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Les jeunes Haïtiens dans les Amériques

Haitian Youth in the Americas

Sous la direction de
Louis Hérns Marcelin
Toni Cela
Henri Dorvil



Presses de l'Université du Québec

CHAPTER
2

**NEGOTIATING EDUCATION
GENDER, POWER AND VIOLENCE IN HAITI'S HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS¹**

Toni Cela

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1. This study resulted from several research grants. The first was a study on the Socio-Cultural Costs of Pursuing Higher Education for Women in Haiti (2016-2017), funded by the Spencer Foundation, Contract #201600158; the second, focused on the State of Higher Education in Haiti (2013-2015), funded by the United States Fulbright Scholar Program and the Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development (INURED). Additional data were collected under a study on Diaspora Involvement in Higher Education in Haiti (2011-2014), funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada, Contract #C1100158.

RÉSUMÉ

La lutte pour l'égalité des sexes a été adoptée par de nombreuses nations comme faisant partie d'une initiative globale pour l'*empowerment* des femmes, et l'on considère qu'elle est essentielle au développement durable des pays du Sud. Au cœur de cet effort se trouve l'éducation, dont on pense qu'elle est porteuse d'une égalité capable d'améliorer l'accès des femmes au marché du travail, y compris à des postes décisionnels leur permettant d'avoir une incidence sur les politiques et les dispositions législatives. Tandis que des initiatives telles qu'Éducation pour tous concentrent leurs efforts sur la parité dans l'éducation, avec l'objectif d'aller vers plus d'égalité, des études ont montré que les contextes socio-culturels dans lesquels les institutions éducatives opèrent posent de nouveaux défis à l'émancipation des femmes, et notamment par leur exposition à de nouvelles formes de violence.

En nous appuyant sur les données d'une évaluation nationale de l'enseignement supérieur datant de 2014, et sur une enquête ethnographique postérieure sur le pouvoir, le genre et la violence au sein des établissements d'éducation supérieure en Haïti, ce chapitre illustre comment la vulnérabilité des jeunes Haïtiennes s'étend aux campus universitaires en observant les coûts socioculturels de la poursuite d'études secondaires. Tout en examinant les expériences qu'ont les étudiantes de la violence et les significations assignées aux différentes formes d'abus, une attention particulière est portée aux dynamiques de pouvoir ainsi qu'au manque de mécanismes efficaces de responsabilité au sein de ces établissements. L'évaluation nationale et l'enquête ethnographique ont mis en évidence le fait que les universités haïtiennes ont négligé d'adopter des politiques de protection, pour les femmes qui fréquentent l'université, contre le harcèlement, l'exploitation et la violence sexuelle. Ce chapitre, « *Negotiating Education: Gender, Power and Violence in Haiti's Higher Education Institutions* [Négocier l'éducation: genre, pouvoir et violence dans les établissements haïtiens d'enseignement supérieur] » explore les différentes stratégies qu'ont employées ces jeunes femmes, par exemple la résistance, la complicité ou le consentement, pour survivre à cette expérience universitaire, persévérer dans leurs objectifs de formation, enfin, se protéger. Le chapitre se termine par trois recommandations clés pour les institutions de l'éducation supérieure en Haïti: a) le développement de codes de conduite qui établissent les paramètres relationnels entre administrateurs scolaires, facultés et étudiants et qui rendent chacune de ces parties comptable du respect de ces politiques; b) l'adoption et le renforcement des politiques contre le harcèlement sexuel qui protègent les étudiants, en particulier les jeunes femmes, et qui maintiennent l'intégrité de ces établissements; et c) l'adoption par les universités haïtiennes d'un rôle moteur dans la sphère publique en facilitant le dialogue communautaire sur la violence sexiste et son effet sur les institutions haïtiennes en particulier et sur la société en général.

2.1. VIOLENCE AND THE THREAT TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Historically, gender-based violence within educational institutions in developing countries has been explored at the primary and secondary school levels; however, increasing reports of sexual abuse at universities in both the Global North and South have drawn attention to incidence of violence within higher education institutions. What these reports unveil is that universities function within a variety of sociocultural contexts in which phallogocentric norms define women's positionality and female students' vulnerability within these institutions. Embedded in various forms of patriarchal structures, higher education institutions encode multilayered power differentials between administrators, instructors and students and enact gender biases that often lead to sexual harassment and the exploitation of female students at the very sites entrusted with their empowerment. The lines between consensual relationships and exploitation are often blurred for young women in university contexts, particularly in countries such as Haiti where there is no preexisting legal framework to deter sexual harassment. With gender-based violence scholarship and activism in Haiti disproportionately focused on intimate partner and community (gang) violence (Berg, 2010; Clark, 2006; Duramy, 2014; Farmer, 2004; James, 2010; Marcelin, 2015; Maternowska, 2006; Small *et al.*, 2008; Willman and Marcelin, 2010), the pervasive nature of this phenomenon, which permeates modern institutions in Haiti, requires further exploration.

The fight for gender equality has been adopted by many nations as part of a global initiative for women's empowerment and is considered critical for sustainable development in the Global South (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2015). At the heart of this effort is education, which is believed to have equalizing potential that will increase women's access to the labor market, including decision-making positions that will create opportunities for them to impact policy and legislation. While initiatives such as Education for All (EFA) focus on gender parity in education, with the aim of working toward equality, studies have shown that the sociocultural contexts under which educational institutions operate pose new challenges for women's empowerment, one of which is exposure to new forms of violence.

Drawing on data from a national study of university student experiences (2013-2015) and an ethnographic study of power, gender and violence at higher education institutions in Haiti (2016-2017), this chapter illustrates how the vulnerability of Haitian women extends to university campuses by exploring the sociocultural costs of pursuing higher education. While examining students' experiences of violence and the meanings assigned to various forms of abuse incurred, particular attention is paid to the power dynamics and lack of viable mechanisms for accountability within these institutions.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of gender and education as related to the phallogocentric values that permeate the field of higher education. The discussion then turns to the key theoretical explanatory argument drawn from Drummond's (1980) concept of the *cultural continuum*, a sociocultural frame that embeds values and norms about self and others, gender and sexuality, and color and class in the Caribbean where Haiti is an exemplar. The cultural continuum concept provides a theoretical framework to understand the logic and implicit meanings (Bourdieu, 1990, 2001) that underlay the uses of sexuality in higher education institutional life. The chapter argues that gender conditions in higher education institutions in Haiti are reflective of a cultural system rooted in the historical legacy of a plantation society. At the core of this cultural system is a hierarchy that classifies and categorizes, and establishes gender-based roles and associated practices embodied through sex and sexuality. These norms and values permeate Haitian institutions, in this case universities, where female students are subject to harassment and sexual violence. The chapter concludes with key recommendations on national and institutional policies that could protect female students, guarantee institutional accountability and position institutions of higher learning to play an active role in fostering dialogue and change on issues such as gender inequality and gender-based violence that continue to plague Haitian society.

2.2. GENDER AND EDUCATION IN HAITI

The EFA initiative has mobilized nations around the world in an effort to provide access to quality education for all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable and have been historically marginalized (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2016). As a result, much of the focus on education in the Global South has highlighted issues of access, as many nations have grappled with low participation rates. Historically, Haiti has had some of the lowest participation rates in the Caribbean region (Wolff, 2008). In 2007, Haiti's Ministry of Education (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Formation professionnelle [MENFP], 2007) reported primary and secondary participation rates at 75% and 22%, respectively. By 2014, overall participation rates rose to 88% for children ages 6 to 12 (Inter-American Development Bank [IDB], 2014). Despite these gains, educational access for Haitian girls remains an issue as Haiti's gender parity index is estimated at 0.81 (UNESCO, 2015). Only 6.5% of Haitian youth are enrolled in tertiary institutions where gender disparity persists with male students outnumbering their female counterparts by a ratio of 3 to 2 (UNESCO, 2015).

While increasing the participation rates of female students remains important, understanding their experiences within educational settings not only sheds light on their ability to persist but provides insights into the sociocultural factors that impede their participation.

Interest in the experiences of girls and women in educational settings has increased over the past several decades (Burke, 2014; Jacobs, 1996; Johnson, 2014). Studies have shown that schools, often considered safe havens, can serve as sites of non-partner violence (Contreras et al., 2010; World Health Organization [WHO], 2012). Similarly, at universities entrusted with the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and the instillation of civic virtues in members of society (Bowen, Kurzweil, and Tobin, 2005), female students have been victims of sexual harassment and violence in the Global North (Anderson, Svrluga, and Clement, 2015; Leach, 2013; Levin, 2016) and the Global South (Joubert, van Wyk, and Rothmann, 2011; Leach, 2013; WHO, 2012). The experience of violence within university settings in both developed and developing contexts calls attention to the need for further examination of the patriarchal structures and cultural contexts that facilitate such incidents. In Haiti, where political instability, natural disasters, and extreme poverty exacerbate vulnerabilities, particularly for women, understanding the sociocultural costs of pursuing higher education for young women is imperative for sustainable development efforts but also as a human rights issue. Yet, with the exception of an assessment of higher education institutions conducted in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake (Interuniversity Institute for Research and Development [INURED], 2010), scientific inquiry into this phenomenon has been limited both in Haiti and globally.

Several studies of gender-based violence in universities in the Global South have been conducted in sub-Saharan Africa where data reveal that sexual harassment of female students by male instructors/administrators is widespread (Kayuni, 2009; Norman, Aikins, and Binka, 2013; Shumba and Matina, 2002; Zindi, 1994). Despite the pervasive nature of violence in the Caribbean, family and community violence against girls and women receives the lion's share of attention (Cobbett and Warrington, 2013; Contreras et al., 2010; Leach, 2013). In Haiti, estimates of the lifetime prevalence rates of sexual violence are particularly high at nearly 26% (Sumner et al., 2015). Further, studies have linked experiences of sexual violence with increased risk for later sexual exploitation (Jewkes, Sen, and Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Mimiaga et al., 2009), thereby suggesting that young Haitian women may be particularly vulnerable to the sexual exploitation present in university settings. Yet data on university-based violence in the Caribbean, in general, and Haiti, in particular, are nearly nonexistent despite high prevalence rates of sexual violence in these

contexts. As Cannella and Perez (2012) assert, “male dominance ... is a major and rhizomatic form of power in higher education; patriarchy is alive, even healthy, unquestioned, and systemic” (p. 279).

University systems characterized by weak governance and limited resources in nations with high poverty levels and gender inequality render female students extremely vulnerable to sexual violence (Sharma, 2013). These abuses perpetuated by educators generally entail sexual favors as *quid pro quos* for grades, access to exams, and/or enrollment assistance (Leach, 2013). Yet the consequences of sexual harassment or violence for victims can be severe, resulting in depression, post-traumatic stress, psychological distress, and reproductive and physical health complications (Buchanan et al., 2009; Huerta et al., 2006; Jewkes et al., 2002). Examining student experiences of violence within university settings will broaden our understanding of gender-based violence as part of a cultural system that generates hierarchical relations between groups, in this case males and females, that are perpetuated in homes and communities, as well as in “modern” institutions that are expected to mitigate such behaviors.

2.3. SOCIOHISTORICAL LEGACIES OF VULNERABILITY: POWER, VIOLENCE AND GENDER

The analysis in this chapter is framed within the larger Caribbean context of what Lee Drummond (1980) called the “cultural continuum,” a spectrum of historical legacies of hierarchy, gender, race, class and patriarchy carried through values, norms and structures that shape Caribbean society in general and Haitian society in particular (Marcelin, 2012; Mintz and Price, 1992; Trouillot, 2002). It is argued that universities in Haiti encode these values through multilayered power differentials between administrators, instructors and students and enact gender biases that often lead to sexual harassment and exploitation.

Drummond (1980), in characterizing societies and institutions (e.g., family, schools, religion or states) in the post-slavery/post-plantation Caribbean, introduced the concept of cultural continuum to depict a set of values and practices that have no uniform rules or invariant properties but defines societies in the region. Others (Mintz and Price, 1992; Trouillot, 2002) have shown the relevance of the concept of cultural continuum in examining how plantation legacies have served as a “cultural matrix” (Trouillot, 2002, p. 198) for Caribbean societies, including Haiti (Dayan, 1995; Marcelin, 2012, 2015), despite their different trajectories and realities. In this chapter, it is hypothesized that higher education institutions embed and enact multilayered sociocultural scripts from this cultural continuum matrix, which shape the interplay between sexuality and gender in academic sites. Violence, as part of the cultural system that informs

Haitian practices (Marcelin, 2012), is used to maintain social hierarchies rooted in patriarchy, of which gender is at the core. Cultural systems are kept intact through social systems (e.g., family, community) and permeate modern institutions. Social norms and values generate normative interactions between groups that reinforce existing hierarchies and male/female typologies. As such, men and women have distinctive and prescribed languages with definitions, essentialized social roles, and embodied values (distinguished by class, ethnic group, urban/rural) that are rooted in social relations born of plantation societies. These deeply held values remain inculcated in society and are reproduced through habitus.

This historical legacy underlies masculine domination as well as the sexualization and objectification of women in Haiti. As the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IAHRC) (2009) asserts,

Discrimination against women is a constant and structural feature in Haitian society and culture, both in times of peace and unrest. Accordingly, such discrimination must be addressed in order to ensure the full protection of women's rights and to achieve the eradication of the problem of violence against women in Haiti (para. 8).

In Haitian society, sex and sexuality must be negotiated by women, since culturally they have been deemed subordinate to men who dominate economically, politically and socially. As Bourdieu (2001, p. 66) explains,

Masculine domination constitutes women as symbolic objects whose being (*esse*) is a being-perceived (*percipi*) [and] has the effect of keeping them in a permanent state of bodily insecurity, or more precisely of symbolic dependence They are expected to be “feminine”..., and what is called “femininity” is often nothing other than a form of indulgence towards real or supposed male expectations, particularly as regards the aggrandizement of the ego. As a consequence, dependence on others (and not only men) tends to become constitutive of their being.

Thus, Haitian women are characterized by their dependence on and objectification by men. There is no better place where popular attitudes regarding the subordinate status and objectification of women has been documented than in Haitian popular music. As the late *Coupé Cloué* declared in one of his songs, *Nan peyi pa m fanm pa komandé* [Where I'm from women aren't in charge]. In the song titled, *Chambre Gaçon* [A Man's Room], but better known by its subtitle, *Sociss* [Sausage], *Coupé Cloué* emphasizes the importance of maintaining the dominance of Haitian men over women, while making disparaging remarks about lesbians and reminding his listeners that *sociss pa manje kanpe* [sausage isn't eaten

2. *Coupé Cloué* (1925-1998) was a prominent Haitian musician whose distinctive style of Haitian popular music, known as *kompas mamba*, included storytelling and was filled with innuendo.

standing up]. These misogynistic lyrics are well-known and sung by both men and women in Haiti. Similarly, a 2016 carnival song released by the Haitian musician known as Sweet Micky, who at the time was the outgoing President of Haiti, in response to a female political critic, journalist, and human rights activist, taunted, "Take it out and put it in her behind. Give her the banana!" In both songs, a double entendre is used as a reference to the male anatomy while reducing women to sexual objects. These forms of domination have evolved within global institutions, and such hierarchies are maintained through (often symbolic) violence that is encoded in "modern" institutions such as the university. Thus, the university's female constituencies are particularly vulnerable because they are generally outnumbered by their male counterparts who hold positions of power. Further, both males and females engage in social practices that conform to a cultural continuum that has established a rigid hierarchy along gender lines with associated stereotypes, values and norms that objectify women and reinforce their subordinate status.

Female students endure sexual harassment informed by the same sexist attitudes contained in the above-referenced lyrics, which are held by the broader society. According to Eliason, Hall, and Anderson (2012), gender harassment "expresses sexist beliefs" and "can consist of sexual objectification, gender role prejudice and stereotyping, or demeaning and derogatory comments" (p. 346). These beliefs may be hostile and have the aim of controlling and dominating women or take the form of benevolence, a paternalistic view that reinforces stereotypes such as the weakness of women (Sakalli-Uğurlu, Salman, and Turgut, 2010). Young women who attend university must, therefore, develop various strategies (agency) to pursue higher learning, while navigating institutions dominated by men (structure) who wield disproportionate levels of social, economic, and political power (capital) in society. Thus, Bourdieu's (1990) concepts of agency, structure, capital and habitus are critical in defining the sociocultural resources that are brought to enact and resist situations where the interplay between sexuality and gender leads to undesired materiality.

Female students' experiences of sexual abuse in university settings exemplify what Bourdieu (1990) refers to as symbolic power and symbolic violence. Power, whether political or economic, cannot be effectively deployed unless both the dominant and dominated groups consent to maintain the social order, a process of legitimization brought about through symbolic power. However, he notes that as exercising direct domination over others becomes more difficult, the need for more subtle forms of domination emerges, or what he terms symbolic violence. Through symbolic violence, the dominant "impose the means for comprehending and adapting to the social world by representing economic and political power in disguised, taken-for-granted forms" (Swartz, 1997, p. 89) making

dominated groups complicit in their own domination. In the university context, as in Haitian society, the social practice of gender differentiation occurs in which the "material point of reference" is sex and sexuality embodied through the "habitus" (Krais, 2006, p. 120-121).

Habitus shapes actions in relation to aspirations generated by the opportunities and disadvantages that result from objective structures and thus must be understood within their social context (*i.e.*, "habitus and institution, habitus and history, habitus and the social order;" Krais, 2006, p. 124). While one's life experiences may be unique, they "are shared in terms of their structure with others of the same social class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, occupation, nationality, region and so forth" (Maton, 2008, p. 52). These opportunities and disadvantages are internalized and transformed into "durable, transposable dispositions" that are passed on from generation to generation (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53), in this case unifying the experiences of masculine domination by women throughout Haitian society, including those attending institutions of higher learning.

As Bourdieu asserts, educational institutions play a principal role in "controlling the allocation of status and privilege in contemporary societies" (Swartz, 1997, p. 189). In the Caribbean, studies have shown that these institutions also serve as sites that reproduce gender inequities and social inequality through symbolic power and symbolic violence. The currencies of power and violence (symbolic or structural) are captured through quantitative and ethnographic methods in order to evaluate their efficiency and efficacy in Haiti's social and cultural contexts.

2.4. RESEARCH METHODS

Data for this chapter are extracted from a national assessment of higher education conducted by INURED between 2013 and 2015. The assessment employed a multidisciplinary and mixed-methods approach which included document analysis, GIS mapping, surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Findings from the assessment revealed the need for a closer examination of issues of power and violence in the higher education sector and their impact on student experiences, particularly young women. Funding was secured in 2016 to conduct a follow-up ethnographic study of power, gender and violence at institutions of higher learning in Haiti. The ethnographic study consisted of focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations at university campuses. This chapter focuses exclusively on data drawn from the student survey, focus group discussions and semi-structured and in-depth interviews, as well as observations conducted during the 2013-2015 assessment and 2016 ethnographic study.

Of approximately 180 known higher education institutions operating in Haiti, a sample of 65 institutions were selected for participation in the assessment using the following criteria: geographic location, student population, institutional status (public or private) and legal status (including government recognized institutions and those operating without government recognition).³ A national survey tool was administered to 983 students who were approached at their campus sites. Potential participants were informed of the study's objectives and asked for their written consent to participate prior to administering the survey. There was one criterion for participation in the student survey: respondents had to be enrolled at one of the higher education institutions in Haiti selected for inclusion in the study. Surveys were available in French, one of Haiti's two official languages as well as the official language of instruction at universities, and Haitian Creole, the nation's other official, and most commonly spoken, language. Participants were given the option of completing the survey in the language in which they were most comfortable. This chapter contains data derived from the section of the survey titled "Access and Equity." Within this section, 23 closed and 7 open-ended questions regarding students' experiences of discrimination, preferential treatment, harassment, abuse and violence were explored.

Qualitative approaches served as a complement to the survey, as they facilitated further exploration of themes (Bogdan and Biklen, 2006). A combination of several qualitative techniques, which have been documented as effective approaches (Agar and MacDonald, 1995; Maxwell, 2005; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), were employed in the assessment, including 35 semi-structured interviews with students, 14 focus group discussions with 106 participants and observations conducted at the 65 campus sites. Students were approached on campus where they were informed of the study's objectives then asked if they would agree to participate in an interview or focus group discussion. All study materials were made available in French and Haitian Creole. To facilitate candid and fluid dialogue, all focus group discussions and interviews were conducted in Haitian Creole. Focus group discussions and interviews were conducted at a location of the students' choosing, including both on- and off-campus sites, and covered themes, including ethics, academic integrity, discrimination,

3. The *Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Formation professionnelle* (MENFP) (Ministry of Education) is responsible for the oversight of the recognition process which is distinct from accreditation. Higher education institutions can apply for government recognition once they are fully operational which results in many institutions functioning without it. Presently, there is no process for university accreditation in Haiti. For more information on the government recognition process, see INURED (2010) and Cela (2016).

harassment, abuse and violence. Whereas quantitative data were collected through surveys, interviews provided a deeper understanding of student experiences and perspectives on violence in the university context. Through observations, these experiences could be verified and inferences drawn from those perspectives (Maxwell, 2005, p. 94). Field observations were conducted at the 65 university sites across the country in order to record the complexity of interactions between people, space and time.

For the ethnographic study, 6 focus group discussions, 24 in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations were conducted at 15 university campuses. The themes covered included perceptions of female student abilities and performance at universities, student vulnerability to exploitation and violence, perceptions of the morality and ethics of intimate relations between students and faculty or students and administrators, existence and enforcement of sexual harassment policies at universities, areas of convergence/divergence in student experiences of exploitation/violence at public and private institutions and the role of social media in facilitating or hindering such relations. For the purposes of this chapter, the observations referred to herein highlight how resource constraints in the higher education sector are reflected in space limitations that exacerbate student vulnerability.

Descriptive and nonparametric analyses were drawn from the quantitative data for the identified questions using a Statistical Analysis Software Package (SPSS). Qualitative data were coded using thematically-based content/discourse analysis of the interviews and focus groups, which accounted for sentences, ideas, and events that generated an understanding of structural contexts that shaped the experiences of harassment and violence of female students at universities as well as the strategies they employed to confront these situations. The embedded themes in interview texts were highlighted with attention paid to their formulation by interviewees through fragmentation and coding of the interview texts.

2.5. CONFIDENTIALITY

The research team obtained approval from INURED's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the IRB protocol was respected. The survey, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews were preceded by an introduction to the study, and participants were informed of the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation and that their participation could be withdrawn at any time. In addition, all participants provided written or verbal consent to participate in the study. Consent was also obtained to tape record those who participated in focus group discussions or interviews.

2.6. FINDINGS

2.6.1. Quantitative Data

INURED's National Assessment of Higher Education institutions in Haiti included a student survey with questions regarding how instructors evaluated students' academic performance. Over three-fifths (63%) of student participants were between 18 and 24 years of age, slightly over one-third (34%) between the ages of 25 and 34, and approximately 2% were 35 years of age or older. More than half (54%) reported as male, 45% as female and less than 1% (0.6%) reported as other. The vast majority of students were single (91.5%), and just over 5% reported being married (Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1.
Student Demographics

Student Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Age Distribution		
18–24 yrs.	625	62.7
25–34 yrs.	336	34.3
35–44 yrs.	18	1.8
45+ yrs.	4	0.4
Gender Distribution		
Female	445	45.3
Male	531	54.1
Other	6	0.6
Marital Status		
Single	899	91.5
Married	50	5.1
Divorced	2	0.2
Other	31	3.1

* All percentages are shown as percent of total responses. Percentages may not add up to 100.

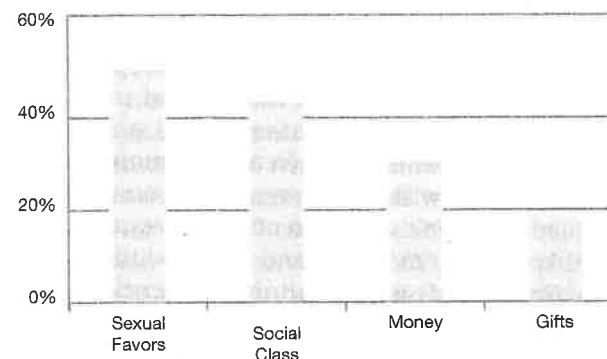
Source: INURED National Assessment of Higher Education 2015 (Compilation by INURED).

Study participants were asked whether university instructors' evaluations of student academic performance were influenced by non-academic criteria to which 44% (428 students) responded in the affirmative. Of those who reported that non-academic factors influenced student evaluations, they identified sexual favors (51%, 219 students), social class

(44%, 190 students), money paid to instructors (31%, 131 students) and gifts (19%, 82 students) as influencing student evaluations. Of note is that students were given the latitude to provide multiple responses for this question (Figure 2.1).

FIGURE 2.1.

Non-Academic Factors Influencing Student Evaluations



Source: INURED National Assessment of Higher Education 2015 (Compilation by INURED).

Notably, male respondents were more likely to report that non-academic factors influenced student evaluations overall, representing 57% of the 428 participants who responded affirmatively to this question. This pattern was consistent in all areas: 64% of the respondents who said sexual favors influenced student evaluations were male, 59% of the respondents who said social class influenced student evaluations were male, 63% of the respondents who believed money influenced student evaluations were male, and 67% of the respondents who reported that gifts influenced student evaluations were male. What the data from the survey reveal is that sexual favors were the most commonly identified non-academic factor that influenced how students were evaluated. However, when examined along gender lines, male participants (141 in total) identified sexual favors while female participants identified sexual favors (77) and social class (77) as the principal non-academic factors influencing student evaluations by instructors. As a result of these findings, student sexual exploitation was a major concern identified by participants of the survey, which was further explored through open-ended survey questions, qualitative and ethnographic methods, the results of which are elaborated on the next page.

2.6.2. Qualitative and Ethnographic Data

2.6.2.1. Marginalizing and Objectifying Female University Students

Field observations revealed that women, in general, were under-represented at most university campuses, though there were exceptions in professions deemed appropriate for them, such as nursing. In general, at most university campuses or sites, males outnumbered females in the student body, among the faculty, and in administration. Their minority status at these institutions reflects broader discriminatory practices affecting women throughout Haitian society influenced by cultural beliefs regarding their inferiority that were captured in student narratives. One student at a public university explained, "When I was coming to take the [entry] exam, they told me I would not pass because I am a woman. It is not easy at all [author's translation]."⁴ Another female participant explained how her male peers attempted to intimidate their female counterparts in an engineering program, "The guys are always making up twoubadous⁵ about the girls saying that only ugly girls study here. There are fewer girls in this school than guys and women get jobs more quickly so the guys have become very aggressive toward us." During an all-female focus group in the department of the West, a private university student expressed her frustration with how female students were perceived at her institution,

When I think of higher education, from administration down to the maintenance guys, they all have this manner, a way that they look at you ... they look at women from a different angle than they do others. Your peers look at you as a weak being. They are always asking you if you can do this. They always underestimate women When you consult the Director, if he is not trying to make a deal with you, he wants something else.

This student shared her experience of marginalization by different constituencies within the university ranging from the administrators to her peers, including the maintenance staff. Further, her objectification by an administrator illustrates the interplay between power and violence. The marginalization of young Haitian women fortunate enough to gain access to higher education institutions reflects the hierarchical relationship that exists between males and females throughout Haitian society. Sexual violence at these institutions is yet another manifestation of these social norms and values.

As mentioned above, sexual favors were most commonly reported as influencing student assessments at universities, and females were exclusively reported to be the victims of male instructors and administrators.⁶ As one student from a private institution in the department of the North explained during an interview, "A professor can have a sexual relationship with a student. Why? For grades!" Female participants described harassment by male instructors as a regular occurrence, as this female student in the department of the West explained: "It is quite uncommon for female students to study at the university without a male instructor making advances toward them. It's something that happens often." Another female student in the same focus group concurred, adding that, "Most of my friends ... have an instructor who is talking to them, making offers or demands." During a female focus group in the department of the North, one student suggested that male instructors do make sexual advances toward female students but that the student's comportment could facilitate or hinder such advances, "You'll find some [females] who are somewhat reserved who make it hard for them [instructors] to make such advances ... then you'll find some who are somewhat independent, very loose so they treat you in the manner in which you come." Here the student suggests that young women can instigate or prevent these sexual advances. Contrarily, this student in the South believed instructors had the power to dictate whether these relationships would happen: "The professor can just decide they want the student and then you hear that the professor is involved with them."

Many participants agreed that instructors had the power to compel students to accept their advances. As in this example provided during a focus group discussion in which a participant explained how the thesis⁷ requirement placed female students in a precarious position, "These men [faculty members] think that they have to sleep with the girls before they allow them to defend their thesis. They say that this is particularly the case in the School of Law." During a focus group discussion in the North, a student shared her friend's experience:

They do not treat female and male students the same because where I am there is a staff member, from the day a female student registers he asks for their telephone number ... I have a friend, he asked for her number, and she didn't give it to him and they marked down her exam ... and during an argument the director told them to kick her out and told her to come back the next day for her money [exam fees]. He even asked her to apologize but my friend refused. She said she'd rather leave school than apologize.

6. It should be noted that most university administrators in Haiti generally teach courses in addition to their administrative duties.

7. Most undergraduate programs in Haiti require that students complete a thesis to graduate. Students must independently secure a faculty sponsor to guide them through the development and defense of the thesis.

4. All quotes have been translated by the author, unless otherwise indicated.

5. *Twoubadou* is a genre of Haitian music that focuses on stories of love and often includes suggestive lyrics.

During focus group discussions, many female students shared their own experiences of sexual harassment. This particular student shared in an open-ended survey question her experience with a male instructor at a public university, "I rejected a professor's advances and he failed me. What's worse is that students who had lower grades than me were allowed to take make-up exams. I didn't get that chance." Rebuffing the sexual advances of instructors or administrators can have severe consequences, as this student from a private university shared in an open-ended survey question, "He [the instructor] tried to rape me."

2.6.2.2. Female Students and the Benevolent Predator

Throughout the study, students were asked whether males or females received preferential treatment from instructors. During a focus group discussion in the West, one female student shared, "You find that there are professors who ... give females priority ... they give female students more importance." In a separate all-male focus group in the West, a student suggested that female students did receive preferential treatment while also questioning it:

There is a tendency down there that makes men mostly want to work with the ladies. In that sense, I can say there is preferential treatment. If he's not available for me, I mean my theme may not interest him, but how is it that all of a sudden you are available to work with a female right in front of me. Why weren't you available for other guys?

In that focus group, all male participants concurred that male instructors were more readily available to advise and support female students than they were for male students. During the same focus group, another student questioned male instructors' availability to serve as thesis advisors for female students and their reluctance to advise male students with similar research interests. In a female focus group in the West, a similar remark was made about the preferential treatment female students receive:

Personally, based on my observations, things are more favorable for the girls ... for example, if I don't understand something the professor is more likely to say, "Here's my number. You can call me, and we can meet up so that I can explain this" I've seen that. It's different for guys. The professor will tell them, "You are a man, what is it that you can't understand? Just go to this website, click on it, and you'll find all the information. Here is a book you should check out."

This student's statement suggests that there are different expectations for male and female students in terms of academic performance. Male instructors are more inclined to offer additional assistance to female students that extends beyond the classroom. However, some female students challenged the idea that they are better treated than their male peers as this student argued: "You say that girls have priority, but I would say when a

person gives someone priority, an advantage, it is something that is done for free. This is not free. They lean toward the girls in order to get something but it's not really priority that they are giving to girls. They are looking for something from them." This student challenges the notion of instructor benevolence toward female students by suggesting that preferential treatment is a method used by male instructors to prey on young women in their classrooms.

2.6.2.3. Sexual Violence and the Complicity of Female Students

While participants held divergent views of instructor motives behind the favorable treatment of female students, others emphasized how some students capitalized on the attention and were complicit in these arrangements. For example, one study participant explained: "For a female student, sometimes they don't make the grade so they chose to sell their bodies so that the professor will pass them in the course so that they don't lose the entire year ... This happens all the time in this society. I'm not the only one who knows it." During a focus group discussion, several female students provided a rationale for such complicity: "Sometimes, when the person is involved with a director, they have privileges they can enjoy, for example, passing classes for the year. They don't pay [fees] as well. They may have never passed their classes. [Yet] they always have good marks." Another student explained how poor performing students actively sought such *quid pro quo* arrangements:

There may be things that are more or less confidential, sexual offers that makes them give a student grades they didn't earn. We see that generally with girls because there are not many female professors who teach classes and they tend to keep their distance from students. However male professors are always trying to get in your good graces, looking to sort of be friends with students. And, a lot of times as well, the students who are weak [academically] are looking to find out where the professor lives, their phone number, calling them on free nights.⁸

Students shared stories regarding the prevalence of such *quid pro quo* exchanges during the period of exams. Participants explained how during exams students "made arrangements" with university personnel that might entail "giving him money or having a sexual relationship with him." During an all-male focus group in the West, a student shared this story:

There are incidents in the school, particularly with female students ... the instructor will let the student know in which hotel he will grade the exams ... the instructor gives the student his number, he will grade the exam in the hotel, and the student can give herself whatever grade they want It is a terrible situation.

8. Free nights is a reference to cellular phone service plans that offer free and unlimited calls at certain times in the evening.

The allegation that female students intentionally seduced instructors was made implicitly with references to "painting their fingernails with red nail polish," which one participant claimed resulted in an instructor "asking for her phone number" and subsequently harassing her, while others were more explicit. One participant claimed that a female student had a habit of, "Sitting in the front ... in a negligent manner." The instructor was reported to have said to the female student in question, "Didn't you notice that I was unable to teach the class well today? ... When you sit in the front I get aroused because your feet are always spread apart." Such statements suggest that female students use their bodies to draw the attention of and gain favor with their male instructors. Male participants were particularly concerned about these *quid pro quo* arrangements that placed them at a distinct disadvantage. Indeed, many complained that, "They might sleep with a professor for grades while you are working hard."

Of note is that during focus group discussions several female students shared that having a man in their life who could financially support their studies was a life strategy. One student explained: "If it is a man you can get to help you, you must do what you have to do to accept that help." Another female student concurred, "Sometimes you must do what is not right in order to have a career." Students shared stories of women they knew who "had like eight men" subsidizing their education including "married men." What these participants suggest is that some female students engage in the exchange of sexual favors, whether with instructors or other men, in order to secure their own future.

While some women felt that this was a legitimate strategy to help them achieve their goals, others felt that these *quid pro quo* relationships fostered dependence, as this participant explained: "I have to put forth the effort ... my dream is to be independent ... I would like to get there without the help of a man ... I don't want any man to tell me that they are the one who helped me get there." Regardless of female participants' views on whether they should engage in sexual relationships with men, university personnel or otherwise, in order to get an education, there was collective acknowledgement that these arrangements existed both inside and outside of the university.

2.6.2.4. Perspectives on Sexual Relationships between University Personnel and Students

When asked about the recourse that students have when such incidents of sexual harassment or abuse occur, no specific policies or procedures were identified. In the following example, a female student attending a private institution in the West shared her own strategy for dealing with sexual harassment. "It's possible to make a complaint. They [female students]

can get the support of a female instructor although there are not too many ... There is no policy for this situation." None of the study's participants could recall any sexual harassment policies or code of conduct in place at their university.

In the absence of clear sexual harassment policies, the issue of instructor-student relationships has become an instructor's or student's prerogative. Participants had conflicting feelings regarding instructors dating students. On the one hand, some students were adamant that such practices were inappropriate since they could compromise the instructor-student relationship, as this male student's statement suggests: "I think it's unjust for a professor to have a sexual relationship with a student because once that happens the rapport between the student and professor will change, particularly in the class ... if the professor tells her to do something she may not respect it since she is his woman." A female student in the West shared a similar sentiment. "A professor should have professional ethics. A student is a student, a professor is a professor, their relationship should be a professional one ... it's not fair because if the student does something wrong he will not be able to take a serious stance against her."

And while some believed that instructors dating students was altogether inappropriate, others were of the opinion that one could not prevent such practices among consenting adults. However, even those who believed these relationships could not be prevented acknowledged the potential for them to disrupt the academic environment, as this male student in the South shared: "In a university everyone is an adult. Professors can approach any student he wishes. Except, from my point of view, there is a time to do so, during class they should not do that." During a focus group discussion in the West, a male student raised an ethical dilemma posed by such relationships, "Now, you can't prevent a student from dating a professor; however, you may begin to doubt the grades that they receive." A female student believed that consenting adults could have a relationship, but she raised concerns about the motives behind such relationships, "It is normal for two adults to have a sexual relationship, but it's abnormal if one is making advances toward another in order to get something they want." This student suggests that while consenting adults at a university should be free to be intimately involved with whomever they choose, *quid pro quo* relationships, in her view, were unacceptable.

The study also revealed that such *quid pro quo* arrangements were common in educational institutions in Haiti, even at lower levels. During a focus group in the West, one female student explained that this happens in "primary, secondary, and even university." Another female student shared the following during an interview: "The majority of grade school teachers do this. They have always done this." To an open-ended survey question, a male student indicated that he had witnessed such practices: "In secondary

school, a teacher offered to give a student the exam he was preparing with the hopes of having a sexual relationship with her." What the study revealed is that sexual relationships between male instructors and female students are a problem in Haiti's educational system and are widely known to the public. As this student suggests, "In the minds of the majority of Haitians, once they see a student with an instructor they will automatically think there is a relationship." This statement assumes that any level of proximity between an instructor and student carries with it a perception of sexual intimacy and gives a sense of the pervasive nature of sexual abuse within educational institutions in Haiti.

2.7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

2.7.1. Power, Violence and Student Vulnerability

Education is believed to promote equality and increase economic and social opportunities for its beneficiaries. However, as previous studies have demonstrated, and this study further unveils, educational institutions are influenced by the sociocultural contexts within which they operate. In contexts where women are considered subordinate to men and there exists "broad social tolerance of violence," those values permeate local institutions and result in weak policies and lack of enforcement (Leach, 2013) or, in the case of Haitian universities, the absence of sexual harassment policies altogether. While global initiatives to increase access to education for women and girls have made significant gains in providing these opportunities, the failure to address underlying sociocultural factors that contribute to gender-based domination in these societies has subject these students to new forms of discrimination, marginalization, exploitation and violence (Cannella and Perez, 2012; Ivinson, 2015; Leach, 2013; Plummer, 2013; Tora, 2013). In Haiti, cultural systems—rooted in plantation societies—exacerbate fundamental differences between groups and establish rigid gender-based hierarchies that remain encoded in modern institutions. These systems define what it means to be male or female, have a set of prescribed languages that carry certain values and norms, and are embodied by both genders through habitus (Krais, 2006).

The IAHR (2009) describes discrimination against women in Haiti as a "widespread and tolerated phenomenon," which this study illustrates focusing on universities as sites of inquiry. Prevailing sexist attitudes toward female students were evidenced throughout this study; their aptitude was called into question since they were not expected to pass entrance exams, study in certain fields or persist in the classroom. Cultural values regarding sex and sexuality, generated through time, have been adapted to the university context and must be negotiated by its female

constituencies. For female students, the rules of the game are different because they are subject to gender harassment and exploitation based on sexist attitudes informed by gender-based stereotypes.

The findings of this study reveal that female students are perceived as less capable by their male counterparts. However, what these beliefs mask is that the presence of females at universities suggests an attempt to access (and thus redistribute) power. As Bourdieu (2001) explains, the presence of women in male spaces, such as those studying in domains believed to be male professions (e.g., engineering and computer science), "places women in a 'double bind': if they behave like men, they risk losing the obligatory attributes of 'femininity' and call into question the natural right of men to the positions of power; if they behave like women, they appear incapable and unfit for the job" (p. 68). This was evidenced in the male engineering students expressing their disdain for their female classmates' chosen course of study by calling them "ugly." These young women were accused of not being feminine (or desirable) because they failed to conform to gender-based stereotypes that, at best, would allow them to pursue a career in the helping professions (e.g., nurse, teacher, and receptionist) and, at its most extreme, require that they remain at home. Their pursuit of an engineering degree threatens status quo arrangements between males and females (Burgess and Borgida, 1999), which, by the female participant's own admission, may hold some truth as she contends that females in her program were more likely than their male counterparts to secure employment. Bourdieu (2001) stresses this point when he asserts, "The violence of emotional reactions to the entry of women into a given occupation can be understood when one knows that social positions themselves are sexually characterized, and characterizing, and that, in defending their jobs against feminization, men are trying to protect their most deep-rooted idea of themselves as men" (p. 96). The various forms of harassment and violence to which female university students are subjected serves to reinforce gender-based stereotypes in order to keep them in their proper place, which is subordinate to men.

Such sexist attitudes create hostile environments that facilitate harassment, discrimination, exploitation and violence. Findings from the study revealed that harassment and exploitation were the result of ambivalent sexism, which could take the form of benevolence or aggression (Glick and Fiske, 1996).

2.7.2. Benevolent Instructors and their Prey

The evidence from this study exposed the preferential treatment male instructors afforded female students. Female students who needed further guidance with their work were offered additional assistance outside of

classroom time, while their male counterparts were encouraged to independently conduct further research. However, instructors did not suggest to meet with female students during office hours or on campus, but offered their telephone numbers and, in some instances, to meet outside of the classroom, if not off campus. Studies of the Haitian higher education sector reveal severe resource constraints that have resulted in inadequate and insufficient office and meeting spaces for instructors (Cela, 2016; INURED, 2010, forthcoming). Observations conducted during this study revealed that the majority of university campuses or sites operated in structures that were limited in terms of space and in some cases altogether dilapidated. Most universities lacked the most basic facilities; there were few faculty offices or meeting spaces, rarely did these institutions have an auditorium or student lounges, and many spaces served multiple purposes. A number of universities shared space with secondary schools in which the latter operated during the day while the former operated at night. Some universities were housed in structures that were designed and built as modest private dwellings. Based on these observations, one could surmise that these space limitations might compel instructors to use their personal phones to communicate with students and to meet them at off-campus sites. However it can also be inferred that these resource constraints place female students at risk, since they are compelled to exchange personal telephone numbers with instructors and/or meet them at sites where interactions cannot be monitored. As several female students revealed during the study, the exchange of personal telephone numbers between instructors and students usually served as a precursor to a proposition. As one student shared, she was harassed by an instructor who insisted that she give him her telephone number. The student's rejection of his advances led him to lower her marks and her eventual dismissal from the university, thereby demonstrating how power differentials can be exploited to the detriment of the female student.

However, underscoring the generosity of instructors, who were more likely to assist female students in academic need, is the stereotypical view that women are "weaker" students than men, an example of what Sakalli-Uğurlu *et al.* (2010) called "protective paternalism." Drummond's (1980) principle of ethnic difference proves appropriate for an examination of gender differences when he states that "the social setting is populated by distinct kinds of people, who are what they are as a consequence of inborn qualities or deeply held beliefs manifest in their everyday behaviour and difficult or impossible to renounce" (p. 354). In the context of this study, women's academic inferiority to men is an inborn quality that has given rise to the belief that their place is in the home, not educational settings. As Bourdieu (2001, p. 13) asserted, female university students' "thoughts and perceptions are structured in accordance with the very structures of the relation of domination that is imposed on them, [thus] their acts

of cognition are, inevitably, acts of recognition, submission." Having accepted, whether consciously or unconsciously, their subordinate status, many female participants viewed the special treatment received from male instructors as an advantage. Thus, the Haitian cultural continuum is characterized by gender differences that "operate as representations because they take their significance from a pool of shared myth and experience" (Drummond, 1980, p. 353). Various studies of gender and education conducted from the 1970s through the 21st century suggest that female students question their own ability in relation to their male counterparts (Iverson, 2015), which may explain why some female participants viewed the disproportionate attention received by male instructors in a positive light. However, this misrecognition of symbolic violence as benevolence on the part of female students only serves to reinforce social norms and values that subordinate women to men and foster dependence of the former on the latter. Yet not all female participants believed these male instructors were well-intentioned; specifically, they recognized that there existed sinister motives behind the special attention—sexual desire.

Some participants challenged the idea that the additional support female students received from instructors was, in fact, preferential treatment, explaining that this support came at a cost. They contend that male instructors use this approach to extend their relationships with female students beyond the classroom. From their perspective, exchanging telephone numbers and scheduling meetings to provide extra help outside of class time often leads to the solicitation of sexual favors. Therefore, these male instructors abuse their power in order to exploit female students while perpetuating gender-based stereotypes. Bourdieu (2001) explains that this act of symbolic violence as an effect of male domination, which exposes females to constant objectification and has produced a habitus whereby their body exists for the gaze of others, primarily men. In university settings, some female students pursue *quid pro quo* arrangements for their own validation as women and in furtherance of their academic goals.

2.7.3. Symbolic Violence and the Complicity of Female Students in their own Domination

An experience that most female students share is their objectification by the men around them. Several female students shared that instructors had made sexual advances toward them: calling them, sending text messages, or making face-to-face propositions. Similarly, studies conducted at universities in Ghana and Zimbabwe found that more than two-thirds of female students were victims of sexual harassment by male instructors (Norman *et al.*, 2013; Shumba and Matina, 2002). Some female participants in Haiti

believed that sexual harassment by male instructors was a common experience for all female students. Another participant explained that during registration, an administrator may immediately ask for their phone number. In the classroom, instructors are more attentive to female students' needs in furtherance of their own motives. In turn, many participants believed that some female students have capitalized on this attention by using sex and sexuality as a strategy (agency) for academic advancement. As Bourdieu would put it, the academic arena, as other socially constructed spaces in Haiti, "assigns to women their social status as objects of exchange defined in accordance with male interests to help reproduce the symbolic capital of men" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 43). Female students' use of sexuality as a strategy for academic success was one of the findings in Tora's (2013) study of sexual violence at a southern Ethiopian university. Tora (2013, p. 2364) found that "female students who lack money to fulfill their economic needs and have poor academic performance" were vulnerable to sexual violence.

While sexual exploitation was the principal non-academic factor identified by both male and female respondents, the latter identified social class along with sexual favors, thus giving these two factors equal importance. Their male counterparts, on the other hand, reported social class as the second most prevalent non-academic factor influencing student evaluations. Many of the students who participated in this study were, in fact, from modest backgrounds. Their economic and social vulnerability may make them an easy target since they (and their families) may not have the resources to take legal action or have the networks necessary to compel those in power, within or outside of the university, to intervene on their behalf. Therefore, these findings begin to unveil a relationship between sexual harassment and social class, consistent with Tora's (2013) findings at the southern Ethiopian university.

A similar study of sexual harassment at universities in Zimbabwe found that "the majority of the female respondents (fifty-nine percent) agreed that they 'would gladly go out with a male lecturer of their own choice'" (Shumba and Matina, 2002, p. 53). And while the reasons for dating an instructor in the Zimbabwean inquiry are unknown, some of the female participants in the current study provided a particular rationale for dating any man. They believed that having a man in their life who could help them advance in their studies, though morally questionable, served as a life strategy for young women with limited economic means. Other participants explained that some female students engaged in *quid pro quo* relations with male instructors in order to gain access to university, ensure that they would earn passing grades, or to help cover tuition fees. As Bourdieu (1990) puts forth, habitus orients our actions in relation to aspirations generated by the opportunities and disadvantages resulting

from objective structures. Essentialized social roles in the Haitian context has led to women's structural marginalization from "decision-making positions ... professional opportunities ... [and] educational opportunities" (IACHR, 2009, p. 15). Thus, Haitian women's trajectory has been structurally controlled by men, a pattern that has continued in modern institutions dominated by men such as the university. Another illustration of how Haitian men have adapted gender-based violence to institutional contexts can be found in Maternowska's (2006) study on fertility and population control in Haiti. She illuminates how a Haitian woman's livelihood can be arbitrarily placed in jeopardy by her male superiors:

Several women also reported gendered abuses, in the form of rape and sexual coercion. Some women were obliged to engage in sexual relations with foremen and floor managers to get a job or keep it. Lack of resources and the dire need to remain part of the work force required some women to submit to this sexual abuse inside factories. (Maternowska, 2006, p. 65)

And while women have access to these modern institutions, young women at universities, similar to Maternowska's low-wage factory workers, have learned that access is insufficient since their academic success within these institutions, to a large extent, depends on the various men who are in power. And, for many young women, these (structural) disadvantages can only be overcome through sex and sexuality thus making the dominated complicit in reinforcing their own domination by making their (symbolic) dependence on and objectification by men "appear as natural" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 35).

This structural dependence on male gatekeepers and powerbrokers keeps female students in a constant state of "bodily insecurity" (Bourdieu, 2001) that requires male validation in order to secure their future. Female students are perceived as seeking the gaze of their male instructors in order to validate their femininity. Some were described as having seduced male instructors with their bodies. In one case, an instructor referred to a student's red nail polish as a pretext to exchange telephone numbers, suggesting that the nail polish was worn to capture his attention. As Drummond (1980) argues, "Classification of an actual slice of behaviour depends greatly on who is doing the classifying and where the behaviour is taking place" (p. 357). The wearing of red nail polish has a particular meaning in this cultural context that suggests some sort of sexual overture on the part of the female student wearing it. In yet another case, an instructor is persistent in his pursuit of a female student whom he accuses of sitting suggestively in the front of the class in order to capture his attention. Within this sociocultural frame, the social construction of the female is naturalized through biological difference (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 23). Using their bodies, female students willingly engage in *quid pro quo* exchanges of sex for access, grades, or economic advantages. This is consistent with

several studies of sexual violence in South Africa that link sexual indebtedness and resource exchange among casual sex partners (Wojcicki, 2002; Woods, Lambert, and Jewkes, 2007). Moral codes may be sacrificed as young women learn that opting not to play by the rules, or conform to gender roles, may result in missed opportunities or failure, which has significant consequences in a nation ravaged by poverty with limited resources and opportunities.

Yet not all young women were complicit in these arrangements, as some rejected these advances. While some participants reported that rebuffing the sexual advances of a male instructor had no negative consequences on their academic pursuits, many reported the contrary. As the evidence revealed, many female students who had turned down the propositions of male instructors were academically penalized. Some students received lower grades than they thought they deserved. Others reported that in addition to receiving lower marks, they were not allowed to take make-up exams. One student was targeted as a troublemaker after refusing to give her telephone number to an administrator while registering for courses. She was eventually dismissed from the university in a separate incident but attributed her dismissal to her rebuff of the administrator. Disproportionate power ratios between female students and male instructors and administrators are exploited as a means by which to coerce young women to comply with the sexual demands of university personnel. The cost of non-compliance can have economic implications if students are forced to repeat a course or, even worse, end their academic pursuits. More troubling is one student's report that she was a victim of attempted forced sex by an instructor. As numerous studies have shown, sexual violence is often underreported. In this regard, silence is a prevalent coping strategy among women due to the limited availability of services, absence of social support, and/or denial of abuse (Ahmed, Reavey, and Majumdar, 2009; Cannella and Perez, 2012; Tankink, 2013). Therefore, it can be inferred that the prevalence of violence against women at institutions of higher learning in Haiti may be much higher than is divulged by study participants. As this study has demonstrated, instructor abuse of power and students' exposure to violence often threaten the future of young Haitian women, which begs the question: what protective measures exist for young women who experience sexual harassment at Haitian universities?

2.7.4. Fending for Oneself in a Policy Void

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that there were no known sexual harassment policies or codes of conduct at Haitian universities to which male or female participants could refer that protected female students from gender-based harassment and violence or served to maintain

the integrity of the academic environment. What the evidence suggests is that in the absence of policies and ethical standards that clearly define the role of instructors in relation to students and the nature of those relationships, the burden rests on female students to protect themselves from their predators while providing no recourse for other students whose academic experience may be negatively impacted by these relationships.

The sexual harassment policy void reinforces culturally-based gender biases by exacerbating power differentials between men, who hold the majority of administrative leadership and faculty positions, and women, who represent a numeric minority generally found in subordinate positions and in the student body at these universities. The absence of such protections allows male administrators and instructors to use their power to prey on female students, thereby compromising the integrity of students who comply or acquiesce while perpetuating culturally-rooted biases regarding their academic abilities. For some victims, harassment affects their academic performance and, in more extreme cases, may result in their withdrawal or dismissal from the program.

At Haitian universities, sexual harassment remains a personal matter to be negotiated between the victim and assailant, since no protective measures have been adopted to prevent it. Consistent with sexual harassment studies undertaken in other countries (Sakalli-Uğurlu et al., 2010; Woods et al., 2007), both male and female students in this study shared a "blame the victim" mentality in which women were believed to have provoked instructors and were deemed responsible for their own victimization. In this study, male participants often referred to the seductive measures undertaken by female students to capture the instructor's attention. And while female participants emphasized the importance of (female students) being "reserved" so as not to draw unwanted attention to oneself, they shared a view that some were complicit in these arrangements by describing them as "independent" or "loose." This is consistent with Bourdieu's (2001) assertion that the female body exists to please men and that the embodiment of any form of femininity serves the purpose of capturing a man's (even one's instructor's) attention. As such, just as women have the ability to spark male sexual desire, study participants, both male and female, believed that by being "reserved" young women can also tame, if not police, those desires.

In the absence of institutional dialogue on sexual harassment, students have had to reflect on this issue independently. Student perspectives on these relationships ranged from believing that sexual involvement between an instructor and a student was unethical to the acceptance that one could not intervene in matters between consenting adults. However, most participants expressed concern regarding its impact on the academic experience. Of those who did not believe that sexual relations between an

instructor and a student were appropriate, their primary concern was with how the dynamics, as well as *quid pro quo* arrangements between the two parties, could affect classroom learning. There were concerns about the instructor's authority being compromised if he was no longer able to impartially evaluate and critique the student's work. And, as one male student pointed out, once the relationship is made public, doubts will be raised regarding whether the student's grades were earned. Many participants lamented the academic benefits some female students yielded from these arrangements, specifically grade inflation. Yet students enrolled in classes where these *quid pro quo* arrangements existed felt victimized as well. One male student complained about working hard while some female students reaped the rewards of dating an instructor. Moreover, other participants shared how male students were often placed at a disadvantage compared to their female counterparts who received additional attention, support and advisement from instructors. These benefits reinforce a cultural continuum rooted in historical hierarchies that subordinate women to men by perpetuating female students' (symbolic) dependence on male instructors who are, in turn, credited with ensuring their academic success. There was an overall sense of powerlessness among students because there were no sexual harassment policies or ethical standards to protect them from such abuses of power.

Study participants could not identify any ethical standards or codes of conduct that protected them against such abuses. Codes of conduct address issues such as conflicts of interest, academic integrity and equal treatment and protections, all of which could serve as a first step in protecting university students in Haiti. As Rezaee, Elmore, and Szendi (2001) contend, "A college code of conduct can help eliminate unethical practices, relieve ethical dilemmas, and demonstrate a commitment to ethical conduct" (p. 179). Codes of conduct allow higher education institutions to establish clear standards for ethical behavior to maintain their academic integrity (Rezaee et al., 2001). Without these measures, students are made vulnerable and the public trust in these institutions may be compromised (Rezaee et al., 2001). The absence of known and enforced codes of conduct suggests a more pervasive issue of accountability which is beyond the scope of this chapter. Until Haitian higher education institutions take on the responsibility of establishing an environment conducive to learning for all their students, which necessarily requires addressing sexual harassment, they will continue to serve as sites of adapted forms of gender-based violence and women's disempowerment.

CONCLUSION

Young Haitian women's experiences of marginalization, within and outside of the university, shape their habitus, which is structured by the opportunities (*i.e.*, access to formal education) and obstacles (*i.e.*, male domination) they confront in their daily lives. These university students must negotiate new forms of gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence, rooted in patriarchal systems that subordinate them to men, in the absence of institutional protections and safeguards. As Kraus (2006) asserts, "modern gender order ... constitutes a field of open struggle ... [in which] women exist not only as *objects* but also as *social subjects*, agents who act in their own rights and in defence of their own interests" (p. 124). Young women who attend university in Haiti must confront (symbolic) violence while pursuing tertiary education in a variety of ways, including resistance, complicity or acquiescence. These students have had to employ a range of strategies in order to endure a university experience that places them among the distinguished few with access to higher education, while reinforcing their subordinate status as Haitian women in this "privileged" space. Social hierarchies rooted in the legacy of plantations place female students' academic pursuits, and their future and status, in jeopardy.

What this study reveals is that the absence of sexual harassment policies and codes of conduct renders female students vulnerable to predatory behaviors, abuse and violence by men in positions of power and institutional authority. Without these protections, they are left to fend for themselves against men who may wield enough power to permanently change the course of their lives. As a first step, codes of conduct, as well as sexual harassment policies, must be adopted and enforced by higher education institutions in Haiti. A study conducted by Williams, Lam, and Shively (1992) found that the incidence of faculty/student harassment declined as policies and grievance procedures were put in place. Policies must be adopted, widely distributed, and include training for university personnel, as well as students, to be effective. Procedures must be put in place to hold instructors accountable for inappropriate and unethical behavior to protect female students and maintain the integrity of higher education institutions. As this study elucidates, gender-based violence at higher education institutions comes at a cost to a) female students, whose grades (and competence) are called into question via reinforced gender-based stereotypes; b) instructors, whose integrity may be called into question by their relationships with students; and c) universities, whose reputations as merit-based institutions are compromised by such *quid pro quo* arrangements and abuse.

As institutions that play critical roles in the public sphere, universities are responsible for promoting women's empowerment not only within their walls but throughout Haitian society. By adopting and enforcing

sexual harassment policies that protect the student body in general and their female constituencies in particular, higher education institutions in Haiti can serve as an example to other Haitian institutions that are in need of similar reforms. Finally, university leadership in this arena could help bolster grassroots initiatives to eradicate gender-based violence by facilitating dialogue and reflection on its impact on Haitian society. These measures will ensure that this critical and pervasive issue is understood as a phenomenon that is not exclusive to urban slums or rural areas, women in poverty or *restaveks*⁹ but part of a cultural continuum that permeates Haitian society and frames the life of individuals, families, communities and institutions at all levels.

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9. *Restaveks* are children from poor, typically rural, families that are unable to properly care for them and who are sent to work for less impoverished or affluent families in towns or cities (see Chapter 3 in this volume).

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CHAPITRE

3

**LES JEUNES EN CIRCULATION EN HAÏTI
DE L'ENFANCE À LA DOMESTICITÉ**

Myrvine Marcelin

