectionality of multiple forms of inequality shaping Haitian women’s conditions.³³

Why did NGO staff and volunteer leaders nuance the definition of feminist? Their lived experience shows the limitation of single-axis ideological approaches. As both women of color in the United States and so-called Third World feminists have argued, while there are multiple feminisms, hegemonic mainstream liberal feminism privileges the experiences of professional, white, US women.³⁴ Valerie Smith has written about the problem of “split affinities,” wherein women of color are forced to choose between allegiance to white feminists and Black men.³⁵ Naromie voiced this critique for many women of Haiti’s *pèp la* who are forced to choose between sisterhood with middle-class women or solidarity with their husbands, fathers, sons, and also with their class. For

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33. Radhika Coomaraswamy, “Are Women’s Rights Universal? Re-Engaging the Local,” *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 3, no. 1 (2002); Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes, “Female Consciousness or Feminist Consciousness? Women’s Consciousness Raising in Community-Based Struggles in Brazil,” in *Global Feminisms since 1945*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (London: Routledge, 2000); Alexandra Hrycak, “From Mothers’ Rights to Equal Rights: Post-Soviet Grassroots Women’s Associations,” in *Women’s Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and International Politics*, ed. Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai (London: Routledge, 2002).
34. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Feminist Review* 30 (1988); Cherríe L. Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1983); Chela Sandoval, “U.S. Third World Feminism,” in *Methodology of the Oppressed, Theory out of Bounds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
35. Valerie Smith, “Split Affinities: The Case of Interracial Rape,” in *Conflicts in Feminism*, ed. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York: Routledge, 1990).

instance, many Haitian women report that mainstream feminist organizations lost legitimacy for them because of the organizations' opposition to Jean-Bertrand Aristide. According to women I have met, they felt as if feminist organizations used them — low-income victims of violence and supporters of Aristide — as pawns in their campaigns against Aristide. I have spoken with women victims of violence who, in their first visit to a women's organization, were told to join their protest against Aristide. Some of these women joined KOFAYIV.

This politics of representation is magnified in a transnational, neo-colonial context.³⁶ In Haiti, all of the self-described feminist organizations accepted official bilateral aid, mostly from Canada and France, but also from the United States. All of these organizations were vocal members of Aristide's opposition. Many women's organizations had legitimate concerns about Aristide, and there continues to be a debate within Haiti about Aristide's legacy and certainly the factors that led to his second ouster in 2004. That said, feminist organizations' acceptance of aid from the very countries that engineered Aristide's ouster — against the wishes of many in the poor majority — made them suspect to the very women they were attempting to help.

Throughout Haitian history, women's organizations have often made strategic alliances to advance broader, sometimes anti-imperialist, agendas. In 1820, a generation before the Seneca Falls Convention, Haitian women successfully organized to overturn laws that treated them as minors under their husband's custody, a holdover from French colonial rule.³⁷ In 1934, a group of professional women founded Haiti's first formal women's organization, the Ligue Féminine d'Action Sociale.³⁸ The Ligue was instrumental in ending US troops' nineteen-year occupation of Haiti that same year. Women played visible leadership roles

36. Christine E. Bose, "Intersectionality and Global Gender Inequality," *Gender and Society* 26, no. 1 (2012); Bandana Purkayastha, "Intersectionality in a Transnational World," *Gender and Society* 26, no. 1 (2012); Nira Yuval-Davis, "Dialogical Epistemology — an Intersectional Resistance to the 'Oppression Olympics,'" *Gender and Society* 26, no. 1 (2012).

37. Marie M. B. Racine, "The Long Journey toward Freedom," *Roots* 1, no. 3 (1995): 8.

38. Carolle Charles, "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti: The Duvalierist State, Transnationalism, and the Emergence of a New Feminism (1980–1990)," *Feminist Studies* 21, no. 1 (1995); N'Zengou-Tayo, "Fanm Se Poto Mitan"; Racine, "The Long Journey toward Freedom."

in the democratic movement in the 1980s, including in the November 1985 protest that sparked the eventual downfall of Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier’s dictatorship. Shortly after Duvalier’s overthrow in 1986, a group of thirty thousand women marched in the streets of Port-au-Prince in one of the largest demonstrations of the period. As scholars have argued, women’s popular organizations, those organizing working-class women, peasants, and street merchants, have had a dual focus on citizenship, democratization, and economic transformation, on the one hand, and on women’s participation in civic life, representation, and changes to traditional cultural roles and stereotypes on the other.³⁹

Even if only a few organizations — those funded by foreign agencies — called themselves feminist, Haitian women’s organizations have been struggling against violence, including structural violence, long before the earthquake.⁴⁰ Therefore it is dangerous to paint post-earthquake gender-based violence as either exaggerated or exceptional. Listening carefully to women’s *istwas*, however, clearly underscores both the continuities since the earthquake and how the situation deteriorated for most women. Attempting to respond to the many inequities women faced, a large ad-hoc coalition of Haitian diaspora and foreign women’s groups wrote “The Haiti Gender Shadow Report” in response to the Haitian government’s official reconstruction plan for the country, the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). The Gender Shadow Report, with its self-stated aim to ensure Haitian women’s participation and leadership in the post-disaster relief and reconstruction, addresses a range of issues such as the economy, political participation, grassroots organizations, popular consultation, healthcare, and education. After the report’s publication and the PDNA’s formal adoption and creation of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission to implement it, the coalition disbanded, and the only organized advocacy effort regarding women centered around violence.

39. Olga Benoit, “Women’s Popular Organizations,” *Roots*; “Report on Haitian Women,” 1, no. 3, 1995; Charles, “Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti”; Racine, “The Long Journey toward Freedom.”

40. Erica Caple James, *Democratic Insecurities: Violence, Trauma, and Intervention in Haiti* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Nolan, “Haiti, Violated.”

GENDER AND VULNERABILITY IN DISASTERS

Feminist researchers have made inroads in the literature on disasters, arguing how gender as a social construct renders women more vulnerable in disaster situations, particularly to gender-based violence.⁴¹ Building from a political ecology perspective that theorizes the interconnection between the political economy and human societies' exploitation of the natural environment, the concept of vulnerability outlines the societal conditions that augment the destructiveness of natural events.⁴² However, disaster scholarship specifically theorizing women's experiences and gender is still relatively scarce, at least until recently. Although focused on the United States, Elaine Enarson presents a gender analysis of issues such as vulnerability, health, housing, employment, and resilience.⁴³ Enarson also coedited an extraordinary volume assembling analyses about women and Hurricane Katrina in which several authors theorize a rise in post-disaster gender-based violence, including chapters from SisterSong cofounder Loretta Ross and the activist organization INCITE!.⁴⁴ Diverting the highly racialized gaze away from individual perpetrators, these authors identify larger systems such as state violence (imperialist wars as well as police violence against communities of color) and white supremacy as contributing to the rise in violence against women following Katrina.

Contributing a timely and specific set of gender analyses of disasters, Haitian American activist anthropologist and performance artist Gina Athena Ulysse assembled a path-breaking interdisciplinary set of essays, poems, and autobiographies about the earthquake in a special

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41. Enarson, "Through Women's Eyes"; Anastario, Larrance, and Lawry, "Using Mental Health Indicators"; Henrici, Helmuth, and Braun, "Women, Disasters, and Hurricane Katrina."
 42. Anthony Oliver-Smith, "Peru's Five-Hundred Year Earthquake: Vulnerability in Historical Context," in *The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspective*, ed. Anthony Oliver-Smith and Susanna M. Hoffman (New York: Routledge 1999); Wisner et al., *At Risk*.
 43. Elaine Enarson, ed. *Women Confronting Natural Disasters: From Vulnerability to Resilience* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012).
 44. Emmanuel David and Elaine Enarson, eds., *The Women of Katrina: How Gender, Race, and Class Matter in an American Disaster* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012). See especially chapters by Loretta J. Ross, "A Feminist Perspective on Katrina," and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, "INCITE! Statement on Hurricane Katrina."

issue of *Meridians*, called “Pawòl Fanm” (Women’s voices).⁴⁵ These critical perspectives centering the voices and lived experiences of Haitian and diaspora women challenge mainstream constructions of the disaster, infusing an intersectional analysis of how the earthquake impacted Haitian women and girls in a multitude of arenas: survival, security, their families, and their livelihoods in addition to violence, as well as how these are linked. The remainder of this article employs the intersectional analysis of structural violence provided to materially ground understandings of gender-based violence.

Camps for internally displaced persons became visible symbols of the humanitarian crisis in post-earthquake Haiti. For reasons discussed in this article, they also became sites where acts of gender-based violence proliferated. The Geneva-based Small Arms Survey, an independent source of public information on aspects of small arms and armed violence, found that 22 percent of women living in the camps experienced violence the first year following the earthquake, compared to 2 percent outside the camps.⁴⁶ Many Haitian women activists cited the proverb, *abse sou klou* (an abscess on an open wound) to describe the increase. Villard-Appolon said, “We worked hard to bring rapists to justice before the earthquake. After, it’s like we had to start from zero.” Activists began using Anne-Christine d’Adesky’s term “gender aftershocks” to describe the secondary impacts of the earthquake and how they in turn increased violence against women.⁴⁷

As the humanitarian crisis wore on, camps became symbols of the failure of the disaster response, begging the question of where to assign blame. Ulysse, Jean-Charles, and other Haitian feminist scholars have noted that narratives of post-earthquake problems easily slot into longstanding discourses denigrating the world’s “unthinkable” first free Black republic.⁴⁸ The remainder of the article highlights several aspects of camps and the humanitarian apparatus offering aid to the camps,

45. Gina Athena Ulysse, “Pawòl Fanm Sou Douze Janvyè” [Women’s words on January twelfth], *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 11, no. 1 (2011).

46. Robert Muggah, “Security from the Bottom-Up in Haiti: Before and after the Quake” (Small Arms Survey, 2011).

47. See d’Adesky et al., “Beyond Shock.”

48. Gina Athena Ulysse, “Why Representations of Haiti Matter Now More Than Ever,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 43, no. 5 (2010); Jean-Charles, *Conflict Bodies; Trouillot, Silencing the Past*.

each of which constitute factors in the rise of gender-based violence: physical design, lack of basic services, daily interaction, the gendered ways in which aid was delivered, and housing.

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE: VIOLENCE IN THE CAMPS

At the peak of the relief effort, during the summer of 2010, the International Organization for Migration counted 1.5 million people living in 1300 camps across Haiti, representing a sixth of the country's population. My research focused on the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, home to 862 camps at the time. Fully describing the myriad realities in Haiti's camps is impossible. The camps differ quite significantly: some were veritable cities, well on their way to becoming permanent shantytowns with rows of merchants selling cooked foods and school supplies, used clothing and plumbing. Others were cobbled together with only people's wit and endurance, with ripped-up tarps not even holding back the torrential rains or tropical sun.

At best, camps are planned relocation sites with temporary shelters made of treated plywood, known as "T-shelters," and social services, such as security patrols, potable water, maintained toilets, clinics, and some simulation of a school. This describes barely a handful of camps in Port-au-Prince, as the contracts for services such as water and sanitation began to run out by the beginning of 2011. Even in Karade, an officially planned relocation camp for six thousand displaced people, services were limited. H el ene, a nurse and women's organization leader profiled in the pre-earthquake film *Poto Mitan*, denounced the lack of a health clinic in a video update for the film in July 2010. Standing in front of an empty tent, she decries, "UNICEF is aware of this tent but they have never negotiated with us to tell us whether it will be a dispensary or a mobile health clinic." The Karade camp was intended to be a model for other camps. According to our research conducted that summer, less than a fifth of camps in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area had an onsite clinic as of August 2010, and the average time it took a person — often a mother — to walk to the nearest clinic was twenty-seven minutes.

Based on the widely proliferated discourse that people were only in the camps for the free services, landowners responded by cutting life-saving services such as water and sanitation. H el ene reported that at her former camp, "The priest kicked out the doctors. He told the Americans not to saturate the grounds," meaning not to fill up the camps with

people like her. As a result, many residents felt abandoned by NGOs and other aid agencies. Aline Despaines, president of the women's organization Organisation des Femmes Devouées en Action, who lived in a camp, explained, "It's like they forgot this camp. No one has ever passed through here to investigate. We sent a letter to all the NGOs we know: UNICEF, OIM, WPF, World Vision, but we have received nothing. Only Mercy Corps came by to offer people a little water. However, you see the reservoir? It's empty. Water never comes out anymore." Unfortunately these cases were far from unique; in August 2010, seven months after the earthquake, 42.3 percent of the camps didn't have access to water.⁴⁹ Because of blame-the-victim discourses, camps on private land had less access to water than camps on public land.

Alongside water scarcity was poor sanitation, with 29.2 percent of camps not having a single toilet.⁵⁰ While the "Sphere Handbook," the most widely implemented set of guidelines outlining minimum standards of humanitarian response, states that no more than twenty people should share a toilet, the average in Haitian camps was 273 people per toilet. One camp, Plas Lapè, had thirty toilets for over 30 thousand residents. Of camps with toilet facilities, a quarter of them hadn't been cleaned since the onset of the disaster, seven months at the time of the research. This lack of sanitation hastened the spread of cholera following an outbreak in October 2010, the genesis of which, epidemiological and genetic evidence show, was infected United Nations troops at a base with a leaky sewage.⁵¹ Cholera killed over 4,000 people in the first three months; by January 2012 it had claimed 7,025 lives, and by October 2013 there had been 8,361 deaths, with fifty new deaths occurring monthly.⁵² Despite additional media attention and a UN flash appeal that sought to raise over \$170 million, little progress was made in improving these

49. Mark Schuller and Tania Levey, "Kabrit Ki Gen Twop Met: Understanding Gaps in WASH Services in Haiti's IDP Camps," *Disasters* 38 (2014).

50. *Ibid.*

51. Renaud Piarroux et al., "Understanding the Cholera Epidemic, Haiti," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 17, no. 7 (2011). Rene Hendriksen, Lance B. Price, and James M Shupp, "Population Genetics of *Vibrio Cholerae* from Nepal in 2010: Evidence on the Origin of the Haitian Outbreak," *mBIO* 2, no. 4 (2011).

52. "Haiti Cholera Death Toll Tops 4,000," *Agence France-Presse*, January 28, 2011; Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population, "Rapport De Cas" (Gouvernement d'Haïti, Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population, 2012).

life-saving services: as of January 2011, 25.5 percent (down from 29.2 percent) of camps still lacked toilets, and 38.6 percent (instead of 42.3 percent) of camps still did not have water.⁵³

The lack of public facilities in the camps had a disproportionate impact on women, especially the tactic adopted in many privately run camps to charge camp residents to use the facilities. Said Villard-Ap-*polon*, “Imagine! Having to pay for a bathroom! Men can get away with one time per day, but we women! And who is in charge of the children?” Also impactful to the women in the camps was that, despite the emergency rations provided by NGOs during the first three months following the earthquake, residents of at least thirty-one camps were not offered sanitary napkins or tampons. Said NGO consultant Murielle Dorismond, “Half of the population needs this! It’s good that people are finally concerned about the public health concerns of human waste. But what about menstrual blood? Do we not count as people?”

This lack of sanitary provisions in the camps presented particular dangers for women, as State University of Haiti student and blogger Carine Exantus outlines:

In my camp, there are twelve toilets in the front and twelve toilets in the back for 4,200 people. You can’t use the shower: you wash to get dirty. People hardly use these facilities anymore. Everyone at their tent has a little plastic tub, where they throw water over themselves, or they just shower in public. In my journal I wrote about this: young women suffer sexual aggression because they have to shower in public.

Exantus’s testimony explicitly connects the poor state of public facilities in the camps with the issue of gender-based violence. Theorizing from her own lived experience, Exantus articulates the necessity of understanding an intersectional approach, while also highlighting the limited progress within the international aid response.⁵⁴ This intersectional analysis of structural violence requires attention to the ways in which the humanitarian aid was gendered and how this contributed to violence against women.

53. Schuller and Levey, “Kabrit Ki Gen Twop Met.”

54. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge*, 31-2.

**GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND GENDERED PRACTICES
OF HUMANITARIAN AID**

Because of Haitian women's culturally valorized status of *poto mitan*—pillars of society—and because of the conscious shifts in donor policies resulting from years of tireless advocacy from feminists working within aid agencies, donors have begun to make policy decisions to favor women.⁵⁵ This is most visible in areas of microcredit and food aid. Said Paul, one (male) USAID/Haiti employee, voicing years of development orthodoxy, "You give money to a man and he's as likely to spend it on beer or a lover as on his family. But if you give to a woman, you're guaranteed that she will prioritize feeding herself and her children." Since the earthquake, donors and large NGOs have adopted the World Food Program's guidelines to give food aid exclusively to women. In theory, these policies are advantageous to women; the practice is, however, more complicated since women are not isolated individuals disarticulated from men in their family and community, some of whom understandably attempted to use this system to their advantage.⁵⁶ In some cases, declaring women to be heads of household actively discouraged men's responsibility by fixing and reinforcing the stereotype of matri-focality.⁵⁷ In other cases, women-as-aid-recipients became targets of gender-based violence.

Before the government stopped the practice in April 2010, food distribution was managed by NGOs and officially recognized committees. The system was one of distributing ration cards instead of food and had been designed by large NGOs as an attempt to establish order and ensure fairness. However, this system had several negative consequences because of gendered ideologies and practices. The first was the disruption of Haitian family structure. Haitian anthropologist Michel Laguerre has written extensively on how the traditional multigenerational household pattern, the *lakou*, was maintained in urban Port-au-Prince in the early 1980s.⁵⁸ My 2011 survey of 791 households across

55. Porter and Judd, *Feminists Doing Development*.

56. Kum-Kum Bhavnani, John Foran, and Priya A. Kurian, *Feminist Futures: Re-Imagining Women, Culture and Development* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

57. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe."

58. Michel Laguerre, *Urban Life in the Caribbean: A Study of a Haitian Urban Community* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishers, 1982).

eight camps shows a breaking apart of the *lakou* system occurring in the camps, resulting in newly formed households comprising a mean of 3.35 people from a previous mean of 5.37 people per household. Follow-up qualitative interviews with camp residents and aid agency representatives suggest that humanitarian policies and practices triggered this household fission. For instance, the same quantity of food aid was distributed to households of two and eight people, which had the consequence of breaking up multigenerational families that often split up to increase their chances of receiving aid. This had the unintended consequence of setting up young mothers as new “heads of household.” A follow-up study illustrated that 47 percent of people did not move back with the same families once they left the camps. The policy ended up tethering women even further to their children as single mothers with little extended family help.

A second issue with humanitarian efforts was the heavy male dominance of aid committees, with women comprising fewer than a quarter of members.⁵⁹ While to international aid agencies, these committees represented local participation, they were in fact constructed around the international humanitarian effort in order to service that effort, and they often edged out pre-existing grassroots organizations. However created, these male-dominated committees were given extraordinary powers to decide to whom to give aid within the humanitarian effort. The Humanitarian Accountability Project reported in 2010 that NGOs put too much power in the hands of these committees, while knowing very little about them.⁶⁰ The disproportionate number of men represented in camp committees holding disproportionate power to dole out ration cards for food contributed to gendered stereotypes and even the targeting of women for acts of sexual harassment. Villard-Appolon argued in March 2010 that the practice of powerful men giving out ration cards led too often to sexual harassment and even forced sex. “Already we have heard over

59. Mark Schuller, “Unstable Foundations: Impact of NGOs on Human Rights for Port-Au-Prince’s Internally Displaced People,” October 4, 2010, <http://ijdh.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Report-unstable-foundations-final-2.pdf>.

60. Humanitarian Accountability Partnership and International Organization for Migration, “Camp Committee Assessment: A Tool for Deciding How to Work with Camp Committees” (Port-au-Prince: Humanitarian Accountability Project, 2010).

two dozen members tell us that they were forced to submit to sexual relations with the guy in exchange for the cards.” An investigation by the New York University (NYU) School of Law Center for Human Rights and Global Justice found that at least the discourse of transactional sex—exchanging sex for ration cards—was commonplace.⁶¹ Kolonbi camp resident Magalie, in her fifties, never received food aid. When asked why, she theorized, “It’s because the guys in the committee choose young women with large buttocks.” In the Saint-Louis camp, the Red Cross gave the camp committee president, a male, the responsibility to make the official list of who was a “real” resident and therefore eligible for relocation assistance valued at \$500 or more. Sandy Nelzy notes that the committee president used this responsibility to demand sex from at least two mothers, one of whom was married.⁶² The most comprehensive study of gender-based violence—that performed by d’Adesky and Poto Fanm+Fi, the post earthquake coalition to support women and girls—reports that 37 percent of pregnant women (n=1251) reported having sex for survival, mostly for shelter but also for food.⁶³

Unfortunately, the NYU report also found that many people reported that incidents of gender-based violence and sex-for-food increased when the official food aid ended in April 2010. While they did not collect corroborating data, they are investigating whether a causal link exists between food insecurity and gender-based violence. The report by d’Adesky has a much larger data set that also includes the experiences of women in rural areas. It explores the links between food insecurity and gender-based violence in greater depth, but the results are limited because of the worldwide problem of underreporting rape due to fears of reprisals, lack of confidence in the authorities, and stigma. However, the information strongly suggests that the ways in which humanitarian aid was gendered played a contributing role in increasing violence against women.

61. NYU School of Law, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, “Sexual Violence in Haiti’s IDP Camps: Results of a Household Survey,” March 2011.

62. Sandy Nelzy, “The Impact of NGOs in Saint-Louis De Gonzague Camp, Haiti,” *Practicing Anthropology* 35, no. 3 (2013).

63. d’Adesky et al., “Beyond Shock.”

INTERSECTIONAL SOLUTIONS

Continuing a history of engagement described earlier, women's groups are among the leaders in improving living conditions within the camps. In an August 2010 interview with activist and author Beverly Bell and myself, Elizabeth Senatus, a leader within the women's group L'Étoile Brillante, said, "We might have potential that we weren't aware of. We use what resources we have in hand. We don't wait for millions to arrive, we create." Supported by the Haitian-Dominican Women's Movement and their Haitian diaspora partners such as Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, L'Étoile Brillante has created a school, income-generating activities for women, and weekly plays and movie nights in a camp called Centre Hébergement Petite Rivière in Léogâne some 30 kilometers south of Port-au-Prince and closer to the quake's epicenter. Critically, they also engaged men in a common effort against violence. As of August 2010, when we visited the camp, there were no reported instances of rape.

Solutions, even for gender-based violence, cannot only focus on police patrols and incarceration, as stipulated in an injunction by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. An intersectional approach to structural violence requires attention to multiple issues that may not be readily identifiable as "feminist" issues to some international agencies. Women's groups in Haiti are among those on the forefront of a growing social movement post-earthquake — a coalition of grassroots groups spanning multiple issues and political perspectives. This mobilization poses solutions to Haiti's internally displaced persons crisis within a lens of human rights, to demand better from the Haitian government and donors. The first solution is permanent housing, defined by local organizations as a women's issue as it directly relates to gender-based violence. In her 2011 interview, the first Minister of Women's Condition and Rights, Lise-Marie Dejean, said,

In 1993, a journalist asked me what the coming government needed to do to meet women's needs. I said housing. One of the emblems we had in the 2000 Global Women's March was a cardboard box because people used to sleep in them. [The earthquake] sharpened the focus on the housing problem and violence. Because now women live in a series of conditions one on top of one another, lack of privacy. They are at the mercy of any vagabond who would want to rape them.

Activists within KOFATIV, involved in many of the internally displaced persons camps and part of a larger mobilization of activist organizations defending housing rights, described a direct link between violence and housing. KOFATIV cofounder, Eramithe Delva, said,

I think that if the government provided permanent housing, the incidents of rape and violence would diminish. True, even when people had houses there was still violence. But it was never this bad. I think if someone has a house to stay in she has more security. Now, the person's under plastic. All it takes is someone to come by with a razor and rip the tent, and he can come inside and do what he wants. It's like you're sleeping in the street if you're in a tent.

To date, housing remains an urgent priority. At an official ceremony before the four-year anniversary of the earthquake, the Haitian prime minister, Laurent Lamothe, outlined progress, including the construction of 5,000 houses, while the *New York Times* reported a total of 7,515 new homes were being built.⁶⁴ These figures pale in comparison to the 105,000 homes completely destroyed and 188,383 houses collapsed or badly damaged.⁶⁵

LIMITATIONS TO AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

This article has demonstrated the need for complex, intersectional analyses of Haitian women's lives before and after the earthquake. Although the problems that women face go far beyond gender-based violence, grounding an understanding of this problem within women's lived realities and posing culturally appropriate solutions that address women's multiple identities is essential work. A coalition of groups advocating for a holistic, multisectoral infusion of gender concerns into the official reconstruction plan has emerged. Why has gender-based violence come to dominate all discussions of women and gender, and why have official solutions to gender-based violence been limited to tools of greater police enforcement focusing on individual perpetrators and victims? Posed another way, what processes mitigate against complexity and

64. New York Times Editorial Board, "Haiti, Unfinished and Forsaken," *New York Times*, January 10, 2014.

65. "Key Statistics," *Haiti: Lessons Learned*, 2012, <http://lessonsfromhaiti.org/lessons-from-haiti/key-statistics>.

intersectionality and against an understanding of gender-based violence as both embodied and structural/intersectional?

Unfortunately, political processes work against such an intersectional approach, as Black feminists have long pointed out. For example, the court system—including the international human rights apparatus—tends to flatten complexity and reproduce essentialist concepts within mainstream, Western liberal feminism.⁶⁶ While many women working within humanitarian agencies and certainly activists working alongside KOFAVIV and other groups advocating for women and girls have a more nuanced understanding, processes linked to NGOization limit their responses to those that match international donors' priorities and classificatory schema even as gender "mainstreaming" is attempted.⁶⁷ Added to the culturally, racially, and class-specific definitions of gender issues is an inherently hierarchical and bureaucratic structure that shifts decision-making powers upward through a system of intermediaries.⁶⁸

This tendency is being put to the test: Haitian women's groups such as KOFAVIV and their solidarity partners have brought litigation to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In addition to more patrols of internally displaced persons camps that were required by the injunction, the plaintiffs called for greater lighting, sanitation services, and grassroots women's participation. Partly owing to this advocacy, international development agencies have begun to invest significant resources in combating gender-based violence. While this support garners the necessary tools to curtail gender-based violence, the bilateral support limits the understanding of the issue and its potential solutions to mainstream, single-issue feminism within restraints of the political processes inherent to bilateral aid. The injunction called for

66. Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

67. Sonia E. Alvarez, "Advocating Feminism: The Latin American Feminist NGO 'Boom,'" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1, no. 2 (1999); Sabine Lang, "The NGO-ization of Feminism," in *Global Feminisms since 1945*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (London: Routledge, 2000); Nagar, *Playing with Fire*; Millie Thayer, "Transnational Feminism: Reading Joan Scott in the Brazilian *Sertão*," *Ethnography* 2, no. 2 (2001); Sophie Bessis, "The World Bank and Women: 'Institutional Feminism,'" in *Eye to Eye: Women Practising Development across Cultures*, ed. Susan Perry and Celeste Schenck (London: Zed Books, 2001).

68. Schuller, *Killing with Kindness*.

greater policing and management efforts such as lighting. According to their own report, UN Peacekeepers had conducted regular patrols of six camps, including Karade. Their presence was so ineffective at Karade that residents called them “photocopies” as if they hung on the wall, never doing anything.⁶⁹ Permanent housing, affirming the rights of internally displaced persons, and women’s participation remained unaddressed in the international court order. A report from the Government Accountability Office published in June 2013 critiqued USAID for failing to meet its housing objectives while investing \$224 million in a new industrial park outside of the earthquake-impacted zone.⁷⁰ In June 2013, the official camp population was 279,000 people.⁷¹

These top-down processes have ever-greater potential to reproduce the same exclusions and stereotypes that led victims of violence to turn away from the foreign-funded “feminist” organizations before the earthquake. While resources to confront gender-based violence increased, it is important to remain vigilant so that these tools do not cut off solutions such as permanent housing and economic justice, nor do further violence through amplifying negative stereotypes, thus justifying continued foreign occupation and control.⁷² In 2011, KOFAVIV received a large USAID grant through a contracting NGO; however, this support again diminished throughout the ensuing years, as the value attached to what Erica James has called the “economy of compassion” within “the political

69. Tracey Ulcena, “Survivors, Not Victims,” *Practicing Anthropology* 35, no. 3 (2013).

70. US Government Accountability Office, “Haiti Reconstruction: USAID Infrastructure Projects Have Had Mixed Results and Face Sustainability Challenges,” June 18, 2013, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-558>.

71. In September 2013, the International Organization for Migration’s Displacement Tracking Matrix database arbitrarily excluded displaced persons in the informal settlement of Kanaran/Canaan, home to some 130,000 people; see <http://iomhaitidatportal.info/dtm>. Therefore the most recent statistic before this political decision is used in the article.

72. Haiti’s violent crime rate ranks below median within the region. Haiti’s homicide rate of 8.2 per 100,000 is consistently more than three times lower than that of Brazil (26.4 per 100,000), [I think this is useful information, speaking to a double standard] and almost seven times lower than Jamaica (54.9), across the Windward Channel. Source: US Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, *Haiti 2011 Crime and Safety Report*, <https://www.osac.gov>.

economy of trauma” once again diminished.⁷³ Certainly other NGOs are downscaling their efforts in Haiti as international funds wither. It is also an open question as to whether KOFAVIV has changed as a result of these funds. They have already been set apart from other women’s organizations, including grassroots associations with whom they worked before they had their own office. International funding and visibility (Villard-Appolon being named a CNN Hero, for example) comes at a price: in the summer of 2011, Villard-Appolon and her colleague Delva were forced to move out of the camp where assailants attempted to kidnap Delva’s daughter, and in 2013, Villard-Appolon had to seek asylum in the United States. This is admittedly an extreme case, but it is emblematic of how celebrating and exceptionalizing individuals can provoke intense anger in this context.

This article has suggested that international tools may be inherently essentialist, making it impossible to dismantle the master’s house, so to speak. Unlike the hundreds of thousands of homes built for Haiti’s poor majority following the earthquake, this house remains on firm ground. The corrective is to include Haitian women’s own analyses, to have them handle their own bodies and movement, and to make decisions based on Haitian women’s multiple subjectivities and issues that they embody.

73. James, *Democratic Insecurities*.

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