

From *Poto Mitan* to Humanitarian Organization Leaders: Experiences of Haitian Women in the Labyrinth of Intersectionality and Leadership Stereotypes

Rachele Delva

Abstract

As the 2010 post-earthquake humanitarian crisis in Haiti created a leadership vacuum in managing the country's reconstruction efforts and the socioeconomic crisis worsened, Haitian women have not had equal access to leading humanitarian initiatives to benefit Haiti and Haitians in the diaspora. The current literature also discusses one-dimensional narratives of Haitian womanhood as victims or humanitarian aid beneficiaries. In this article, I cover a literature gap by expanding the narrative on Haitian women through the *poto mitan* paradigm in a humanitarian leadership context and by drawing on the feminist labyrinth metaphor to discuss their experience in humanitarian leadership. Focusing on Haitian women leaders making headway in diasporic Haitian humanitarian organizations headquartered in Miami, I share four case studies of their experiences to bring awareness to their struggles and triumphs with intersectionality. I do so through a qualitative analysis of ten interviews emphasizing four leaders in greater depth. In addition, I address the transnational feminist misconceptions about gender norms, stereotypical white supremacist perceptions of humanitarian leadership, and practices of postcoloniality in the sector. This work significantly contributes to the literature about Haitian womanhood in a humanitarian leadership context, as it showcases perspectives from a group not commonly heard from. Simultaneously, through a feminist approach, this article analyzes participants' stories intertwined with a thick description of Haitian cultural heritage and mentality to present an expanded narrative of the *poto mitan*.

Keywords: *Poto mitan*, Haitian diaspora, Haitian American women, humanitarianism, women's leadership, intersectionality, transnational feminism, gender norms, Haitian experience

Introduction

In recent years, the failure of humanitarian aid programs in Haiti has dominated world news and the literature on humanitarianism (Hsu and Schuller 2020). Whether it is regarding the overgrowth of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) operating in Haiti or the leadership oversight and mismanagement of humanitarian funds after the 2010 earthquake, the narrative on Haitian humanitarianism is marked by victimization (Klarreich and Polman 2012; Schuller 2017; Peck 2012). Specifically, Haitian American feminist Gina Ulysse argues that Haitian women have been invisibilized in this narrative (Ulysse 2015). Often, researchers in the field hired from within INGOs and external post-development critics who study Haitian women's and girls' participation in humanitarianism and engagement in their communities have lacked local women's perspectives (Markowitz 2001; Beliso-De Jesús and Pierre 2020; Schuller 2012), retold the same matrifocal narrative of Caribbean women (Rowley 2002; Mohammed 1994; Miller 1988; Kempadoo and Deshong 2021; T. Haynes 2017), or overused the concept of resilience to honor their suffering (Grove 2018). Ultimately, knowledge production on Haitian women-led humanitarianism is underexplored, and advocacy for more representation of Haitian women's leadership in the sector is underreported.

To address this literature gap, this article presents the experiences of Haitian American women in the *labyrinth* leading Haitian diasporic humanitarian community organizations (HDHCOs) in Miami.¹ First, by *labyrinth*, I reference Eagly and Carli's (2007) feminist metaphor describing the unconventional, challenging, oppressive, and yet possible journey that women go through in their careers to reach positions of power and leadership. This concept has influenced my belief and optimism that Haitian women can and should succeed in accessing leadership roles in large-scale Haitian humanitarian organizations despite the gender, racial, neoliberal, postcolonial, and many other forms of oppression they face. Also, beyond Haitian women's experience, exploring the labyrinth metaphor in the context of other "minority" groups of women's struggle in philanthropic leadership, such as Latinas and Jewish women (Pimenta 2014; Cooks 2018), has allowed me to expose and synthesize practices of discrimination in hiring and underpayment in leadership positions when it comes to women

1. Haitian humanitarian organizations (HHCOs) in this article means nongovernmental humanitarian organizations that are founded and led by Haitians to benefit Haiti and Haitians in Haiti or overseas.

(Bowles and Babcock 2013; Blau and Kahn 2007). Unlike the glass ceiling metaphor, which conveys an unsurmountable barrier, I am optimistic about Haitian women's growing leadership representation in Haitian humanitarian community organizations (HHCOs). Second, the investigative work to collect data for this article took place in Miami, outside the Malinowskian "field" that would be considered Haiti, where previous studies on failed Haitian humanitarianism and women's subjugation take place (Beliso-De Jesús and Pierre 2020). Finally, this article was written to show the diversity of Haitian womanhood not only from the *poto mitan* (Haitian Creole for central pillar) narrative standpoint, but also an extended dimension of it through humanitarian leadership that challenges the stereotypical perceptions of leadership in this sector and of Haitian womanhood. Hence, I will share the experiences of Haitian women leading HHCOs headquartered in Miami whom I interviewed and present my qualitative data analysis. In doing so, I will answer one central research question: How do the experiences of Haitian women leading HHCOs expand the narrative about Haitian feminism and perceptions of humanitarian leadership?

Background

Broadly speaking, who are Haitian women? They are born of predominantly African roots as enslaved people and *affranchies* (Casimir, Dubois, and Mignolo 2020; Labelle 1987); inherit a Creole identity made of a paradoxically rich cultural patrimony and socioeconomic instability (Cécile Accilien and Orlando 2021; Chancy 2012; Dayan 1995; Charles 1995); and navigate a diasporic status as an oppressed group all around the world that intersects with gender, racial, and national discrimination (Celeste 2017; Jackson 2011; Lamour 2021; Safran 1991; Zeleza 2009). Haitian womanhood is complex. And it is also vast, so I would not presume to define it in a single article. However, stereotypically, the notion of "strong Black womanhood" is commonly used to describe their experiences as matrifocal figures in their families and society (Miller 1988; Mohammed 1994; Rowley 2002), trendsetters for their communities (Collins 2008), guardians of the cultural heritage (Bell and Danticat 2013; Danticat 2001), and so on. In fact, in Haitian society, they are called *poto mitan*,² the presumed backbone of Haitian households and society

2. A Haitian Creole word meaning center pillar, generally found in Vodou temples to represent a connection to the underworld. The word also implies leadership of a family or a society, which is the presumed role and imposed responsibility of Haitian women, although their treatment and actual positions in Haitian society are contradictory. Hence, I refer to the *poto mitan* paradox throughout the paper.

(Bergan and Schuller 2009). Also found in Vodou temples, a *poto mitan* represents a connection to the underworld and the heavens (Rigaud 1985), meaning that the figure is grounded in cultural importance, which implies duty, leadership, and reverence (Bell and Danticat 2013). However, in reality, some Haitian women are treated with less dignity and kindness (Bergan and Schuller 2009; Lamour 2021); thus, the *poto mitan* figure is often victimized while it is revered (Ulysse 2015; N'zengou-Tayo 1998; Accilien and Orlando 2021). From the colonial to postcolonial eras, Haitian women continue to bear the weight and expectations of society, with fewer opportunities to expand the narratives on Haitian womanhood beyond stoicism (Lamour 2021; Danticat 2001). Yet Haitian society and its diaspora, including Haitian women, esteem them so much that there is a saying that a house without a woman cannot stand (Danticat 2001). Hence, the *poto mitan* paradox comes through in the article.

As the Haitian socioeconomic crisis worsened and the 2010 post-earthquake humanitarian crisis created a greater leadership vacuum in managing the country's structural needs, Haitian women have not had equal access to leading humanitarian initiatives to benefit Haiti and Haitians (Ramachandran 2015). It is as though they are invisible (Ulysse 2015), especially in the humanitarian leadership context. Many Haitian women in the Miami-based Haitian diaspora have had the similar paradoxical challenge of being labeled "resilient" and "strong Black women" (Collins 2008), yet simultaneously invisibilized or denied citizenship rights (Laguerre 1998). Those qualified to lead Haitian humanitarian initiatives are undermined in comparison to their white and male counterparts who lead large INGOs (Everest 2011). Their organizations are underfunded despite their personal contributions and proven track records of helping with Haitian causes (Everest 2011). However, as difficult as the *labyrinth* that limits their access to leadership may be, Haitian women who successfully lead HHCOs in Haiti and Miami do exist.

I must emphasize first that I have used the term *poto mitan* freely throughout the article, as it is culturally relevant to Haitian heritage and feminism. It is the paradoxical meaning and victimhood narrative associated with the concept of *poto mitan* that I find problematic. I use the term mindfully, neither to attribute nor impose it on the research participants. Second, I refer to these Haitian American women simply as Haitian women because the women in the study who fit this profile first and foremost call themselves "Haitian," which is how the world sees them (Wright 2015). Third, even though Haitian women come from all ethnicities and races, I refer to Black-skinned Haitian women in this article who are not white or Latina-passing. Finally, although

I mention the *labyrinth experience* multiple times throughout the article, I recognize the intersectional aspects of the metaphor, meaning that it is not a universal women's experience.

Theoretical Framework

This article contributes to an alternative *poto mitan* narrative by addressing transnational feminism and the postcolonial tendencies of humanitarian leadership as they relate to Haitian women. Expanding the narrative through these two theoretical frameworks in humanitarianism has allowed me to thread an intersectional exposé on Haitian women leaders and advocate for more representation of this group in humanitarian leadership. I use Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of *intersectionality*,³ founded on the interconnection of different forms of privilege and discrimination based on social categorization, to highlight how the two frameworks are relevant to my research on the concept of the *poto mitan* to expand the narrative of Haitian womanhood and the perceptions of leadership in humanitarianism (Crenshaw 1989). Then, I adopt a postmodern approach to letting the research participants' narratives come through by presenting four cases of Haitian women leaders' experiences in their own words, along with my interpretation of their interview responses. Later in my analysis, I couple intersectional insights from the literature with my interpretation of the data to generate a new dimension of Haitian womanhood and humanitarian leadership. The following brief literature overview helps to ground the conclusion and implications of this article about Haitian women's leadership in humanitarianism through the *poto mitan* narrative in the *labyrinth*.

On Transnational Feminism

While women are stereotyped as communal and well-suited for small-scale charitable pursuits (Rosette and Tost 2010; Heilman 2001), leadership roles within international humanitarian organizations have conventionally been advertised with men in mind (Chamorro-Premuzic 2019). Now that more white women are stepping into leadership roles (Wingfield 2020) and assisting with aid programs aimed at helping impoverished women and girls in developing countries, transnational feminism has gained prominence in

3. Intersectionality is the term coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) to describe the interacting effects of different forms of privilege and discrimination based on social categorizations, such as gender, race, social class, education, religion, age, sexual orientation, etc.

the narrative of humanitarianism (Patil 2011). The theory has served as an analytical tool to critique Western feminism's perception that women of color in developing countries are wholly oppressed and victimized (Mohanty 1988; T. Haynes 2017). For example, Maria Noel Vaeza, the UN Women's Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean explained that "[we] need to make sure that the rights of women and girls are taken into consideration at all levels of the response and guarantee their participation and leadership in the recovery strategy. To do so, we rely on data, which allows us to target and prioritize the needs of those in the most vulnerable situations" (UN Women 2021). Although studies generated by large humanitarian entities espouse transnational feminist principles to advocate solidarity with women and girls in developing countries, these principles are not fully actualized (Patil 2011; Markowitz 2001).

These gender and race stereotypes also transcend national territories to impact Haitian women living in the diaspora and have their ways of being manifested in places like the United States, where women of color in leadership are often subjugated and undermined by white men and women equally (Collins 2008). In the humanitarian sector, numerous studies have argued that local Haitian women community leaders are excluded from decision-making and INGO leadership (Schuller 2012); similar dynamics have been described for Black Haitian American women leaders in the United States (Rosette et al. 2016; Everest 2011). They are treated as the "outsider-within," meaning that they are never fully granted the same respect accorded to others of different gender and race in the same positions (Collins 2008). Likewise, the perception and objectification of Black women as "resilient" matrifocal figures and *poto mitan* are double standards rooted in coloniality and woven into the matrix of domination (Rowley 2002; Lamour 2021; N'zengou-Tayo 1998; Accilien and Orlando 2021; Collins 2008; Kempadoo and Deshong 2021). Traditionally, women of all races have faced challenges in accessing leadership roles due to the gender normalization that discourages women from the cutthroat or "masculine" nature of such positions (Butler 2011; Eagly and Carli 2007), like leading a Haitian humanitarian organization. However, many women view their *labyrinth* experiences as a source of strength and draw on them to inspire their roles and positions in society (Kristeva 1981). Whereas transnational feminism has traditionally focused on women's solidarity while lamenting the plight of women in developing countries (T. Haynes 2017; Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Reddock 2021; Rowley 2002; Mohammed 1994; N'zengou-Tayo 1998), my research proposes women's solidarity while also appreciating women's unique perspectives and strengths (Lorde 1984; Jordan 2003; Devault 1990).

On the White Supremacy of Postcoloniality in Humanitarianism

In addition to the gender oppression that Haitian women face while leading HHCOs, race plays a significant intersectional role (Collins 2008; Crenshaw 1989). Studies show that white supremacy is a common link among Haiti's postcoloniality (Casimir, Dubois, and Mignolo 2020; De Lauri 2016), the paternalistic nature of the humanitarian sector (Schuller 2012; Malkki 2015; Goldsmith and Mander 2001), the underrepresentation of Black women leaders in the sector, and the essentialist narratives instigated by those in the field (T. Haynes 2017; Markowitz 2001). In addition, ethnocentric norms, where Europeans and their descendants are the saviors of humankind, translate into the "white savior complex" in humanitarianism that often keeps Haitian women from leading HHCOs (Malkki 2015; Ticktin 2014; Everest 2011). However, Haitian scholars are adamant that Haitians are masters of their destiny, including Haitian humanitarianism (Casimir, Dubois, and Mignolo 2020). Moreover, research indicates that effective humanitarian programs cannot happen without including community members who know local contexts, speak local languages, and understand the needs of a community (Peck 2012; Sözer 2020; Schuller 2012). As such, this research is mindful of intersectional privileges and oppressions, and I emphasize HHCO leaders' *identities*,⁴ such as spoken languages, religious beliefs, cultural heritage, etc. From the literature that accentuates proper collaborations between researchers and stakeholders, I fashion a nuanced assessment of the participants' experiences and their contribution to Haitian womanhood and humanitarianism later in the article (N. Haynes 2020).

Methods

This article presents case studies and analysis developed from ten semi-structured interviews with women leaders of Miami-based humanitarian community organizations that benefit Haiti and the Miami-based Haitian community. Held on Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were rich and informative, ranging from 30 minutes to an hour. Per the Internal Review Board protocol, each interview was transcribed, coded, and analyzed using Zoom, Microsoft Word, and NVIVO qualitative coding software (Corbin and Strauss 2015; Creswell 1998). Overall, I interviewed women leaders who were young and older, Black and white, leading large and small

4. In this article, I say Haitian identity to reference several tenets of Haitian epistemology, such as connections to the Creole language, knowledge of the country, Haitian diaspora experiences, etc.

Table 1: Summary of Leaders and Organizations

Organization	Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Age	Program and Population Focus	Beneficiaries
Organization 1	Pam Wilson	White American	40s	INGO Development/Everyone	Haiti
Organization 2	Bella	Black Haitian American	30s	Education/Students and Teachers	Haiti
Organization 3	Denise	Black Haitian American	40s	Workers' Rights and Policy/Adults	Miami
Organization 4	La Perle	Black Haitian American	20s	Education and Agriculture/Everyone	Haiti
Organization 5	Libby	White American	40s	Christian Mission/Church Members	Haiti
Organization 6	Blossom	Black Haitian American	20s	Education and Environment/Everyone	Haiti
Organization 7	Maria	Black Cameroonian American	40s	Education and Health/Everyone	Haiti
Organization 8	Stephanie	Black Haitian American	20s	Education/Students	Miami
Organization 9	Mary May	Black Haitian American	60s	Women's Advocacy/Immigrant Families	Miami
Organization 10	Sonia	Black Haitian American	30s	Education/Students	Miami

organizations with small and large amounts of funding that serve Haitians in the diaspora and in Haiti. During the interviews, the women described their ethnicity, national background, age range, and other social identification that cued me on the role that intersectionality plays in their experiences as Haitian women humanitarian leaders. Then, in addition to signing the informed consent forms, each woman chose a pseudonym that I used in the transcription and coding phases, and I referred to their organizations in the order interviewed (Corbin and Strauss 2015; Creswell 1998; Judge et al. 2002). The following table provides a sociodemographic summary of the leaders and their organizations.

How do the experiences of Haitian women leading HHCOs expand the narrative about Haitian feminism and perceptions of humanitarian leadership? Circling back to this original question, I analyzed the matrix of social categorizations for all ten women I interviewed and the experiences they shared with me. I primarily focused on the four leaders featured in the case studies; they better represented the broader themes that emerged throughout the sample: feminist thoughts, white supremacy, intersectionality,

humanitarianism, and the impacts of their leadership. Then, to expand the narrative of Haitian women's leadership to a broader audience outside of Black women leaders, I also created a tapestry of commonalities and differences among the experiences shared by all the women. Paying particular attention to the gaps in the literature, this article contributes to transnational feminism, white supremacy, and postcolonial humanitarianism. Finally, to expand the narrative on intersectionality in humanitarian leadership, I attempt to answer two additional questions for all the commonalities and differences: what is already going well, and how can it improve?

Findings and Analysis

Case Studies

I selected La Perle, Mary May, Bella, and Denise—leaders of two organizations serving Haitians in the Miami community and two organizations serving Haitians in Haiti—whose experiences better reflected the main collective themes. In the following four cases, I recount the most relevant experiences they shared with me and my interpretation of them. I also used my positionality to interpret their responses as someone who has engaged with HHCOs in Haiti and Miami.

LA PERLE

Sitting on a garden patio surrounded by green plants and bright sunlight, timidly touching her long braids every time she smiled, La Perle radiates calm energy. Poised and articulate, she paused before answering each question. Born and raised in Haiti, she migrated with her family to Miami in her early teens and considers herself Haitian American. Now, in her mid-twenties and freshly admitted to the Florida Bar Association, La Perle is the president of Organization 4, which provides educational and environmental assistance to impoverished schools and communities in the northeastern rural part of Haiti. She claimed that her prior involvement with other Haiti-Miami charity initiatives had prepared her to cofound Organization 4, where she started as vice president. She repeatedly said that patience, perseverance, and creative thinking were the three values that embodied her approach to leadership.

In our conversation, La Perle sounded positively committed to her gender's experience in the *labyrinth*. She described several times that she was determined not to be swayed by the sexism that she encounters in her leadership role, and one of her examples stayed with me.

I feel like there's a lot of sexism in there and not necessarily only, like, I'm a man I know better, but also you're a woman, you're pretty, and I want you . . . like, OK, yeah, let's talk business, and then business always tries to merge with something else . . . another reason why there's such a low number of women in that field.

Although this type of harassment adds to the oppression she undergoes as a Black Haitian American woman leading an HHCO, she takes her role too seriously to be discouraged.

But gender and racial representation mean everything to her and Organization 4. She explained how one of her organization's purposes is to challenge white supremacist practices in humanitarianism.

After the earthquake, everybody that went to help most of them . . . maybe 90 percent of them if not more were strangers to the people, that knew nothing of the people, and people knew nothing of them, except for the name because they were big organizations . . . We feel that a lot of the young people in Haiti don't see people like them doing different things inside NGOs . . . We [Organization 4's leadership team] felt that it was necessary to be 1) Haitian, 2) young Haitian professional people that go back to our country to help because representation matters.

Her multifaceted background, which sometimes opens doors and other times closes them, has made her acutely aware of the need to normalize the representation of diverse women in the sector. She emphasized that representation was a good place to start, even if it would not solve the more significant barriers that Haitian women encounter on the path to humanitarian leadership.

La Perle draws on the power of her representation to foster mutual respect, trust, and a good rapport with Organization 4's beneficiaries. She also strongly believes that good rapport and trust are essential to beneficiaries' inclusion in organizations' decision-making. These principles are the impacts that genuinely matter to her. Therefore, she and her team prioritize this aspect of humanitarianism as a code of conduct from which never to stray. For example, she recounted an experience where she felt that a beneficiary's vulnerability in opening up resulted from her leadership style. The person in question was a female teacher at an impoverished school in northern Haiti, where Organization 4 was helping.

I feel like if it were just another foreigner passing there or just a regular organization, she probably would have said, OK, we need this, we need that. But she would not have been as vulnerable.

La Perle appreciated how open the woman was with her. She expressed that the many contributions Organization 4 makes to impoverished schools in the rural northwest of Haiti mean so much to her. However, experiences when she can connect with or help beneficiaries feel heard are more meaningful to her, as they anchor her organization's impact on a human level.

MARY MAY

Dressed in a bright red suit jacket, sitting at her desk behind a colorful Haitian woman's head painting, Mary May exudes confidence and warmth. As a middle-aged Haitian American woman and executive director of Organization 9, she has provided wraparound services to Haitian women and families in Miami since the 1980s. Our 30-minute interview turned into an hour-long conversation that was informative and enthralling. She shared many experiences about her childhood growing up in Haiti during the Duvalier regime⁵ in a household that functioned like a small community center. Raised by parents who were neighborhood advocates, she learned from their examples to stand up with the voiceless and be a voice for justice. Multiple times, she boldly claimed that many of the hardships she faced as a humanitarian organization leader were tied to the fact that she is "a woman, a Black woman, a Black Haitian woman." However, she also stated that she is a "no-nonsense kind of woman" who speaks her truth loudly and clearly and is not intimidated by anyone.

Despite her hesitancy about the term "feminist" during our conversation, Mary May held decisive views on women's roles. She believed that the family benefits when women are included and given the tools to succeed. She went as far as to claim:

If you cannot pay for the boy and girl to go to school, it's more important to send the girl to school because the girl is a socializing agent."

While grounded in her beliefs about women's superiority, which she declared in her own words in other parts of the interview, she acknowledged that certain aspects of some women's lives put them at a disadvantage compared to men when pursuing leadership opportunities.

Sometimes, I had to put the children first. My husband and I were separated after we had our first child. So, it was hard finding someone to watch the children . . . And the constant worries, you know, whether you're doing the right thing. As a mother, you always have to worry.

5. The Duvalier regime was made up of the father-and-son dictatorship duo who ruled Haiti with an iron fist from 1957 to 1986. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duvalier_family, accessed October 20, 2021.

Motherhood was as important to her life as her career in leadership. Navigating the two roles shaped her identity and became her personal definition of womanhood.

However, Mary May has faced additional constraints that many women of color experience in their humanitarian leadership careers. They have chronically low funding to run their programs because their organizations do not have name recognition compared to the large global INGOs, and their ethnicities associate them with greater risks of corruption or incompetence in managing large funds properly. She confided to me that:

For the first ten years, we didn't get any support at all . . . until we started getting national awards and human rights recognition for our leadership . . . We've done phenomenal work, but I always feel that if I were a white man instead of a Black woman, I would definitely have more support.

According to her, fulfilling the organization's mission took more than hard work. It required her diligent efforts in dealing with racism at the institutional level. Mary May alluded to a nine-month audit of Organization 9 as a punishment imposed by a Miami commissioner, whom she "put in her place" during a county commission meeting. She proudly added that by the end of the audit, the auditors recognized the commissioner's unjust allegations and held Organization 9 in high esteem.

At this intersection of race, gender, and nationality, Mary May, like many Black women, has experienced *individual, societal, and institutional dimensions of oppression* in leading Organization 9.⁶ However, based on her responses, societal oppression from the Miami-based Haitian community seems to have been the most hurtful to her.

The Haitian community didn't believe that a women's organization could last. Pa okipe yo. Kou yo kòmanse pran mari lòt ou pral wè. Bagay la pral kraze. Ret tann ou pral wè. (Don't mind these women. The moment they start to sleep with each other's husbands, you'll see. The organization will fall apart. Just wait and see.)

Even when these criticisms did not influence her 30-plus years of commitment to the organization, they hurt the part of her ego that had been conditioned to be a community leader since childhood.

6. Individual, societal, and institutional dimensions of oppression are multiple levels of the matrix of domination that Patricia Collins discusses in her 1990 book *Black Feminist Thought*.

Mary May is proud of the organization she created for the Miami-based Haitian community. When I asked what her greatest achievement leading Organization 9 was, she said:

Organization 9 has received delegations from all over the world to look at our model, which has successfully combined wrap-around services with advocacy in organizing. This is a rare model that has succeeded . . . They are always impressed by the breadth of the work and always ask: how do you do it? What is your budget like?

Having gotten this far after tremendous skepticism about her qualifications from her own community, scrutiny from racist institutions that undermined her credibility, and meager funding, she appreciates when Organization 9 is recognized for its worth. Her impact is a 40-year journey to supporting Haitian women and immigrant families' voices in Miami.

BELLA

Bella felt grounded and down to earth from the moment we started our conversation. Wearing her natural hair in a never-seen-before style, she exuded confidence and creativity. With a visible passion for what she does, the proud Haitian American woman, who is still under 30 years old and has a PhD in education, is the cofounder and executive director of Organization 2, which is gaining prominence in Haiti and recognition in the United States for bringing teacher training to a struggling Haitian education system. Bella was born in Haiti and raised in Florida, which does not detract from her sense of Haitian nationalism. She fiercely declared that Haiti belongs to Haitians and that all foreigners involved in humanitarian work in Haiti should take a back seat and let Haitians lead. With her tone of voice and demeanor, she asserted herself as rightfully being the one to be in the driver's seat.

Bella is optimistic about a future that relinquishes gender inequality. She is informed by the idea of equity over equality, meaning not only that men and women must be treated with equal dignity, but that they must also be given the same opportunities, resources, etc. Although her worldviews sound progressive, Bella's leadership in Haitian humanitarianism is inspired by conservative Christian beliefs, which are common among those involved with international development. She admitted to her leadership being driven by her faith.

It's not like a man-made calling . . . like something that I've given myself to . . . something that I've made up . . . I truly feel like God has created me to see an ending in poverty in Haiti. And the best way that I can see that

in my lifetime is through education, specifically through this organization that I helped create.

As I see it, being a Haitian and a devout Christian is the byproduct of Haiti's postcoloniality, and Bella is not an exception to that influence. In that respect and in the Haitian context, evangelical Christian practices influenced by white supremacy affect Haitian humanitarianism's leadership structure, where Haitian women typically participate in auxiliary roles. However, Bella separates her feminist and international development views from her Christian faith. In fact, her stance is quite categorical.

OK, so, my response is a little bit sharp, but if there is an organization that does not have Haitians and Haitian Americans at the highest levels of leadership on staff, on the board of directors, aren't in advisory committees, there is an opportunity for growth because Haiti belongs to Haitians. End of story.

Along with diverse and independent worldviews from her faith, she shared many other experiences that landed outside the norm for what is stereotypically expected for her gender, age group, and humanitarian leadership.

Just as feminism cannot be reduced to one thing and Haitian womanhood is not just one narrative, she is not a one-dimensional version of the *poto mitan* paradigm, either. Bella is grounded in her individuality, understanding that many aspects of her identity, along with her training, contribute to her qualification as a leader of a HHCO. Yet she finds that the same social categorizations—being a young minority woman—oppress her. She illustrated her point with a telling example.

We're sitting there with my pastor and then a leader of a multibillion-dollar business that we're trying to build a relationship with. The entire conversation, this man, he isn't looking at me in the eyes. Like he's just addressing our pastor, a white male. When I asked a question, he would look at the pastor and give the answers. It was just the weirdest hour and a half that I've ever experienced.

But Bella is confident about what she brings to the table. She also admitted that having a doctorate adds to her credibility and the trust the Haitian and internal communities put in her and Organization 2.

They [foreign leaders of INGOs in Haiti] very much now see us as the expert, and they are asking advice from me, as a Haitian. That Haitian perspective... I think it's really cool that they recognize that I have a deeper connection to the land than them, even though they have the money.

However, she does not get complacent about her leadership and organization gaining international recognition in Haitian humanitarianism.

But we won't be satisfied until we see the entire educational system transformed. That's what we're going for. That's what we will keep doing until we see more results.

Improved teachers' performance and students' literacy rates in the training program are Bella's main drive for fulfilling her calling.

DENISE

Denise's voice stood out to me because her Zoom camera was not turned on at the beginning of our interview. The measured intonation of this woman, who I could not see, sounded calm and confident. Then, her smile illuminated the screen when her camera turned on shortly after. As the executive director of Organization 3, which provides support for Haitian domestic workers in Miami, she is an advocate, an organizer, and a Haitian community leader. This is a new role that she started after the pandemic has raised her profile, although she has been active in this calling for most of her adult life. Born in Haiti and raised in Miami, Denise calls herself Haitian American while also identifying with the African American experience. She was forthcoming about her struggles as a woman of color evolving in a white-dominated sector. She was also forward about her experiences as a woman in leadership, embracing what she calls her "unique feminine attributes" as a strength and acknowledging how society perceives her choices.

Denise was quite vulnerable with me about her experience as a woman leading an organization that advocates for policy change. It is a position that has made her stronger, but one that has also come with judgment.

To be an E.D. [executive director] or what you know in the Haitian community is a boss . . . sometimes that's a negative connotation that you are not feminine enough. . . . It's kind of like folks are proud of you, as well as hmmm [silent judgment when your kin thinks that you are on the wrong path] . . . And you know what that "hmmm" means . . . Like this is not your place, and you're choosing career over family.

Recognizing that oppression does not happen only at institutional levels, she acknowledged the gender role expectations coming from her own community. The feeling of not being enough is never pleasant, but she ignored the judgment and pressure to confidently apply her ability to be a transformational leader (Northouse 2022).

In general, Denise was happy to talk about her thoughts on Blackness in feminism. As we discussed Haitian womanhood and the representation of Black Haitian women in humanitarian leadership, she shared what she came to realize when she started her role as executive director of Organization 3.

And so, I think that's a unique experience that a Black woman, who is first-generation Haitian American, to be in the leadership of this organization is quite a unicorn, to be frank.

She recognizes the racialized gender disparities in her sector and hopes that seeing Black women leading humanitarian organizations becomes more frequent. However, it is more than her gender and race that oppresses her.

Denise explained that her social class had also been the object of her oppression. She candidly talked about ways that she has felt excluded from the humanitarian leadership networks in Miami, although she belongs in those circles as the executive director of Organization 3.

We really underestimate how much . . . “these folks are not my folks...these are my types of people and those do not exist” . . . Like, I have a lived experience that is very different from people who typically arrive at this level by different means . . . It can be quite challenging to be welcomed into the typical . . . say, the country clubs, be invited to the happy hours of folks who are in a similar sector and profession.

Rather than letting her oversight by the humanitarian sector that does not perceive her as worthy to lead affect her, she embraces her background as her greatest qualification. She is steadfast in supporting Haitian immigrants in the Miami diaspora despite her lack of “the proper pedigree,” as she said.

I know that immigration fight personally because of my family background. I also know the work that these workers do personally because of my family. And so it allows me to better understand what policies we should be pushing and how to tell their stories. In Miami, there are a lot of home health aides and house cleaners who are Haitian, and I think that we're the only organization really organizing these folks, really fighting for their rights, really standing up for them.

Denise feels strongly that by aiding Haitians in the diaspora, she is helping Haitians in Haiti who depend on remittances. Although it is an imperfect system, she explained, it is more dignified than the current international charity system growing in the country.

My conversations and the many themes explored with La Perle, Mary May, Bella, and Denise were much more extensive than I can fit in this article. The other six women also greatly enriched my awareness of the *poto mitan* effect, Haitian women's engagement, and intersectional oppression in Haitian humanitarianism. Pam Wilson, Libby, Blossom, Maria, Stephanie, and Sonia were instrumental in helping me expand the narratives on Haitian women in Haitian humanitarianism.

The Expanded Narrative

Transnational Feminist Applications of the Interviewees' Experiences in the Labyrinth

Black and white women leaders in the humanitarian sector have more commonalities than differences. As this was the sentiment of the two white women I interviewed, from a transnational feminist standpoint, the myth of solidarity among all women in the *labyrinth*, who face gender oppression in one shape or another in their professional careers, seemed to be universal. For example, Mary May expressed remorse for being away from her children for too long in the early years of Organization 9. Denise also disclosed feelings of annoyance toward some members of the Miami-based Haitian community who undermine her career choice for giving Organization 3 more of her time than she should spend on getting married and bearing children. Whether pressured to perform a set gender role or conditioned from an early age to assume a gender performance, gender oppression resonated like a universal chorus among all ten women interviewed (Butler 2011). However, the experiences of the eight Haitian women were slightly different, as they aligned with the transnational feminist criticism that women from the Global South and women of color live much more challenging lives than just dealing with gender oppression when coloniality, racism, and other intersectional factors are factored in (Patil 2011; Rowley 2002). For example, Bella shared a story of when she and her team had to be airlifted out of a conflict area near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, which was turning violent due to a political protest. In fact, these are the challenges reflected in the Haitian womanhood narratives of victimization and the *poto mitan* stereotypes that, despite their encumbrance, have some grain of truth in experiences of violence, subjugation, exploitation, etc. (Ulysse 2015). I acknowledge this fact as a counterargument to this article's aim of expanding common narratives about Haitian women into the new context of humanitarian leadership. But, by the same token, the experiences

shared by the eight Haitian women shaped their strength, diversity, and tenacity as leaders of HHCOs. Mary May, for example, reminisced about her proximity to violence when she was growing up in Haiti during the Duvalier regime as a character builder for her as an adult leader of a diasporic HHCO.

If gender oppression was the commonality among the ten women, other points of divergence were more categorical. First, I noticed that some claimed more religious connections to their leadership roles than others. This matters because religious faith is integral to one's identity and can influence the perception of gender norms, humanitarianism, leadership, etc. (Boisnier 2003). For example, Libby and Maria—non-Haitian women and cofounders of Organizations 5 and 7 alongside their husbands, both Christian missions in Haiti—agreed that their roles as women leaders in their organizations were important but subordinate to their husbands. Second, I distinguished a difference in feminist attitudes primarily based on *generational mentality*.⁷ Broadly, by that I mean the different values held by older and younger women interviewed whom I connect to the narrative on Haitian women in humanitarian leadership. Among the interviewees, the younger and nonreligious women were comfortable being identified as feminists, and some embraced as a strength the gender discrimination that they had experienced as a result of their community's biases against women in leadership. The older women were less comfortable identifying as feminists, even when they supported equity for women in their careers. This is relevant to the *poto mitan* paradox, in that Haitian women are expected to be strong, valiant, and independent. Yet Haitian society and the diaspora tend to resist association with feminism because of the connotation of its perceived over-independence and stubbornness (Collins 2008; Lamour 2021). However, it is an encouraging sign that the consensus on the women I interviewed favors women's equality in humanitarian organizations leadership despite their different intersectional identifications.

The women I interviewed also agreed that Black women's representation is a form of gender equity. I agree with them that normalizing Black Haitian women in humanitarian leadership roles by having more representation addresses the concern for how women of the Global South and women of color are stereotyped and how equity can be achieved (Mohanty 1988). The aspiration for more representation of Black Haitian women leaders also

7. Generational mentality is code in my codebook from the ten interviews' analysis. I define generational mentality as examples of differences between how different generations of Haitian women perceive feminism, gender roles, and religion.

correlates with the transnational feminist ideal to replace the gender-centered focus on the discussion of equity with greater consideration of global issues and intersectionality impacting all women (Smith 2012; Patil 2011; Schuller 2012). Race, national background, immigration status representations, and many other relevant social stratifications ought to be included in the transnational feminist critique of gender equity in the context of humanitarian leadership (Collins 2008). La Perle suggested that *“the way to get more women’s voices and to get more women involved is to actually have women in those places . . . I feel it’s about time to actually have things go in different ways. We need different voices, different views.”* Adding to La Perle’s hope for more representation of women, Haitian women’s representation of diverse sexual orientations, religious affiliations, age brackets, and more also matters (Collins 2008).

Collaboration to Overcome White Supremacist Tendencies in Humanitarian Leadership

White supremacist tendencies and postcoloniality are predominant traits of the humanitarian sector (Ticktin 2014; Aloudat and Khan 2022). Furthermore, the influx of INGOs and foreign leadership in Haiti that increased after the 2010 earthquake became an opportunity for the imperialist leadership of the Group of Eight to gain more control of Haiti than before (Peck 2012). That is another point of consensus among the interviewees. The two white women expressed that they witnessed hegemonic dominance in Haitian INGOs and disagreed with it. Pam Wilson of Organization 1 revealed that organizations take longer to carry out their assignments, which creates a dependency on their services despite their sustainability missions. In addition, organizations designed to provide long-term assistance to Haitians should be led by Haitians, who are better placed to know their needs (Peck 2012; Schuller 2012). Moreover, in Haiti, coloniality is ubiquitous in the domestic humanitarian sector when members of public administrative services exercise dominance over monolingual Creole speakers with colonial linguistic-shaming practices (Delva 2019; Fanon 2021). Libby of Organization 5 described how when her staff goes to the bank, they are embarrassed when spoken to in French and do not know how to respond correctly to perform their work duties. In response, she opted to learn Creole and stepped in to defend her staff whenever they were confronted with French in administrative settings. However, she also acknowledges the “white savior” complex that others may use to judge her for defending Haitians.

The other eight Black women interviewed have experienced discrimination and white supremacy in humanitarian leadership. What they shared is

best compared to being an “outsider-within” (Collins 2008), Black women who might have access to leadership positions but are never fully integrated or accepted in their roles because of their race. These women’s experiences put into perspective how the *poto mitan* paradigm is deeply ingrained in narratives about Haitian women, who are called resilient but deemed unworthy of leading (N’zengou-Tayo 1998). Denise of Organization 3 exemplified this very well when she stated that not having the right pedigree excluded her from some leadership networking opportunities that could have helped her in her executive director role. Her *labyrinth* experience is navigating her leadership role in the humanitarian sector and the Miami-based Haitian diaspora, where her race and socioeconomic background are added challenges to her professional success (Eagly and Carli 2007; Rosette et al. 2016).

Conversely, the younger interviewees—La Perle of Organization 4, Blossom of Organization 6, and Stephanie of Organization 8—had less intense experiences dealing with white supremacy. However, their experiences emphasize that they felt pressure to be exceptional examples of young Black women leaders to change the perception that whiteness is better suited for leadership in humanitarianism. They strive to model a leadership image that can inspire Haitian youths to believe in their ability to participate in Haitian humanitarianism. The pressure that they are under to shine constantly resonates with the traditional *poto mitan* expectation as they navigate their careers in the *labyrinth*. Additionally, their being in these roles is a representation of counter-visibility against the stereotypical white male center-stage narratives in leadership (Mirzoeff 2006).

Another form of resistance to white supremacy in the humanitarian sector is the practice of equitable and respectful collaborations among all humanitarian organizations’ stakeholders (Smith 2012; N. Haynes 2020). From the interviews, I gathered the ease of the women’s experiences when collaborating transnationally with other Haitian women leaders of HHCOs in Haiti and the diaspora versus their wishes for more inclusion in INGOs and nonprofits benefiting Haitians (Everest 2011). This observed difference stems from the usually subtle but sometimes overt subjugation of Black women in the humanitarian sector (Schuller 2012). When done correctly, collaboration can become a process of healing from gender oppression, postcoloniality, and racism in the humanitarian sector (N. Haynes 2020; Smith 2012). It can empower indigenous, “local,” and marginalized actors who have previously been overlooked to lead sustainable actions that align with their agendas (Smith 2012). For example, several of the women interviewed shared that they collaborated with other women and organizations to join forces for similar programs, which have furthered their organizations’ outreach. In these instances, international

collaboration with “local” leaders is a resource for resisting white supremacy within the humanitarian sector and expanding the narrative of the *poto mitan* (N. Haynes 2020). When women leaders of Haitian organizations in Haiti and the diaspora form coalitions to support each other in their mutual agendas, it reinforces the mindset of solidarity that Haitians are masters of their destinies and better placed to lead in Haitian humanitarianism (Casimir, Dubois, and Mignolo 2020; Smith 2012; Accilien and Orlando 2021). If this notion sounds essentialist, it is a bias attributed to developing countries. For example, African and Asian foreigners would never be deemed more appropriate to lead humanitarian endeavors in the United States for American communities. In Haiti, when white humanitarians seem to have more credibility than “locals,” young Haitian women leaders, like La Perle, hope that continuous representation of leaders who look like her in HHCOs will bear fruit in the decades to come and influence the younger generation.

Conclusion

The experiences of the ten women I interviewed, particularly those featured in the case studies, contribute to the underexplored *poto mitan* narrative in a humanitarian leadership context. These women are now portrayed as examples of resistance to oppression and determination in professional humanitarian careers to overcome the *labyrinth*. Furthermore, the voices of the ten women attest to the significance of Black Haitian women’s representation in Haitian humanitarianism, as it is culturally relevant and logistically effective from a leadership standpoint to change common perceptions of humanitarianism influenced by postcolonialism. Furthermore, their experiences, which expand and diversify perceptions of Haitian womanhood, can serve all women leaders of color in all sectors. I conclude that the postcolonial tendencies of the humanitarian sector, coupled with transnational paternalism and underestimation of women of color in the Global South, influence the disproportionately low representation of Haitian women in humanitarian leadership roles and reduce funding for their humanitarian organizations. The implications of this article suggest that normalizing more representation of Haitian women leading HHCOs can increase funding opportunities for DHHCOs that benefit Haitians everywhere by 1) expanding the narrative on Haitian womanhood through the *poto mitan* figure in a humanitarian leadership context to humanize Haitian women vis-à-vis their stereotypical depictions in Haitian humanitarianism, and 2) legitimizing those who lead HHCOs to receive the same consideration as their male and white counterparts.

References

- Accilien, Cécile, and Valérie K. Orlando. 2021. "Ayiti Se Tè Glise: Intersectionalities of History, Politics, and Culture." In *Teaching Haiti: Strategies for Creating New Narratives*, edited by Cécile Accilien and Valérie K. Orlando, 1–12. Gainesville: University of Florida Press. <https://doi.org/10.5744/florida/9781683402107.003.0001>.
- Aloudat, Tammam, and Themrise Khan. 2022. "Decolonising Humanitarianism or Humanitarian Aid?" Edited by Julia Robinson. *PLOS Global Public Health* 2 (4): e0000179. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0000179>.
- Beliso-De Jesús, Aisha M., and Jemima Pierre. 2020. "Special Section: Anthropology of White Supremacy." *American Anthropologist* 122, no. 1: 65–75. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13351>.
- Bell, Beverly, and Edwidge Danticat. 2013. *Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Bergan, Renée, and Mark Schuller. 2009. "Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy." Produced by Renée Bergan and Mark Schuller. <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/wayf?redirect=watch/poto-mitan-haitian-women-pillars-of-the-global-economy>.
- Blau, Francine D., and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2007. "The Gender Pay Gap: Have Women Gone as Far as They Can?" *Academy of Management Perspectives* 21, no. 1: 7–23. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2007.24286161>.
- Boisnier, Alicia D. 2003. "Race and Women's Identity Development: Distinguishing Between Feminism and Womanism among Black and White Women." *Sex Roles* 49: 211–18. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024696022407>.
- Bowles, Hannah Riley, and Linda Babcock. 2013. "How Can Women Escape the Compensation Negotiation Dilemma? Relational Accounts Are One Answer." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 37, no. 1: 80–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684312455524>.
- Butler, Judith. 2011. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824979>.
- Casimir, Jean, Laurent Dubois, and Walter Mignolo. 2020. *The Haitians: A Decolonial History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Celeste, Manoucheka. 2017. *Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the African Diaspora: Travelling Blackness*. New York: Routledge.
- Chamorro-Premuzic, Tomas. 2019. *Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders?: (And How to Fix It)*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Chancy, Myriam J. A. 2012. *From Sugar to Revolution: Women's Visions of Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Charles, Carolle. 1995. "Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti: The Duvalierist State, Transnationalism, and the Emergence of a New Feminism (1980–1990)." *Feminist Studies* 21, no. 1: 135–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178323>.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2008. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Cooks, Gali. 2018. "Beyond the Glass Ceiling: Understanding Gender Inequities in the Jewish Communal Workforce." *eJewishPhilanthropy*, 2018. Retrieved from <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/beyond-the-glass-ceiling-understanding-gender-inequities-in-the-jewish-communal-workforce/>, accessed July 7, 2024.

- Corbin, Juliet M., and Anselm L. Strauss. 2015. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 4th edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1, article 8: 139–67. Retrieved from <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/>.
- Creswell, John W. 1998. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Danticat, Edwidge, ed. 2001. *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States*. New York: Soho Press.
- Dayan, Colin. 1995. *Haiti, History, and the Gods*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- De Lauri, Antonio, ed. 2016. *The Politics of Humanitarianism: Power, Ideology and Aid*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Delva, Rachèle-Jeanie. 2019. "Kreyòl Pale, Kreyòl Konprann: Haitian Identity and Creole Mother-Tongue Learning in Matènwa, Haiti." *Journal of Haitian Studies* 25, no. 1: 92–126. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhs.2019.0003>.
- Devault, Marjorie L. 1990. "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis." *Social Problems* 37, no. 1: 96–116. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1990.37.1.03a00070>.
- Eagly, Alice Hendrickson, and Linda Lorene Carli. 2007. *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about How Women Become Leaders*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Everest, Grace. 2011. "NGOs in Haiti: Caught in an Aid Worker Bubble." *E-International Relations*. Retrieved from <https://www.e-ir.info/2011/10/05/ngos-in-haiti-caught-in-an-aid-worker-bubble/>, accessed October 11, 2023.
- Fanon, Frantz. [1961] 2021. *The Wretched of the Earth*, 60th anniversary edition. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.
- Goldsmith, Edward. 2001. "Development as Colonialism." In *The Case against the Global Economy: And for a Turn towards Localization*, 2nd edition, edited by Edward Goldsmith and Jerry Mander, 19–34. London: Earthscan.
- Grove, Kevin. 2018. *Resilience*. London: Routledge.
- Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Encarnación, and Rhoda Reddock, eds. 2021. *Decolonial Perspectives on Entangled Inequalities: Europe and the Caribbean*. New York: Anthem Press.
- Haynes, Nell. 2020. "Ethnographic Exposure and Embodied Solidarity: Getting into the Ring with the *Cholitas Luchadoras*." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 15, no. 3: 292–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17442222.2020.1770976>.
- Haynes, Tonya. 2017. "Interrogating Approaches to Caribbean Feminist Thought." *Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies* 42, no. 3: 26–58.
- Heilman, Madeline E. 2001. "Description and Prescription: How Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent Up the Organizational Ladder." *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4: 657–74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00234>.
- Hsu, Kaiting Jessica, and Mark Schuller. 2020. "Humanitarian Aid and Local Power Structures: Lessons from Haiti's 'Shadow Disaster'." *Disasters* 44, no. 4: 641–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12380>.
- Jackson, Regine O. 2011. *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora*. New York: Routledge.
- Jean-Charles, Régine. 2021. "Getting around the Poto Mitan: Reconstructing Haitian Womanhood in the Classroom." In *Teaching Haiti: Strategies for Creating New Narra-*

- tives, edited by Cécile Accilien and Valérie K. Orlando, 15–33. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. <https://doi.org/10.5744/florida/9781683402107.003.0002>.
- Jordan, June. 2003. "Report from the Bahamas, 1982." *Meridians* 3, no. 2: 6–16. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15366936-3.2.6>.
- Judge, Timothy A., Joyce E. Bono, Remus Ilies, and Megan W. Gerhardt. 2002. "Personality and Leadership: A Qualitative and Quantitative Review." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87, no. 4: 765–80. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.4.765>.
- Kempadoo, Kamala, and Halimah A. F. Deshong. 2021. *Methodologies in Caribbean Research on Gender and Sexuality*. Miami, FL: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Klarreich, Kathie, and Linda Polman. 2012. "The NGO Republic of Haiti." *The Nation*, November 19. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/ngo-republic-haiti/>.
- Kristeva, Julia. 1981. "Women's Time." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7, no. 1: 13–35. <https://doi.org/10.1086/493855>.
- Labelle, Micheline. 1987. *Idéologie de couleur et classes sociales en Haïti*. 2nd edition. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Laguerre, Michel S. 1998. *Diasporic Citizenship: Haitian Americans in Transnational America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Lamour, Sabine. 2021. "Between Intersectionality and Coloniality: Rereading the Figure of the Poto-Mitan Woman in Haiti." *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* 9, no. 2: 136–51. <https://doi.org/10.5406/23260947.9.2.02>.
- Orde, Audre. 1984. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press.
- Malkki, Lisa H. 2015. *The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Markowitz, Lisa. 2001. "Finding the Field: Notes on the Ethnography of NGOs." *Human Organization* 60, no. 1: 40–46. <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.60.1.5777xq9cr9ke4koe>.
- Miller, Errol. 1988. "The Rise of Matriarchy in the Caribbean." *Caribbean Quarterly*, 1–21.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. 2006. "On Visuality." *Journal of Visual Culture* 5, no. 1: 53–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412906062285>.
- Mohammed, Patricia. 1994. "Nuancing the Feminist Discourse in the Caribbean." *Social and Economic Studies* 43, no. 3: 135–67. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27865978>.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1988. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review*, no. 30 (Autumn): 61–88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1395054>.
- Northouse, Peter G. 2022. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 9th edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- N'zengou-Tayo, Marie-Jose. 1998. "Fanm Se Poto Mitàn: Haitian Woman, the Pillar of Society: Rethinking Caribbean Difference." *Feminist Review* 59: 118–42.
- Patil, Vrushi. 2011. "Transnational Feminism in Sociology: Articulations, Agendas, Debates." *Sociology Compass* 5, no. 7: 540–50. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2011.00382.x>.
- Peck, Raoul, dir. 2012. *Fatal Assistance*. Velvet Film.
- Pimenta, Maria. 2014. "Latina Women Leaders: Their Experiences, Obstacles, and Triumphs." PhD diss., Creighton University. <https://researchworks.creighton.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/Latina-Women-Leaders-Their-experiences-obstacles/991005931061302656>.

- Ramachandran, Vijaya. 2015. "Haiti: Where Has All the Money Gone?" *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 1: 26–65. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jhs.2015.0003>.
- Rigaud, Milo. 1985. *Secrets of Voodoo*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
- Rosette, Ashleigh Shelby, Christy Zhou Koval, Anyi Ma, and Robert Livingston. 2016. "Race Matters for Women Leaders: Intersectional Effects on Agentic Deficiencies and Penalties." *The Leadership Quarterly* 27, no. 3: 429–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.01.008>.
- Rosette, Ashleigh Shelby, and Leigh Plunkett Tost. 2010. "Agentic Women and Communal Leadership: How Role Prescriptions Confer Advantage to Top Women Leaders." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 95, no. 2: 221–35. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018204>.
- Rowley, Michelle. 2002. "Reconceptualizing Voice: The Role of Matrifocality in Shaping Theories and Caribbean Voices." In *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought*, edited by Patricia Mohammed, 22–43. Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press.
- Safran, William. 1991. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1: 83–99. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1991.0004>.
- Schuller, Mark. 2012. *Killing With Kindness*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- . 2017. "Haiti's 'Republic of NGOs.'" *Current History* 116, no. 787: 68–73. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2017.116.787.68>.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edition. London: Zed Books.
- Sözer, Hande. 2020. "Humanitarianism with a Neo-Liberal Face: Vulnerability Intervention as Vulnerability Redistribution." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 11: 2163–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1573661>.
- Ticktin, Miriam. 2014. "Transnational Humanitarianism." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43, no. 1: 273–89. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102313-030403>.
- Ulysse, Gina Athena. 2015. *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives: A Post-Quake Chronicle*, trilingual edition. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- UN Women. 2021. "Rapid Gender Analysis in Haiti Reveals Earthquake-Related Impacts on Women and Girls." <https://data.unwomen.org/features/rapid-gender-analysis-haiti-reveals-earthquake-related-impacts-women-and-girls>.
- Wingfield, Adia Harvey. 2020. "Women Are Advancing in the Workplace, but Women of Color Still Lag Behind." *Brookings*, October 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/women-are-advancing-in-the-workplace-but-women-of-color-still-lag-behind/>.
- Wright, Michelle M. 2015. *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Zezeza, Paul Tiyaambe. 2009. "Africa and Its Diasporas: Remembering South America." *Research in African Literatures* 40, no. 4: 142–64. <https://doi.org/10.2979/RAL.2009.40.4.142>.