LIVELIHOODS IN THE BALANCE: HAITIANS, HAITIAN-DOMINICANS AND PRECARIOUS WORK IN RURAL DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A Thesis in

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by

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ABSTRACT

Haitian immigrants and their Dominican-born descendants (Haitian-Dominicans) occupy some of the lowest-paying, most precarious rungs of work in the Dominican Republic. Coupled with severe ethno-racial and social discrimination and political barriers to attaining regularized legal status and legal rights, Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans experience an overarching sense of precarity which keeps them in these insecure working situations. Using an intersectional analysis of precarious work, this thesis examines how gender, ethnicity and race, and legal status and precarious employment interact with and cocreate one another creating a general sense of precarity for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic. It shows how Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in rural communities called bateyes adapt to precarious circumstances and patch together sources of employment and income to create a livelihood.

Haitian migrant workers historically arrived in the Dominican Republic as guest workers on Dominican sugarcane plantations and became the principal agricultural labor force in the country over the course of the 20th century. A growth of income opportunities for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in urban areas in the Dominican Republic since the privatization of the sugar industry in 1998 has led to a shift in migration patterns from rural areas to urban centers (Silié et al, 2002; Landry, 2013). However, despite the lack of high-paying, secure jobs in rural bateyes, many residents remain. Much of the literature on Haitian and Haitian-Dominican populations since this time has focused on the livelihoods of urban-dwelling residents.

This thesis helps to fill this gap in research by identifying the livelihood opportunities still available for rural batey residents and further examines how livelihood opportunities for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in rural areas are shaped by the intersection of gender, ethnicity and race, and legal status. This thesis finds that there is a high level of informality in the
kinds of income-earning activities in which *batey* residents engage and that even seemingly stable jobs are often fraught with insecurity. It further shows how the effects of precarious work have emotional implications that impact not just workers, but also their family members, creating a kind of second-hand precarity. Within these livelihood trends, Haitian migrants and women are often relegated to low-waged, irregular and informal forms of work within the *batey* due to ethnic discrimination, fears of deportation, and traditional conceptions of men’s and women’s labor roles. Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates how aspects of individual identity interact and complicate experiences of precarity, by influencing not only the kind of work one attains, but also if and how they attain it, and, furthermore, how they adapt to insecure circumstances. It proposes a new framework of precarious livelihoods to examine how workers peddle together multiple sources of income in order to make ends meet while navigating precarious living situations.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................... vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .................................................................................................. vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................................... viii

CHAPTER 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
  1. Chapter Overview ............................................................................................................. 4

CHAPTER 2: Background ....................................................................................................... 7
  1. Overview ......................................................................................................................... 7
  2. Haiti and the Dominican Republic: An antagonistic history ........................................ 7
     Changing tides: The rise of the Dominican sugar industry
     Foreign labor on Dominican sugar plantations
     Privatization of the sugar cane industry and its effects
  3. Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic today ............................. 18
     Work for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans
     Social discrimination towards Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans
     Institutionalized discrimination: The struggle to obtain and maintain legal status
     Sense of belonging: Haitian integration into Dominican society
  4. Summary ......................................................................................................................... 28

CHAPTER 3: Literature Review ............................................................................................ 30
  1. Overview ......................................................................................................................... 30
  2. Precarious work: An overview ...................................................................................... 30
     Competing terminology for precarious work
     The rise of precarious work
     Historical roots of precarious work
  3. Experiences of precarious work ...................................................................................... 37
     Intersectional experiences of precarious work
     Racial differentiation in precarious work
     Gender differentiation in precarious work
     Migrant labor and precarious work
  4. Sector specific experiences of precarious work .............................................................. 53
     Day labor
     Domestic work
  5. Summary ......................................................................................................................... 57

CHAPTER 4: Methodology .................................................................................................... 59
  1. Research design .............................................................................................................. 59
  2. Study site ......................................................................................................................... 60
  3. Research methods .......................................................................................................... 62
  4. Data analysis .................................................................................................................. 68
  5. Researcher reflexivity ..................................................................................................... 69
CHAPTER 5: Results

1. Foreword ........................................................................................................................................... 83
2. Overview .............................................................................................................................................. 84
3. “There’s no work here”: Current employment among batey residents ........................................ 85
4. Chache lavi: Barriers to secure employment ................................................................................. 119
5. Precarity of place: Worries beyond the workplace ...................................................................... 134
6. Summary ........................................................................................................................................... 143

CHAPTER 6: Discussion and Conclusion

1. Overview .............................................................................................................................................. 145
2. The social context of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic .................. 146
3. Intersectional trends in employment opportunities among batey residents .......................... 148
4. Adapting to precarity ......................................................................................................................... 159
5. Summary of findings .......................................................................................................................... 161
   Theoretical Contributions
6. Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................... 167

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................................................ 171

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Stage Two (Focused) Coding: Initial Themes Index .................................................. 185
Appendix B. Semi-structured Interview Instrument: Batey La Luisa (English) ............................ 186
LIST OF TABLES

Figure 1. Geographic Location of Monte Plata Province.................................................................61

Figure 2. Layout of Batey La Luisa................................................................................................62

Figure 3. Current Employment: Types of Jobs..............................................................................87

Table 1. Current employment of *batey* residents differentiated by gender.............................88

Table 2. Current employment of *batey* residents differentiated by birthplace..........................88

Table 3. Employment relationship differentiated by gender.......................................................110

Table 4. Employment relationship differentiated by birthplace.................................................111

Table 5. Female Past Employment..............................................................................................115

Table 6. Male Past Employment.................................................................................................116

ABBREVIATIONS

**CEA**: Consorcio Estatal de Azúcar (State Sugar Council)

**MOSCTHA**: Movimiento Socio-Cultural de Trajabadores Haitianos (Socio-Cultural Movement of Haitian Laborers)
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

_Bateyes_ are not pretty places. Down dusty dirt roads, a visitor can follow the sounds of Haitian _konpa_ music to the crumbling barracks leftover from the heydays of sugarcane cultivation. In contrast with the ostensible paradise of the blue jeweled seas, palm trees, and white sand at luxurious Dominican resorts only a few hours away, the stifling heat cannot be subdued by a dip in the ocean and meals are not an unending buffet. Instead of air-conditioned rooms, most homes are made using dull machetes to cut long wooden boards for the thin walls and by mixing concrete by hand for the floors—if they have floors at all. There are few resources in the _batey_. When people need to go to the hospital, they must travel nearly an hour or more for medical care but might not always be seen. There is generally unreliable electricity, no running water, and no formal sewage waste system. The Haitian migrants that live here with their families live in poverty and struggle to make ends meet and survive.

In the Dominican Republic, Haitian migrant laborers and Haitian-Dominicans living in isolated, rural _bateyes_ are being forced into increasingly more precarious forms of work, as economic changes and intense societal discrimination relegate many Haitians to some of the lowest paying, least secure jobs in the country. Haitian immigrants and their Dominican-born descendants long harvested sugar cane, one of the least lucrative jobs in the Dominican Republic. Since 1998, however, sugar plantations across the Dominican Republic have ceased operation due to global economic neoliberal economic restructuring and increased competition in sugar production, causing many _batey_ residents to lose their primary source of income (Agustín, 2018). Many Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans lack Dominican residency or citizenship in the Dominican Republic due to political and legal barriers and face acute social marginalization.
stemming from widespread racism. Due to these issues, Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans face many barriers to entry into well-paying, secure (permanent) jobs in the Dominican labor market.

Despite the 22-year lapse between mass plantation closures starting in 1998 in the Dominican Republic and the modern day, only one published report was found that systematically and empirically analyzes the livelihood situations of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in *bateyes* (that no longer function as sugarcane plantation communities) in the Dominican Republic (FLACSO, 2000), while other literature on Haitian *batey* residents tend to summarize livelihoods and livelihood strategies as part of a broader focus on legal status and social discrimination (Wooding y Moseley-Williams, 2004; Riveros, 2014). This thesis aims to fill this gap in knowledge by providing a qualitative, empirical case study of current livelihood opportunities and challenges among thirty-nine (39) adult *batey* residents in Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic through a conceptual lens of precarious work. Notably, it takes an intersectional analytical approach with a critical eye towards the influence of gender, ethnicity, and legal status in order to analyze how social, political, and economic barriers shape the job security of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in rural communities (*bateyes*) in the Dominican Republic.

Often, precarious work is distinguished from the concepts “precarity” or “precariousness” (Campbell and Price, 2016; Mosoetsa et al, 2016). Precarious work analyzes the employment relationships of laborers, while precarity or precariousness describes a general social situation or feeling (Bandelj et al, 2011; ILO, 2012; Kalleberg, 2008; Mosoetsa et al, 2016; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Alberti et al, 2018; Bobek et al, 2018). In recent years scholars have moved to promote an intersectional analysis of precarious work by examining the roles of social identities such as gender (Vosko, 2000; Lawton, 2015; Mosoetsa et al, 2016), race (Browne and Misra,
2003; Torres et al, 2013; Bueno, 2014; Nelson et al, 2015; Branch and Hanley, 2017), and legal status (Goldring and Landolt, 2011; Torres et al, 2013; Nelson et al, 2015) in experiences of precarious work. However, much of the literature only analyzes the specific employment conditions and characteristics of the jobs held by those individuals who are already employed and their experiences of insecure employment rather than subjective feelings of insecurity and external (outside of work) experiences of precariousness.

This thesis takes a different approach by examining the larger circumstances surrounding precarious livelihoods and how batey residents must consistently struggle to patch together sources of income to survive. It considers the intersections of individuals’ identities to show how one’s circumstances shape particular experiences of precarious work but also preclude her/him from gaining employment in the first place. By analyzing a range of insecure working situations (including a lack of employment) through an intersectional lens, this thesis begins to illustrate the connection between precarious work and the precariousness induced by individual circumstances. It shows how the two seemingly distinct aspects of precarity (work and personal) are co-constructed—essentially, that social identity influences the kind of work in which one will engage and, on the other hand, experiences of precarious employment reinforce and exacerbate preexisting social categories.

In Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic, residents’ struggles to find work and keep it are differentiated based on gender, ethnicity, and legal status. These stratified employment experiences further impact everyday feelings of insecurity and precarity and create emotional burdens for batey residents. Furthermore, this thesis also complicates ideas of “good” and “bad” jobs in the theory of dual labor market segmentation (Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998; Browne and Misra, 2003) and shows how even seemingly stable jobs can be fraught with
insecurity. Finally, it demonstrates how community members come together in to provide mutual aid and assistance to patch together livelihoods and survive in the absence of formal institutions or legal protections in a kind of *batey* moral economy. Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates how aspects of individual identity interact and complicate experiences of precarity, by influencing not only the kind of work one attains, but also if and how they attain it, and, furthermore, how they adapt to insecure circumstances.

Fieldwork for this thesis was conducted in Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic for two and a half months during the summer of 2019. The researcher stayed with a host family in the community and conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with *batey* residents while also gathering participant observation data from daily interactions with community members. The ethnographic data from this fieldwork helps to better illustrate what everyday life is like for *batey* residents and provides a rich context for livelihood opportunities and precarity. The following chapters delve into powerful, and often heartbreaking, stories of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans who struggle to survive in these rural areas in the Dominican Republic and embeds their experiences within the scholarly literature on precarious work.

**Chapter overview**

Chapter 2 presents important background context on the interwoven histories of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and how Haitian migrants came to be the principal labor force in the Dominican Republic. It lays out a historical background for the intense, and sometimes violent, ethnic and racial discrimination—called *antihaitianismo*—towards Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans by Dominican society. It further provides examples on how this social discrimination has influenced prejudicial policies and labor practices which have forced Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans into precarious forms of work. Finally, it summarizes the kinds of work
in which these populations participate today to provide a reference point on employment among Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans from which this thesis builds.

Chapter 3 explores the academic literature on precarious work and how it has evolved to promote a more intersectional approach to analyzing insecure labor. It presents the various competing terminologies for precarious work, detailing why precarious work is the most appropriate framework for this thesis. Next, it discusses the objective and subjective aspects of precarious employment, furthering the argument that insecure work is more than just the “facts of employment”, but also the subjective feelings of insecurity that it [precarious work] provokes in laborers. It then delves into some of the intersectional scholarship that has been conducted on precarious work and hones in on three particular factors of social identity: race, gender, and migrant status. These sections show how race, gender, and migrant status impact individual experiences and further argue that poor, ethno-racial, and immigrant women are particularly at risk for engaging in precarious work.

Chapter 4 presents, in rich detail, the stories and experiences of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans trying to make a living in Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic. The chapter opens with in-depth descriptions of the kinds of employment available to batey residents and their experiences in those jobs based on individual interviews and participant observation fieldnotes. It pays special attention to the intersectional differentiation in job opportunities and shows how gendered assumptions about labor roles and discrimination towards Haitians and their descendants influences who gets jobs, what kind of job, and how long they are able to maintain those jobs. An important finding of this section is that even seemingly secure forms of employment contain aspects of insecurity for workers. Next, the chapter goes into further detail about the challenges and barriers to obtaining secure employment. Moreover, it describes the
incredible emotional burden *batey* residents face while struggling to survive and shows how community members must rely on their connections with one another to make a livelihood under such difficult circumstances in a kind of moral economic arrangement. Ultimately, the chapter demonstrates just how complex an impact the intersectionality of identity can have on experiences of precarious work and precariousness.

Finally, chapter 6 summarizes the rich data from chapter 5 and embeds it within the existing literature on precarious work. The findings from this thesis answer a call from scholars to contribute to knowledge on intersectional experiences of precarious work, particularly in the Global South (Mosoetsa et al, 2016; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017). The chapter also presents the argument that more attention must be paid within the precarious work literature to currently unemployed members of communities since the experiences of those looking for work provide a crucial glimpse at the challenges that workers face in attempting to obtain secure employment. Furthermore, it argues that precarious work can be experienced by currently unemployed individuals via second-hand experiences of precarity, such as through a spouse or other financially supportive family member. Ultimately, it demonstrates how the intersectionality of individuals’ social identities interacts with and influences experiences of precarious work.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

1. Overview

This background on the history of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic provides only a brief overview of the rich, entangled history of the residents of the small Caribbean island of Hispaniola. Nevertheless, it covers some of the most crucial historical moments of the relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It begins with a short review of the differences in the two nation’s colonial histories that influenced their interdependent economic relationship that exists up until today. It then covers the rise and fall of the Dominican sugarcane industry and, most importantly for this thesis, the integration of Haitian labor on Dominican sugar plantations. Finally, it provides a glimpse at the lives of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans residing in *bateyes* in the Dominican Republic today. It ultimately illustrates how ethnic discrimination shapes the livelihood opportunities available for these individuals and how they experience everyday precarity.

2. Haiti and the Dominican Republic: An Antagonistic History

Given the geographic proximity of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, it is inevitable that the two nations of Hispaniola would have a long, shared history. However, their shared history has not had equal outcomes. Today, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with an estimated 25% of its total population of eleven million people living under the international poverty line on less than US$1.90 a day (as of 2012) (World Bank, 2019b). By comparison, in 2016 the Dominican Republic had only 1.6% of its population of ten million living below the international poverty line (World Bank, 2019a).
While both nations were dominated under colonialism—Haiti by France and the Dominican Republic by Spain—their experiences both during colonial rule and the process of gaining independence have ultimately shaped their modern situations. The French colony of Saint Domingue—what is now Haiti—was home to a prosperous sugar industry maintained with the labor of African slaves (Ferguson, 2003). The Spanish colony of Santo Domingo—what is now the Dominican Republic—was not nearly as successful economically as its French neighbor. Unlike its fellow Spanish, French, and English colonies in the Western Hemisphere, the Dominican Republic did not develop an extensive export plantation economy until the mid-19th century. Santo Domingo was rather quickly abandoned by the Spanish in favor of the much more lucrative colonies of what are now Mexico and Peru, although it remained an important Caribbean port throughout the colonial period and beyond (Moya Pons, 1998; Ferguson, 2003).
Haitian independence in 1803 sparked a reversal in these historic economic roles. After independence the new Haitian government attempted to continue exporting its traditional cash cow of sugar cane (Winters and Derrell, 2010). In addition, it set its political sights on geographic expansion to the Eastern half of the island of Hispaniola. After the Dominican Republic gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the Haitian government began its 22-year occupation of its island neighbor (Moya Pons, 1998). This occupation was met with considerable resilience from Dominicans who eventually overthrew Haitian forces in 1844 (Moya Pons, 1998). However, the fear of future Haitian occupation was so great that Dominican leaders invited Spain to recolonize it from 1861 to 1865 as a protective measure (Ferguson, 2003). In fact, opposition to Haitian influence is so deeply embedded in the national consciousness that Dominican Independence Day actually commemorates independence from Haiti, and not from Spain (Moya Pons, 1998).

**Changing tides: The rise of the Dominican sugar industry**

After achieving its (second) independence from Spain, the Dominican Republic began a process of economic growth focused on the sugar cane industry and quickly established sugar as the primary export of the small island nation beginning in the mid to late 1800s (Ayala, 1999; Moya Pons, 1998). Investment from German merchants and knowledge from exiled Cuban sugar cane producers accelerated the process of industrialization by optimizing technological inputs and ensuring a global market for export (Ayala, 1999; Fraginals et al, 1985).

However, the cost of labor from the mid-1800s onward remained a paramount barrier to continued growth. Unlike most sugar cane plantations in the world today, plantations in the Dominican Republic used and continue to use manual labor to cut sugar cane, citing that the final product is of higher quality when cut by hand while still green (Bracken, 2015; Murphy 1991).
This means that the plantations still needed a seasonal labor force every year during the harvest (zafra in Spanish) to cut sugar cane. However, the presence of a strong Dominican peasantry with their own subsistence plots inhibited the use of domestic labor on Dominican plantations and necessitated the introduction of international guest workers as the principal labor force (Baud, 1987). Many Dominican peasants took jobs on sugar cane plantations as supplemental income and did not show up regularly to the fields. Plantation owners had to compete for a limited work force and kept having to raise wages, which made their enterprises less profitable and less competitive on the sugar market. (Ayala, 1999; Fraginals et al, 1985; Murphy, 1991). To reduce labor costs, sugar producers in the Dominican Republic began the first guest worker program in the 1880s, bringing in foreign laborers from Haiti and other Caribbean island nations to the fields (Baud, 1987; Fraginals et al, 1985; Baud, 1992). This supply of cheap labor further drove down sugar prices and made Dominican sugar more competitive on the global scale (Murphy, 1991).

**Foreign labor on Dominican sugar plantations**

The first foreign laborers to be integrated into the Dominican sugar industry en masse through this *bracero* (roughly translated as ‘guest worker’ in Spanish) program were workers primarily from Haiti and the British West Indies, as well as some laborers from other French, Dutch, and Danish controlled Caribbean territories (Murphy, 1991; Baud, 1992). Non-Haitian workers came to be known as *cocolos* in Dominican slang. Baud (1992) argues that the choice to recruit immigrant labor was deliberate on the part of sugar entrepreneurs who used subsequent racial prejudices from Dominican society [particularly towards Haitian immigrant workers] to isolate their labor force and consolidate control over it. He went further in his analysis to equate recruitment of immigrant labor in the Dominican Republic as evidence for the sugarcane-
producing Caribbean’s continuing need for “unfree labor” (ibid, 1992). Laborers lived in temporary housing communities called *bateyes* on rural, isolated plantation lands. *Bateyes* were comprised of cement block barracks with tiny windows barely functional for air circulation in which six to eight workers slept in tiny rooms on wooden beds often lacking mattresses, pillows, and blankets (Murphy, 1991). Most *bateyes* did not have (and still do not have) running water or electricity and were located miles away from resources like hospitals and markets (Murphy, 1991; Riveros, 2014; Bracken, 2015).

In an attempt to further reduce labor costs, many sugarcane plantations ceased using *cocolos* as sugarcane cutters after a few decades. Instead, Haitians became the primary source of manpower on Dominican sugar cane plantations (Murphy, 1991). Haitian laborers were much cheaper than workers from other Caribbean nations to bring into the Dominican Republic as they lived on the same island (Murphy, 1991). Moreover, in contrast with the *cocolos* whose English skills were rewarded with higher positions in the sugar companies, Haitians tend to speak only Haitian Creole, which made them easier to exploit as they could not understand the employers nor demand better treatment (Murphy, 1991; Baud, 1992).

By 1920 it was estimated that Haitian migrants comprised 50% of the sugarcane plantation labor force (Riveros, 2014). Under the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo from 1930-1961, Haitian labor on plantations grew and sugarcane harvests became the primary source of employment for Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic until the economic downturn in the 1980s (Murphy, 1991; Riveros, 2014; Blake, 2017). This was a contradictory process since the nationalist-minded Trujillo set out on a process to “Dominican-ize” the country by expelling all

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1 The word *batey* comes from an indigenous Taíno word roughly translating to ‘plaza’ or ‘a central gathering place’ (Agustín, L. Personal communication. 2019).

2 The overall number of Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic actually dropped during this period, but there was a relative increase in the number of Haitian migrants on sugarcane plantations (Riveros, 2014).
Haitian immigrants and restricting formal migration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic (Baud, 1992; Riveros, 2014). To regularize this process, private sugarcane plantations were no longer allowed to engage in private agreements with the government of Haiti to bring workers to the country and, instead, many workers had to go through a formal, state-run migrant worker program (known as the *bracero* program) that allowed Haitian migrants to come work temporarily on Dominican plantations during the harvest. It ran until it was suspended from 1941 to 1952, during which time most Haitian migrants or otherwise arrived in the country illegally (Riveros, 2014). Due to the strict enforcement of immigration in the Dominican Republic, Haitians movements within the country were severely restricted, and so many were relegated to staying on sugarcane plantations where their stay was accepted and where they could remain at least during the sugarcane harvest (Riveros, 2014).

During Trujillo’s dictatorship, his administration also began a process of consolidating the Dominican sugar industry under state control in order to increase government profits instead of allowing funds to go into the pockets of private (and often foreign) companies (Riveros, 2014). Between 1948 and 1957, Trujillo acquired nine *ingenios* and established three more. After Trujillo’s assassination in 1966, the Dominican government founded the Consejo Estatal del Azúcar (CEA-State Sugar Council), which managed the twelve government-owned *ingenios* and upheld the international labor agreements between the Dominican Republic and Haiti (Riveros, 2014). Haiti migrants continued to be the principal labor force on sugarcane plantations and by the 1980s the Dominican sugar industry was the 4th largest exporter of processed sugar in the world (Dominican Sugar Industry, n.d). Discriminatory attitudes towards Haitian migrants continued to form part of the Dominican national consciousness and have impacted treatment of laborers on sugarcane plantations over the decades (Baud, 1992).
Working conditions for Haitian laborers

The working conditions for Haitian migrant laborers on Dominican sugar cane plantations throughout the 20th century up to present day have been equated to modern-day slavery (Murphy, 1991; Baud, 1992; Vega, 2014; Bracken, 2015; Revuelta, 2017). Impoverished living conditions, social isolation, and low wages characterized and continue to characterize the experiences of many Dominican sugarcane laborers (Verité, 2012; Bracken, 2015).

As mentioned previously, the living conditions on Dominican sugarcane bateyes in the early 20th century were (and continue to be) immensely grim. The extremely impoverished conditions on bateyes were exacerbated by the meager wages that workers received. Many ingenios (sugarcane plantations/mills) minted their own money and “paid” their workers in this money to be used in plantation general stores, keeping the money within the company and making those wages useless anywhere else (Baud, 1992). When paid in Dominican pesos, laborers were paid about half the salary as a native Dominican worker and did not receive other benefits like medical care (Murphy, 1991). In many cases employers even withheld wages for weeks or even until the end of the harvest season or docked pay for arbitrary offenses such as “unsatisfactory work”, instilling an atmosphere of labor and wage insecurity (Baud, 1992, pp. 312).

Over the course of the 20th century conditions did not improve much, however, many Haitian migrants began to stay year-round instead of returning to Haiti (discussed further below) (Riveros, 2014). In order to make ends meet during the tiempo muerto (“off season” in Spanish) migrants occasionally did small jobs on the plantations, but more often engaged in other forms of day labor such as construction outside of the batey (Hicks, 1972; Martinez, 2007).

Today, the situation is much of the same. The formal exclusion of agricultural laborers from legal labor protections leads to the exploitation of workers (Verité, 2012; Bracken, 2015;
Revuelta Guerrero, 2018). During the \textit{zafra} (‘harvest season’ in Spanish) laborers often work more than 12 hours a day and do not have the time or the money to purchase enough food to eat (Verité, 2012; Bracken, 2015). Because the Dominican Labor Code (last updated in 1992) does not require employers to provide written employment contracts to their employees, many workers only receive verbal information about wages and payment schedules (Verité, 2012).

Moreover, article 30 of the Dominican Labor Code specifically excludes cane cutters from participation in permanent labor contracts and only allows them to engage in temporary or seasonal work contracts (Revuelta Guerrero, 2018). Therefore, Haitian laborers live in uncertainty about their employment relationship and rights and do not always receive consistent or timely wage payments (Verité, 2012; Revuelta Guerrero, 2018). However, despite the instability of wages, most Haitian laborers still make three to eleven times the amount that they would earn in Haiti regardless of sector (Verité, 2012; Revuelta; Riveros, 2014; Guerrero, 2018). For this reason, many of them have continued working on sugar cane plantations over the years.

\textit{Forming families in the bateyes}

Although many Haitian laborers have arrived to the country through legal migrant worker programs created by the Dominican government, many have also arrived illegally or \textit{anba fil} (‘under the wire’ in Creole), or overstayed temporary work visas to remain in the Dominican Republic (Murphy, 1991; Riveros, 2014). Some of the work agreements in the 20th century allowed for laborers to bring their wives and young children (under the age of 10) with them to the \textit{bateyes} during their contract, while others brought their family members to live with them illegally once they decided to stay (Riveros, 2014). This practice produced a variety of legal, illegal, and irregular statuses among these workers and their families and increased their
vulnerability to exploitation and deportation while in the Dominican Republic (Petrozziello, 2018).

Women were not allowed to work for the sugar cane plantations, and instead provided many of the domestic services that the CEA (State Sugar Council) was technically required to administer, such as daily meals and laundry services (Landry, 2013; Petrozziello, 2018). This domestic work was and continues to be unpaid. It has also been reported that some women have even resorted to sex work for the temporary laborers that came to the _bateyes_ (Martínez, 2007, Riveros, 2014).³ Allowing women to live in the _bateyes_ vindicated the CEA from having to establish formal programs to feed workers and provide for other basic necessities, while also ensuring a reproduction of the labor force when women had more children (Petrozziello, 2018).

Because the CEA neglected to provide even basic services for workers living on _bateyes_, workers lived (and continue to live) in abject poverty with no running water, very little electricity, and generally crammed into small rooms with many other workers and not enough beds (Murphy, 1991; Riveros, 2014; Bracken, 2015; Agustín, 2018). Although housing was provided by the CEA for free, any additional housing for families had to be built by laborers on their own time and with their own money (Agustín, 2018). Finally, sugar cane plantations and their corresponding _bateyes_ are often located in isolated rural areas, which not only restricts workers’ ability to leave (because of the high cost of transport in comparison with low wages), but also severely limits the kinds of jobs available to them (Revuelta Guerrero, 2018; Agustín, 2018).

³ Sex work and sex trafficking comprise a substantial part of the Dominican economy in general, particularly in the tourism sector (Marple, 2015; United Nations Human Rights Committee, 2016; Rael et al, 2017).
Privatization of the sugar cane industry and its effects

By the 1980s the Dominican sugar industry was the fourth (4th) largest exporter of processed sugar in the world, as mentioned above (Dominican Sugar Industry, n.d). However, this status was short-lived. In the 1980s a global economic crisis caused world sugar prices to plummet (Ahlfeld, n.d.). Mismanagement and corruption of sugar plantations, coupled with this economic crisis, forced the CEA to lease their ingenios to private companies beginning in 1998 to keep them afloat. This process was facilitated through the Dominican law (Ley No.141-97) leading to the privatization of several other large state-owned businesses and companies (Montilla Martínez, 2002) This privatization project was unsuccessful due to immense competition from growing sugarcane producing countries like Brazil and India (Ahlfeld, 2002). As a result, ten (10) of the CEA-run ingenios were forced to close by the mid-2000s leaving thousands of workers without their principal source of income. Today only three (3) of the original state-owned plantations—Ingenio Barahona, Ingenio Porvenir, and Ingenio Consuelo—still cultivate and export sugar (Riveros, 2014) and the Dominican Republic does not even qualify in the top 20 sugar-producing nations worldwide (USDA, 2019).

Privatization of government-owned plantations had many adverse effects for Haitian laborers and their families. While some Haitians and their Dominican born descendants (Haitian-Dominicans) continued working on sugar cane plantations, many lost their jobs after privatization (FLACSO, 2000; Riveros, 2014). Men transitioned to construction work near to

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4 There are four main companies still producing sugarcane in the Dominican Republic: (1) the Consorcio Azucarero Central (CAC-Central Sugar Consortium), which leases Ingenio Barahona from the CEA; (2) the Consorcio Azucarero de Empresas Industriales (CAEI-the Sugar Consortium of Industrial Companies), which owns Ingenio Cristobal Colón and Ingenio Angelina and comprises 15% of Dominican sugar production; (3) the Consejo Estatal del Azúcar (CEA-State Sugar Council), which owns several ingenios but no longer manages their sugar production; and (4) the Central Romana Corporation, Ltd. (CR-owned and operated by the multinational, United States-based Fanjul Corporation), which produces 70% of Dominican sugar (Verité, 2012).
the _batey_ or other forms of day labor (FLACSO, 2000; Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 2004; Riveros, 2014). For women living in _bateyes_, who were often seen as merely domestic companions for their male partners and were not allowed to work on the plantations (Landry, 2013; Martínez, 2007), the prospects for paid work are much slimmer, especially without legal documents. A study conducted in 1999 in six _bateyes_ found that 83% of women surveyed were not engaged in any kind of paid labor (FLACSO, 2000). Those that were involved in the labor market mostly worked as domestic laborers in the homes of wealthy Dominicans in Santo Domingo or other larger cities (FLACSO, 2000). Today, not much has changed. Men tend to work in construction while women, if they leave the _batey_, work as domestic workers (Doris, L. Personal interview, 2018). On many _bateyes_, residents do not own land and they are unable to grow their own food for sustenance (Riveros, 2014). All land is owned by the state and if residents want to farm, they must accumulate enough funds to purchase parcels. Given the poverty of _bateyanos_ (batey residents), this almost never happens (Doris, L. Personal interview, 2018).

Today it is estimated that there are approximately 425 _bateyes_ in the Dominican Republic today, of which 238 belong to the CEA and 186 are privately owned (Martínez, 2014). Each _ingenio_ (sugarcane plantation/mill) is comprised of cane fields, processing mills, and multiple _bateyes_. Exact numbers of the _bateyes_ belonging to each _ingenio_ was not found. However, as mentioned previously, three of the original ten CEA-owned _ingenios_, as well as the _bateyes_ belonging to privately-owned _ingenios_, are still operating today. Those _bateyes_ no longer linked to the sugar industry were incorporated as legal municipalities by the state in 2007 through the Law of Municipalities (Ley 176-07). This allows them to be represented in Dominican government and also receive public funding. However, this newly earned municipality status has
not, in practice, actually afforded *batey* residents many more benefits due to corrupt politics and discriminatory attitudes towards Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans (Agustín, 2018; M. Dandré, personal communication, 2019). Similar to residents in those *bateyes* still linked to the sugar cane industry, residents in former CEA *bateyes* live in conditions of extreme poverty, isolation, and few economic opportunities (Martínez, 2014; Riveros, 2014).

3. Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic today

Official counts from the 2017 Dominican National Survey of Immigrants (ENI-2017) show that there are approximately 570,933 immigrants living in the Dominican Republic, although actual numbers may be much higher. Haitian migrants make up 87.2% (497,825) of that total (officially cited) immigrant population (ONE, 2017). Of that total number of Haitian immigrants, 62.9% are men and 37.1% are women. The majority are between 20 and 39 years old. Additionally, 33.6% of the Haitian immigrant population lives in rural areas while 66.4% live in urban areas, which marks a shift in labor market concentrations of Haitian immigrants from predominantly agricultural work (such as on rural sugarcane plantations) to urban-centered employment, generally in informal work sectors (Silié et al, 2002; Landry, 2013; Riveros, 2014; ONE, 2017). Much of the recent literature on Haitians in the Dominican Republic focuses either on Haitians that have moved to urban areas or on health issues among *batey* populations, leaving a gap in information on livelihoods among these populations, particularly in inactive *bateyes* no longer linked to the sugar industry (Jayaram, 2010; Petrozziello, 2012; Riveros, 2014; Bracken, 2015; Kaiser et al, 2015; Keys et al, 2015; Keys et al, 2019).

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5 Some estimate this number to be as high as 1.5 million, many of those migrants being undocumented (Canales et al, 2009).
It is worth noting that, due to the Dominican constitutional changes (described below) that retroactively removed citizenship from Dominican-born individuals of Haitian descent in 2013, the 2017 Dominican National Survey of Immigrants also reports the number of descendants of immigrants in the Dominican Republic, regardless of legal status. These descendants, along with foreign-born immigrants, are all designated as the “population of foreign origin”. The 2017 Survey of Immigrants reports 277,046 descendants of immigrants living in the Dominican Republic in 2017 (ONE, 2017). Although the survey does not differentiate descendants of immigrants by ethnicity, we may assume that the majority are of Haitian descent.

**Work for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans**

Employment in the Dominican Republic for both citizens and immigrants is characterized by high levels of informality (concept explored in Chapter 3), which makes accurate measurements of employment difficult (ILO, 2014; ONE, 2017). However, general information about their employment is known. Immigrants in the Dominican Republic find work using their own social networks, through formal institutions such as temp agencies, and by engaging in self-employment (ONE, 2017). Most of the work in which Haitian immigrants engage is unskilled labor that does not require high levels of education or professional development. The majority of working age Haitian immigrants work as manual laborers in agriculture (33.8%), construction (26.3%), and commercial activities (16.3%) (ONE, 2017). Haitian Dominicans also work in these sectors, but with a higher percentage concentrated in commercial activities (20.0%).

Women deviate from the overall pattern of employment. 41% of female Haitian immigrants engage in commercial activities while 21.7% conduct mercantile activities from their homes (ONE, 2017). Full data on the specific occupational sectors of each group was not found in the survey.
Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans are legally subject to the same labor code as ethnic Dominicans. As mentioned above, the Dominican Labor Code does not require employers to provide written contracts to their workers, relying instead on “the facts” of employment (Ley No. 1692, Labor Code, Principle 9). The overwhelming majority of work contracts between Haitian migrants and their employers are verbal (77% in urban zones and 82.6% in rural zones) which produces another channel for exploitation of these laborers because the workers then have no reliable source proving their terms of employment or payment (Lozano, 2013). Moreover, even if workers are provided with written contracts, literacy rates among Haitian agricultural laborers are low and even for workers that have attained a higher literacy level the contracts are often in Spanish, not their native Haitian Creole (Verité, 2012).

**Work for Women in the Dominican Republic**

Much of the literature on Haitian migrant laborers has focused on the livelihoods of male migrants (Murphy, 1991; Jayaram, 2010; Petrozziello, 2012; Bracken, 2015) This is because in the Dominican Republic (and Haiti), traditional patriarchal systems of social organization have historically limited women to household activities (Murphy, 1991; Baud, 1997; Raynolds, 2001, 2002). While men are considered the financial and material providers and have a greater variety of work opportunities available to them, women contribute the reproductive labor of the household, caring for children, elderly family members, and other domestic tasks (Baud, 1997). For women living in *bateyes*, who were often seen as merely domestic companions for their male partners and were not allowed to work on the plantations (Martínez, 2007; Landry, 2013; Doris, L. Personal interview, 2019), the prospects for paid work are much slimmer,

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6 For instance, if an employee’s contract says that she is only a part-time worker, but she works full-time for her employer, any contestation of her employment should be based off of that fact. However, unless the employee has proof of these “facts”, they cannot successfully contest any claims.
especially without legal documents. However, a growth of women entering the labor market presents new information on the work opportunities for Haitian women and their Dominican-born descendants.

In recent decades due to high inflation and increased costs of living (Safa, 2010), women in the Dominican Republic have been increasingly engaging in the labor market in areas such as microenterprise, tourism, domestic labor, and even agriculture and manufacturing (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997; Grasmuck and Espinal, 2000; Raynolds, 2001, 2002; Filipski et al, 2011; Werner, 2012; Landry, 2013; Bueno, 2015; Duffy et al, 2015; Marple, 2015). It is important to note that most of the occupational diversification has been opened to Dominican women but not to Haitian women, who tend to be found mostly engaging in microenterprise. Many of these jobs listed above require women to migrate from their homes to other towns or cities. Raynolds (2001, 2002) has shown how the incorporation of Dominican women into the agricultural export workforce has been one source of employment that does not require women to leave their rural communities for urban areas. Otherwise, many women migrate to cities for work. Despite a difference in job opportunities between Dominican and Haitian women, this pattern in rural-urban migration has been recorded in both populations. As cited above, there has been a shift in Haitian immigrant settlement from rural to urban areas in recent years since the closure of many sugarcane plantations, which has altered the forms of employment in which Haitian women and Dominican women of Haitian descent engage (Silié et al, 2002; Landry, 2013).

One of the most important ways that women in the Dominican Republic have generated their own incomes is through small business ventures generally run out of their homes (Baud, 1997; Grasmuck and Espinal, 2000). Washing and ironing clothes for others or running food
stands are ways that women can generate an income while still completing domestic duties. While these small businesses do not tend to yield a large economic surplus (Ortiz et al., 2014), Grasmuck and Espinal (2000) argue that they do yield important social benefits such as a greater investment of funds back into the home and the empowerment of women to assert their own opinions in household decision-making. In their study of 201 men and women in the Dominican Republic in the late 1990s, results revealed that women reported using their incomes more often for the benefit of their children in areas such as improved nutrition or educational materials. However, women were also more likely to report closing their small businesses due to conflict with familial responsibilities (Grasmuck and Espinal, 2000). This thesis explores this issue of women and small business further and addresses how women use small business to bring in supplemental income for their households.

Although this list provides an optimistic overview of women’s increased engagement in the Dominican labor market, it is critical to examine the ways in which discrimination based on race and ethnicity (or even perceived ethnicity), complicate and even prevent Haitian and Haitian-Dominican women (and men) from participating in work opportunities (Bueno, 2015).

**Social discrimination towards Haitians and Haitian Dominicans**

Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans face severe social, political, and economic discrimination and therefore are relegated to more precarious, low-paying jobs. Underlying these issues is the Dominican-borne notion of *antihaitianismo* (anti-Haitianism). *Antihaitianismo* is a social concept that “explains” and justifies Dominican discrimination towards ethnic Haitians and their descendants, largely due to their skin color and associations of Haitians with inferior status (Tavernier, 2008; Simmons, 2010; Santos Ramírez, 2014). It is common in Dominican culture to claim that Dominicans themselves are not black, but rather *mestizo* (mixed) or *indio* (Indian or
Native American). Blackness, in the Dominican Republic, has historically been associated with slavery and inferior status. Historical stereotypes in the Dominican Republic claim that Haitians are the only true blacks on the island, ignoring the range in skin tones among ethnic Dominicans (Santos Ramírez, 2014; García Peña, 2015). For this reason, the concepts of race and ethnicity in the Dominican-Haitian context are confused. *Antihaitianismo* equates blackness with Haiti and those individuals with darker skin are generally assumed to be Haitian or of Haitian descent. The association of blackness with Haiti creates an erasure of black Dominican identity and creates class stratification based on race even amongst ethnic Dominicans. That being said, once lighter skinned individuals of Haitian descent are “discovered” to be ethnically Haitian, they experience similar discrimination to that of their darker skinned counterparts.\(^7\)

The birth of the discriminatory concept of *antihaitianismo* is most often linked to the Haitian occupation of the Dominican side of the island of Hispaniola (mentioned above) and was institutionalized through ethno-racial discriminatory policies under the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930-1961) (Blake, 2017). The anti-black, anti-Haitian attitude has been manifested not only in everyday social discrimination, but also in physical violence towards Haitians and individuals of Haitian descent (Riveros, 2014; Santos Ramírez, 2014). The most extreme example of this is the 1937 Parsley Massacre, in which an estimated 30,000 Haitians were slaughtered by Dominican military members disguised as civilians in the Dominican border town of Dajabón and surrounding villages (Wucker, 1999). In modern times, anti-Haitianism

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\(^7\) For this reason, I made the difficult decision to use the term “ethnicity” rather than “race” when discussing experiences of discrimination in this thesis. I am not an expert on ethnic and racial literature and hope to not anger any who may take offense to this decision. This decision is especially important because, just like Dominicans, the ethnic Haitian population encompasses a wide variety of skin tones. There are many Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans with lighter skin tones that “pass” as Dominicans. It is the association with being Haitian that foments greater discrimination, as we will see in the results section. That being said, a darker skin color is automatically associated with Haitian identity and makes those with a visibly darker skin tone more obvious targets for discrimination, so this thesis makes every attempt to pull out that factor, as well.
takes the form of the arbitrary denial of cellphone SIM cards (a commonly cited complaint among residents in my study site), poor treatment by medical professionals and poorer health outcomes, geographic segregation to less-desirable areas, and less access to transportation (Simmons, 2010; Keys et al, 2015; Doris, L. Personal Communication, 2019). Antihaitianismo has also been used explicitly and implicitly as the reasoning for a variety of discriminatory policies towards Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans and impacts their sense of belonging in the Dominican Republic (Wucker, 1999).

**Institutionalized discrimination: The struggle to obtain and maintain legal status**

Ethnic and racial discrimination towards Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans (and even ethnic Dominicans with darker skin) is directly linked to experiences of political and legal discrimination. Haitians and their descendants have been subject to multiple rounds of mass deportations over the decades based on the Dominican political climate and its attitude towards immigrants (Moya Pons, 1998; Fletcher et al, 2002; Wucker, 2015; Katz, 2018; Doris, L. Personal interview, 2019). Most recently, laws and regulations put into practice in the 21st century have created a particularly hostile environment for these individuals. They aim to keep Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in a consistently precarious position both in order to encourage them to leave the Dominican Republic, as well as to make those who stay easier to exploit.

In 2001, the Dominican government established a new system of social security, which formally excludes workers in “irregular migratory situations” from receiving retirement pensions (Riveros, 2014: 61). Therefore, undocumented Haitian workers who entered the Dominican Republic illegally or stayed beyond their work visa, do not have the right to a retirement pension, despite working for years and even decades in the country. This situation is particularly grave for older individuals that are no longer physically able to work or are denied work due to their age.
Although former sugar cane workers contributed to social security for many years through their employers, many employers did not properly handle those monies. Therefore, many workers are not recognized by the Dominican Social Security Institute (IDSS-Instituto Dominicano de Seguridad Social) and, despite contesting their claims, have gone years without receiving any compensation (Bracken, 2015; Riveros, 2014). Without a retirement pension and without formal status in the Dominican Republic, these workers will either be deported or must stay on the bateyes and continue to work unless a family member can help them or until they perish (Bracken, 2015).

The Dominican government has also attempted to alter citizenship rights guaranteed by the Dominican Constitution in an attempt to control the migration of Haitians to the country. In 2013, the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal implemented a 2010 constitutional change that ended the practice of birthright citizenship (*jus soli* in legal terminology) for those individuals born within the Dominican Republic to children considered to be “in-transit” (Joint Submission, 2018; Petrozziello, 2018). *Jus soli*, as opposed to *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by blood), is a citizenship practice widely recognized internationally as a human right. The Dominican Republic had previously signed an agreement with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights guaranteeing citizenship to all those born within its borders (Morris, 2014; Katz, 2018). In order to enforce this new constitutional change, the Dominican government pulled out of the aforementioned agreement in 2014 (Morris, 2014; Katz, 2018).

According to the new 2004 Migration Law 285-04, “in-transit” refers to all non-residents, as opposed to the 1939 Migration Law that established that the concept of “in transit” applied to “persons in the country for ten days or fewer, with the purpose of reaching another destination” (Joint Submission, 2018, pp.7). The Tribunal retroactively applied this law to all people born in
the Dominican Republic after the year 1929 (Joint Submission, 2018; Petrozziello, 2018; M. Dandré, personal communication, 2019). Because 87.34% of immigrants to the Dominican Republic are Haitian, it was clear that this legal change was aimed primarily at Haitians and their descendants (ENI, 2017). Due to these laws, an estimated 200,000 or more Haitian-Dominicans became effectively stateless or were at risk of becoming stateless (“Deportation and Citizenship”, 2015; Blake, 2017).

In 2014 due to immense international pressure, the Dominican government created the National Regularization Plan, which would give those individuals who had lost their citizenship the opportunity to re-apply for it (Petrozziello, 2018; M. Dandré, personal communication, 2019). The plan divided the affected population into two groups: group A and Group B. Group A were those descendants of migrants born in the Dominican Republic who had been issued a birth certificate and whose nationality had been stripped. Group B were descendants of migrants born in the Dominican Republic whose births had not been registered in the first place. Individuals in Group A were to have their citizenship restored immediately by the Junta Central Electoral (Central Electoral Board); however, the plan specified that “this was not because they [the Dominican government] recognized their right to Dominican nationality, but because the state had led them to believe they were Dominicans and would allow them to continue their lives as such” (Petrozziello, 2018). Group B was given a 90-day window to present proof of birth information, which they normally did not have, register themselves as “foreigners” (even though they had been born in the Dominican Republic) and receive a residency document, and finally register for Dominican citizenship (Petrozziello, 2018; M. Dandré, personal communication, 2019). According to a personal interview with Haitian-Dominican immigration attorney Manuel Dandré—who also had to pass through the process for Group A individuals—not a single person
from Group B had been naturalized as Dominican citizens as of July 2019. Without formal identification cards, they cannot enroll in secondary school (though most children can obtain elementary education) and pursue higher education or other pathways that would have led to greater job security (Kim, 2013; Wucker, 2015). Political and legal discrimination based on ethnic and racial prejudices have negative economic repercussions for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans. Without legal status and facing social barriers, job options are limited. Those limited job options will be explored further in this thesis.

**Sense of belonging: Haitian integration into Dominican society**

These targeted immigration policies and social prejudices based on ethnic and racial discriminatory attitudes have important implications for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans’ sense of social belonging, well-being, and feelings of precarity. Studies in rural Haitian migrant communities have revealed a strong association between mental distress in Haitian immigrants and negative social interactions with Dominicans (Kaiser et al, 2015, pp.157) and a lack of social support (Keys et al, 2015). Haitian migrants also report experiencing repeated humiliation due to harassment by Dominicans which make them feel unwelcome and sometimes worthless (Keys et al, 2015). A central theme in this study was the concept of vale, or worth (both financial and self-worth as a human being). Many Haitian respondents reported either being told by Dominicans that they have no worth or being made to feel that they pa gen vale (“do not have any worth” in Haitian Creole) (Keys et al, 2015).

Even inside bateyes, Haitian migrants experience prejudice from Dominicans living in and near the community. Ethnographer Kimberly Wynne (2015) details how even poor Dominicans living as neighbors with Haitian migrants in bateyes establish a sense of superiority and

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8 This assertion is corroborated by data from a personal interview with the Vice Minister for Naturalization and Migration, Luis Fernández, conducted by Allison Petrozziello in 2016 (Petrozziello, 2018).
hierarchy based off of ethnic and racial discriminatory moral attitudes. Dominican batey residents distinguish between intimate friendships with Haitians (undesirable) and respectful working relationships with Haitians (desirable). Those that cross the line into friendship receive a demoted status in the batey hierarchy and loss the trust (confianza) of other Dominicans. Haitian residents expressed feeling degraded and humiliated because of Dominican perceptions that they were untrustworthy, dangerous, and unable to “progress” (Wynne, 2015, pp.160). Ethnic and racial discriminatory attitudes exclude Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans from participating in many aspects of Dominican society, damage their mental health, and inhibit a sense of belonging.

4. Summary

In the Dominican Republic, Haitian migrant laborers and Haitian-Dominicans living in isolated, rural bateyes are being forced into increasingly more precarious forms of work, as economic changes and intense societal discrimination relegate many Haitians to some of the lowest paying, least secure jobs in the country. Haitian immigrants and their Dominican-born descendants long harvested sugar cane, one of the most exploitative jobs in the Dominican Republic. Since 1999, however, sugar plantations across the Dominican Republic have ceased operation due to global economic neoliberal restructuring and increased competition in sugar production, causing many batey residents to lose their primary source of income (Agustín, 2018).

Many Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans lack Dominican residency or citizenship due to political and legal barriers and face acute social marginalization stemming from widespread racism. Due to these issues, Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans face many barriers to entry into well-paying, secure (long-term) jobs in the Dominican labor market. These barriers are particularly strong for women who have often been relegated to unpaid, feminized reproductive
and domestic roles and have only begun to enter Dominican waged labor markets en masse in recent decades. Very little literature analyzes the current situation of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in rural areas in the Dominican Republic, particularly in regard to modern livelihood opportunities. This thesis aims to fill this empirical gap in knowledge and analyze how *batey* residents address barriers to secure employment. Results of this thesis also contribute to the larger literature on intersectional experiences of precarious work, which will be explained in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Overview

The following literature review will give a general overview of the sociological concept of precarious work as well as provide a contextual basis with which to analyze the experiences of precarious employment and existential precariousness among Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in rural Dominican Republic. I will first lay out a general definition of precarious work, as well as provide some competing terminology in order to demonstrate why precarious work is the most appropriate designation for analysis of my study. Next, I will describe the origins and evolution of precarious work and the influence of neoliberal globalization in its growth worldwide. Then, I will discuss the effects of precarious employment on different populations, differentiating between effects in the Global North and Global South and focusing on the implications of precarious work for immigrant laborers, women, and people of color. Finally, I will argue that few studies focus on the connection between objective conditions and subjective feelings of precarity (Banki, 2013). This thesis hopes to bridge that gap by providing a rich, qualitative analysis of how the intersectionality of batey residents’ identities alter the challenges, barriers, and opportunities for employment and how they adapt to precarious work.

2. Precarious work: An overview

In the modern labor market, precarious work has become an increasingly common employment arrangement. Bourdieu (1963) is credited with introducing the term précarité when differentiating between workers with permanent jobs and those engaging in casual forms of labor in Algeria. The literature generally characterizes precarious work as being uncertain, unpredictable or risky from the point of view of the worker (Kalleberg, 2008), having more
flexible work arrangements, such as seasonal or temporary work (Bandelj et al, 2011), shifting from long-term employment to a lack of fixed-term contracts (Bobek et al, 2018), and as “receiving limited social benefits and statutory protections” (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017, pp. 1). Although some scholars have also associated precarious work with low wages (ILO, 2012; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Young, 2010), this is not necessarily a symptom exclusive to precarious work, as low wage jobs may still have regular working hours and fixed labor contracts (Bobek et al, 2018; Jokela, 2019). However, payment schedules may not be regularized, and workers may not receive consistent payments or uniform wage amounts (Bobek et al, 2018).

There is considerable debate in the literature about whether precarious work should be analyzed only using measurable criteria such as fixed-term contracts and payment schedules or if research on the phenomena should also include more subjective analyses of precarity that incorporate workers’ feelings of insecurity (Porthé et al, 2010; García Pérez et al, 2016; Alberti et al, 2018). The principle characteristic of precarious work is the alteration of employment relations to more flexible, temporary, part-time, and contingent work, which shifts risk onto the employee and instills feelings of insecurity due to uncertainty of work arrangements or perceived unpredictability (Bandelj et al, 2011; ILO, 2012; Kalleberg, 2008; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Mosoetsa et al, 2016). Thus, precarious work is not only the fact of inconsistent employment (objective insecurity), but also the threat or fear of insecurity (subjective insecurity) (Butler, 2009; Alberti et al, 2018; Bobek et al, 2018).

Precarious workers, then, are those laborers experiencing labor insecurity. Guy Standing’s seminal book “The Precariat” (2011) argued that precarious workers actually make up a “new dangerous class of workers” (emphasis mine) called “the precariat”, which lack seven principal forms of labor security. These forms of security are: “labor market security (adequate income-
earning opportunities), employment security (protection against arbitrary dismissal), job security (opportunities to “retain a niche in employment” and access upward mobility), work security (protection against accidents, illness- es, and arduous working conditions), skill reproduction security (opportunities to gain and use skills), income security (assurance of an adequate stable income), and representation security (a collective voice in the labor market)” (Standing, 2011: 11).

Standing describes the “precariat” as a dangerous class because they have “class characteristics” such as a distanced and “minimal trust relationships with capital and the state” and “none of the social contract relationships of the proletariat” which provide a sense of job security (Standing, 2011: 8). So, the “precariat” is “dangerous” because of their disenfranchisement and feelings of labor insecurity; which spark “the four A’s – anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation”, potentially leading to conflict (ibid: 19). Some have questioned Standing’s use of the term “class” to describe precarious workers (Alberti et al, 2018) since precarious work has been shown to impact laborers regardless of occupational sector (Kalleberg and Vargas, 2017; Shankar and Sahni, 2015). Nevertheless, Standing’s analysis has proven to be an important framework for thinking about precarious work and precarious workers.

Both the objective conditions of employment (i.e-wages, work hours, long-term, short-term, or no contract) and subjective feelings of precarity are influenced and exacerbated by one’s social identities, such as gender, race, class, legal status, and residence in the Global North or the Global South. In recent years scholars have pushed to include more diverse and intersectional analyses of precarious work experiences that incorporate both quantifiable measures of precarious work as well as subjective feelings or precarity or precariousness to provide more
robust representations of worker experiences. Implications of precarious work for diverse populations will be explored further below.

**Competing terminology for precarious work**

In the literature on precarious work, there are several other competing terms that tend to be used interchangeably. First, there are the general terms ‘precarity’ or ‘precariousness’, which should not be confused with precarious labor, as precarity and precariousness relate to an overall social condition or state of existential insecurity and can be caused by situations outside of one’s occupation—such as legal status, social discrimination based on race or ethnicity, or poverty (Campbell and Price, 2016; Mosoetsa et al, 2016). Precarity and precariousness, however, are crucial to understanding subjective experiences of insecurity and will be explored in greater depth below. Some scholars use terms such as ‘contingent’, ‘flexible’, or ‘casualized’ (Schewe and White, 2017; Fuller and Vosko, 2008), which capture the conditions of work, but do not cover the larger consequences for the worker or the employment relationship or structure of labor (Mosoetsa et al 2016).

Second, some literature confuses precarious work with ‘informal labor’. The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines the informal economy as “all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal [employment] arrangements” (ILO, 2015, pp. 3). Informal workers, then, are: “employees holding informal jobs in or for formal enterprises, or in or for economic units in the informal economy, including but not limited to those in subcontracting and in supply chains, or as paid domestic workers employed by households; and workers in unrecognized or unregulated employment relationships” (ILO, 2015, pp. 5). The irregular employment relationship, lack of proper enforcement of legal protections and inability to properly track informal work exacerbates
the precarity in “informal” work (Guarnizo and Rodriguez, 2017). However, Mosoetsa et al (2016) argue that ‘informal work’ as a term has several weaknesses: (1) ‘informal work’ can occur in the formal sector (ex: an un-paid internship at a business) and the name may be confused with an exclusive association with the informal sector and; (2) ‘informal work’ groups self-employment with employment by enterprises, which confuses the study of the employment relationship between employer and employee (Mosoetsa et al 2016). Therefore, informal employment is generally precarious work, but precarious employment is not always informal since precarious work can occur in the formal sector. Guarnizo and Rodriguez (2017) sum up this issue concisely:

“Informal activities are licit economic endeavors in which workers are not offered the same protections as those provided by formal work, including a minimum salary, working protections, overtime pay, health benefits, retirement plans, and other fringe benefits. As such, informal work engenders labor precariousness, including job instability, uncertainty, and persistent poverty. Analytically, however, informality and precariousness are two different, rather than synonymous dimensions. For formal work does not preclude precariousness.” (3).

I give informal work such a detailed analysis here because, as will be demonstrated later on in this thesis, informality is a key aspect of employment for Haitian migrants.

**The rise of precarious work**

Precarious labor comes from the rise of neoliberal globalization—a liberalizing of the global economy which breaks down restrictions on the international activities and movements of business and capital and encourages competition between firms internationally—beginning in the 1970s (Bandelj et al, 2011). One of the defining characteristics of this shift is the financialization of capital—"the process whereby financial services come to dominate over productive activities as sources of profits” (Bandelj et al 2011). In theory, neoliberal economics discourages state
involvement in the free market and “equates marketization with the furtherance of human freedom and individual choice” (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017). In practice, the state is actually a critical actor in the establishment and retraction of policies and norms.

To promote these free market ideals, neoliberal policies create opportunities for increased competition among firms. These regulations restructure employment relations in a way that favors the employers or business owners. Neoliberal economic restructuring has prompted the weakening of collective bargaining rights of employees that might interfere with business operations, and the allowance for the outsourcing of labor, further weakening bargaining rights of domestic workers and allowing firms to lower production costs (Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda 1998; Kalleberg 2008; Kalleberg and Vallas 2017; McMichael 2016). Related to the outsourcing of labor and also crucial to the shifting of employment arrangements is “spatial restructuring”, whereby advances in technology and communications allow businesses to “locate their business operations optimally” (usually abroad) to reduce costs (Kalleberg 2009). In essence, in order for firms to be competitive, they outsource labor and production to areas with lower costs. As a result, in the Global North, the service sector has grown exponentially while also witnessing a decline in jobs in the manufacturing sector due to outsourcing (Kalleberg 2009). Finally, the economy has seen increased privatization of industries and businesses that were once public, which has had the paradoxical effect of erasing some jobs and creating others, while also reducing social safety nets (McMichael 2016; Standing 1999).

**Historical roots of precarious work**

Precarious work is the result of neoliberal globalization, or simply neoliberalism. But what is the relationship between precarious work and this shift towards a liberalized global economy? It is of utmost importance to recognize the differences in these shifts worldwide; particularly as it
relates to variation between the Global North and the Global South. The majority of the literature on precarious work up until recently has focused on workers’ experiences in industrialized nations, typically in the Global North (Mosoetsa et al, 2016). Although this literature review will draw heavily from those sources, it will also attempt to differentiate between causes and effects of precarious work experiences in different contexts.

The growth of neoliberalism worldwide can be traced to the the end of colonization and imperialism in the mid-20th century and the end of World War II, which led to a rise in economic growth, international relations and increased competition as trade began to open globally (McMichael, 2016; Mosoetsa et al, 2016). After World War II a trend began in the United States and Europe towards more protections for workers, leading to the growth of unions, greater health and insurance benefits, and long-term employment contracts (Mosoetsa et al, 2016).

However, these protections did not benefit all workers equally. Women, ethno-racial minorities and immigrants in particular were paid poorly and were often in jobs with very little oversight and regulation (Mosoetsa et al, 2016; Branch and Hanley, 2017). This has come to be called “dual-labor market segmentation”, in which occupational opportunities are divided into (a) “good” jobs in the primary market that enjoy high wages, employment stability, and good working conditions; and (b) “bad” jobs in the secondary market that suffer low wages, high turnover, and poor working conditions (Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998; Schewe and White, 2017). It is into this second category that women, ethno-racial minorities and immigrants have been disproportionately relegated; while white, domestic (citizen/legal resident) laborers maintain relative security in more stable, longer-term jobs (Browne and Misra, 2003). “Good” jobs do not necessarily need to be expensive jobs, but rather they offer a sense of security and stability not experienced in “bad” jobs (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011).
As mentioned previously, business became increasingly competitive in the 1970s due to the liberalization of trade, rapid technological innovation and change, and increased mobility of capital and financialization of the economy (Kalleberg 2012). In order to compete in a global market, it was necessary to reduce restrictions for business. In the Global North one of the most common strategies was to outsource labor costs to other nations or to bring in immigrant laborers, which not only reduces costs of production, but also increases “operational flexibility of an organization” (McMichael, 2016, p. 150). This had the effect of weakening the bargaining power of existing domestic labor unions, as well as setting a new precedent for increasingly flexible forms of labor arrangements (McMichael 2016).

However, in order for these alterations in market relations to occur, the state plays a critical role in the regulation of this new economic system and the fashioning of precarious workers. As domestic (citizen/resident—not those performing domestic labor) workers began to lose power in the workplace in the Global North, immigrants or outside labor became the scapegoat for all occupational issues (Anderson, 2010). To counter these grievances, the state applied immigration controls “as a means of prioritizing the national labor force in employment at the same time as protecting migrants from exploitation” (Anderson 2010, p. 301). The result was neither of the aforementioned pretenses.

3. Experiences of precarious work

The impact of neoliberal structural changes can be observed in the changing landscape of employment relations, in which there has been a decrease in the average amount of time workers stay with their employers, longer periods of unemployment, a growth of non-standard or flexible work arrangements, and the shifting of risk from the employer to the employee (Bandelj et al, 2011; Kalleberg 2008; Kalleberg and Vallas 2017). It has already been mentioned that, in the
Global North, the liberalizing of the global economy weakened labor unions and domestic workers’ bargaining power, shifted more jobs from manufacturing to the service sector, as well as exacerbated existing dual-labor market segmentation. However, neoliberalism has had different effects in the Global South.

As workers in the Global North trend towards the service sector and experience a weakening of labor rights, in the Global South there has been a shift in available jobs due to privatization of firms, a reduction in social safety nets, and a growth of the informal sector and informal employment which has led to an increasingly mobile and migratory workforce (Bandelj et al, 2011; Mosoetsa et al, 2016; Shankar and Sahni, 2017). Increased competition from foreign companies pushes out smallholder farmers and pushes domestically owned businesses (often-times state-run) to privatize, generally causing a downsize in employees (Bandelj et al, 2011; Chong and Galdo, 2009; McMichael, 2016). As a result, many residents of the Global South—particularly poor, rural residents—have been pushed to migrate away from their homes to look for work (McMichael 2016, Mosoetsa et al 2016). These migrant laborers may move to the Global North or stay in the Global South to meet the increasing demand for laborers in newly outsourced manufacturing jobs from the Global North, mass agricultural production, and other service jobs—mainly in the informal sector. This South-South migration has not been as heavily analyzed in the precarious work literature—a literature to which this thesis contributes (Lee, 2010).

**Intersectional analyses of precarious work**

Precarious work has different implications for different individuals in both the Global North and the Global South. Precarious work literature has historically focused most of its attention on workers in industrialized countries in the Global North and generally lumps the
experiences of workers together, not accounting for the diversity within those experiences (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017). However, there is an emerging branch of the precarious work scholarship that advocates for a more diverse and intersectional analysis of the experiences of precarious work incorporating issues of gender, race, class, legal status and other aspects of identity in both the Global North and the Global South (Vosko, 2000; Browne and Misra, 2003; Fuller and Vosko, 2007; Banki, 2013; Torres et al, 2013; Lawton, 2015; Mosoetsa et al, 2016; Branch and Hanley, 2017; Schewe and White, 2017).

Intersectionality is the idea that social categories (i.e.- race, gender, class) are socially constructed and that they interact with and co-construct one another to create social experiences unique to individuals and groups that vary based on place and time (Crenshaw 1989; Hankvisky 2012). Additionally, intersectional analyses focus on historical and cultural underpinnings of situations to understand the generational aspect of intersectional experiences essentially demonstrating that these differences in experience do not arise out of nowhere (Rice, Harrison, and Friendman, 2019). Rather, social categorization has compounding, intergenerational effects leading to entrenched inequality (Sharank and Sahni, 2017; Alberti et al, 2019). In precarious work literature, scholars make the case that opportunities for employment, terms of work, and work experiences are all informed and influenced by individual identity (gender, race, legal status, etc.), and vice versa. The following sections will explore the differing implications of precarious work for different populations, paying special attention to race, gender, and immigration status among laborers in the Global South. The compounding effects of these social factors cannot be separated from one another. Therefore, the following sections, while divided into categories of race, gender, and migrant labor, incorporate and
discuss the intersectional interplay of these social categories to demonstrate the complex role identity plays in experiences of precarious work.

Racial differentiation in precarious work

Racial differences in hiring practices and the kinds of jobs available based on race and ethnicity have been well-documented in the United States (Presser, 2003; Branch, 2007; Branch and Hanley, 2014; Branch and Hanley, 2017). Racial and ethnic minority groups have been shown to disproportionately be found in the “secondary” labor market where low wages, high turnover rates, and poor working conditions are prevalent (Brown and Misra, 2003).

Furthermore, black workers, both male and female, in comparison with white, non-Hispanic workers have been shown to work more “nonstandard work shifts”, such as night and weekend shifts, which may be inconvenient for accomplishing other tasks like domestic responsibilities (Presser, 2003).

Over time, certain jobs and labor markets have become “racialized” (Torres et al, 2013; Nelson et al, 2015). That is, they have become associated with a certain race or ethnic group based on stereotypes and racial discrimination; like Latin American immigrants as being construction or agricultural workers, or black workers as working in low-level service industries such as manufacturing or as street sweepers (Torres et al, 2013; Bueno, 2015; Nelson et al, 2015). These stereotypical attitudes have important implications for the kinds of work opportunities available to different racial and ethnic groups and their rights on the job. Nelson et al (2015) argue that racialized conceptions of Latino/a work habits in the United States fuel assumptions about how hard they will work and how little they will complain or protest. A lack of documentation can exacerbate these assumptions and potentially increase exploitation of Latino/a workers (Nelson et al; 2015). Moreover, an individual’s visible identity (such as darker
skin) may impact their employment opportunities, regardless of their education, skills, and qualifications (Bueno, 2015).

Racial differences can be further complicated by gender. Branch (2007) has argued that black men in the United States have actually attained greater advantages in comparison to black women over time under the guise of male privilege; whereas black women face both racial and gender discrimination. In Latin America the discrimination towards and lack of protective rights for black and indigenous women since colonial times has restricted the kinds of jobs available to them and limited their ability to accumulate wealth and pass it on to future generations, producing intergenerational poverty (Bueno, 2015). In the United States, although low-wage black women’s relative status in comparison to white women workers has increased since the 1970s (Branch and Hanley, 2014), this is due in part to the proliferation of precarious work and economic insecurity across occupational sectors in the United States, which reduces relative inequality between races and ethnic groups, but not necessarily because of strides in social equality.

Race has important implications for experiences of precarious work, but much research remains to be conducted in this arena, particularly among workers in the Global South (Branch and Hanley, 2017; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017). Because many studies on precarious work combine analyses of race within examinations of gender and immigrant status variations, I also incorporate racial distinctions into the following sections on gender and migrant labor.

Gender differentiation in precarious work

Over the course of the 20th century, more women have entered the workplace to engage in waged employment (generally called the ‘feminization of labor’ or ‘feminization of the workforce’), generally having to strike a balance between work responsibilities and traditional
domestic duties (Standing, 1999; Vosko, 2000; Agarwala and Chun, 2019). This has been accompanied by a rise in labor migration worldwide (Courtis and Pacecca, 2014; McMichael, 2016; Christian and Namaganda, 2018). A growing literature on the feminization of labor argues that women are over-represented in employment that is informal, insecure, and low-paying (Standing, 1999; Bandelj et al, 2011; Agarwala and Chun, 2019).

In comparison with men, women generally face added challenges to entering and staying in the labor market as they try to balance competing responsibilities. Many studies in both the Global North and the Global South have shown that women often face pressures on their work life due to domestic duties (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997; Raynolds, 2001, 2002; Ariza, 2004; Webber and Williams, 2008; Lee, 2010). They are more likely to cite the needs of the children as their reason for needing work, but also as their reason for leaving work (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997; Raynolds, 2001, 2002; Webber and Williams, 2008; Lee, 2010). Webber and Williams’ (2008) study on women in the United States who work part-time voluntarily reveal how part-time work may be an important strategy for mothers in the both “the top and bottom of the employment hierarchy” (“good” and “bad” jobs) (pp. 752). However, the meaning and experience of part-time work differ based on the kind of labor market a woman belongs to. For professional workers, part-time work was often perceived as a benefit or reward of hard work and many emphasized the desire to go back to work full-time in the future. On the other hand, women in the secondary (“bad”) labor market where part-time schedules are the norm, do not struggle to gain part-time employment, but do suffer the consequences of lower wages and fewer benefits. Webber and William’s (2008) study provides a nuanced analysis of women’s experiences of part-time work (and perhaps precarious work) by demonstrating a clear class stratification and hierarchy among women’s occupational situations.
Young (2010) argues that the mere association of women with domestic and reproductive labor can impact women’s employment experiences. She shows how, within the United States, women are less likely to receive benefits in the workplace and to hold permanent positions and, within these positions, “work far fewer hours compared to their male counterparts” (Young, 2010; pp. 75). Using gender stratification theory, which contends that women are segregated into precarious work settings “because of presumed, rather than actual, family investments”, her study concludes that women may not have equal opportunities to receive secure jobs, despite similar or superior educational attainments to male peers, due to these essentialist frameworks of female work (Young, 2010, p. 79). On the other hand, some studies have shown that job stability and longevity in positions has actually been rising among women, particularly women with children (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017). However, this conclusion may exclude those women that face more challenges to gaining and maintaining employment in the first place and elevate experiences of women who have been able to find decent work. It also may ignore the impacts of other factors such as race, class, and legal or immigrant status.

Job opportunities for women differ greatly based on other social categories such as race, class, legal status and individual experiences vary greatly even within similar categories (Browne and Misra, 2003; Branch, 2007; Fuller and Vosko, 2007; Lawton, 2015; Branch, 2017). However, in general, poor women, women of color, and immigrant women are more often stratified into precarious forms of employment in the “secondary market” (mentioned above) (Browne and Misra, 2003; Bueno, 2015; Branch and Hanley, 2017).

Work for women

One of the many effects of neoliberal economic globalization and the feminization of labor has been the commodification of household activities such as childcare and other domestic
duties traditionally associated with female reproductive labor (Glenn, 1992; Kalleberg 2008; Courtis and Pacecca, 2014; Blofield and Jokela, 2018). Domestic workers have historically been poor, rural, ethno-racial minority women contracted by more well-off households, increasingly as a replacement for wealthier women entering into the labor market (Guarnizo and Rodriguez, 2017; Pereyra and Poblete, 2018; Blofield and Jokela, 2018). In Latin America and the United States, this practice has roots in slavery and racialized inequalities that place poor women of color in the role of servant (both paid and unpaid) to more well-off, lighter skinned families (Glenn, 1992; Courtis and Pacecca, 2014; Bueno, 2015; Pereyra and Poblete, 2018).

Because domestic work is correlated with female reproductive labor, many women find domestic work to be an easier entry point into the labor market than other forms of employment. However, it may also be a kind of entrapment or catch-all for women who cannot find work elsewhere. In her seminal piece on the historical continuities of paid domestic work, Glenn (1992) shows how reproductive labor (housekeeping, childcare, nursing, etc.) has been divided along racial and gender lines in the United States. Specifically, she demonstrates how these racial lines differ regionally in the United States, with some areas relying more on black, Latina, Asian, or Native American female labor than others. Some of these women are also immigrants. Her analysis presents the crucial argument that domestic work is not only gendered, but also racialized. Equating servile work with people of color makes it more likely that women in these social categories will be placed into and stuck in these forms of work, creating a cycle of precarity in employment, especially since domestic labor is not afforded the same kinds of protections as other forms of work. Further discussion of domestic labor as a form of precarious work will be explored below.
While domestic work is a prevalent source of employment for many poor, ethno-racial, immigrant women entering the workforce, it is not the only source of employment. Apart from domestic labor, women also increasingly engage in informal enterprise (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997; Landry, 2013; Shenaz Hossein, 2015), agricultural labor (Raynolds, 2001, 2002), manufacturing (Grasmuck and Espinal, 2000; Safa, 2010; Filipski et al, 2011; Werner, 2012; Bueno, 2014), and tourism (Duffy et al, 2015). In general, these jobs do not require high education levels. Many are low-paying and irregular but offer a source of income for women unable to find decent, full-time work elsewhere and allow them to attain some level of economic independence (Shenaz Hossein, 2015).

In the Dominican Republic, even as women are afforded more opportunities to diversify employment, jobs are still stratified based on race and social capital. Cruz Caridad Bueno’s rich, ethnographic study (2015) with black female Dominican workers in both domestic work and the manufacturing sector demonstrates how black women (1) have a more difficult time finding work, and (2) have their work devalued, labor rights obscured and ignored, and wages oppressed by employers. Bueno’s interviews reveal that racial discrimination emphasizing black inferiority reduces black Dominicans’ access to information, resources, and stable, well-paying jobs.

Similar to domestic labor, jobs for women in newly available fields are servile and exploitative of those in oppressed and marginalized positions in society. Facing a lack of job opportunities elsewhere, women (particularly poor, immigrant, women of color) take whatever jobs they can find, even if they do not provide the kinds of financial and emotional security they may be seeking. This thesis contributes to this growing intersectional literature on women’s employment in the Global South and reinforces arguments made by other scholars that work opportunities have been stratified based on gender and race (Glenn, 1992; Bueno, 2015). It
further reinforces arguments that traditional domestic responsibilities present a particularly feminized barrier to obtaining and maintaining employment.

**Migrant labor and precarious work**

Migrant laborers in both the Global North and the Global South experience precarious work differently than do citizen and documented immigrant workers. Due to issues of immigration status, language barriers, social discrimination, and a lack of recognition of migrants’ skills by receiving countries, immigrants are more likely to engage in precarious employment (Anderson 2010; Bandelj et al 2011; Banki, 2013; Goldring and Landolt 2011; McMichael 2016; Schewe and White 2017). Philip McMichael argues that:

Migrant labor conditions are always precarious because of issues of documentation, exploitation, racism, sexism, and employment uncertainty (not to mention separation from family and community back home) (2016, p. 155).

Faced with societal discrimination and a lack of rights and oversight, immigrants in low-waged, unskilled labor markets form a class of workers that is extremely vulnerable to exploitation by employers (Anderson, 2010). Fear of deportation may deter a laborer from reporting abuse and occupational injustices (Rodriguez and Mearns, 2012), reduce a worker’s mobility (Anderson, 2010; Torres et al, 2013; Preece, 2018), and inhibit the formation of social bonds and a sense of belonging (Anderson, 2010; Torres et al, 2017).

**Precarity of place: Migrant status and implications for insecurity**

Immigrant laborers arrive to their host countries with varying statuses of “legality” or documentation. While the roles that immigrants fill in society are economically important, their legal statuses do not always reflect this significance. Instead, the legal limbo that many

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10 For the purposes of this thesis, I am discussing migrant laborers as international migrants who cross borders to work, not citizens or residents of a nation engaging in internal migration.
immigrants experience reflect the undesirability (in the eyes of native workers) of the jobs that they fill. As argued by Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda (1998), while governments may allow immigration to occur, they can also be very selective in choosing what kind of person can migrate and for what purpose, what kind of rights and protections they may enjoy, and whether or not they can stay. Quoting W.R. Böhning, they state that: “Demand, then, is caused economically, screened politically, and given effect to administratively” (as quoted in Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998, pp. 13). I would also argue that it is also monitored socially, as the kinds of employment opportunities available differ based on one’s social grouping and identity.

Bridget Anderson (2010) elaborates on this idea by arguing that states produce precarious status among migrants through immigration controls in three specific ways: (1) the creation of the categories of entrant; (2) the influencing of employment relations; and (3) the institutionalization of uncertainty. First, the state applies standards or qualifications that a migrant must maintain or acquire in order to be able to legally enter another country; thereby forcing those who may not fit the category into a choice of staying in their home country or entering the new country illegally, immediately producing a precarious class of workers. The creation of entrant categories may also contain a double bind, in that only certain levels of entrant may eventually permanently settle. All others not in these privileged categories remain non-citizens or non-residents without certain benefits and rights. Furthermore, the kinds of entries obtained by migrants shape the employment relationship. In some circumstances, a laborer may obtain a work visa that is “sponsored” by a specific employer. If that employer decides that it no longer wishes to employ the migrant laborer, the employee has no further attachment to the country and will be forced to leave or to stay illegally. This creates further
inequality between employer and employee, forcing the migrant to be dependent upon the employer, which increases migrants’ vulnerability to exploitation.

The lack of certainty about longevity and/or permanency in the host country—or a migrant’s ‘temporariness’ in the words of Anderson (2010, pp. 309)—creates a sense of precariousness which has implications beyond that of a stable source of income. Connection to a single employer that reduces a person’s mobility is a form of hyper-vigilance that is not necessarily faced by domestic laborers. This extreme form of vigilance strips migrants of their agency. In the case of both legal and illegal immigrants a breach of contract with an employer can make them “deportable” and is a sufficient enough threat to keep them in a precarious work situation (ibid, pp. 312). While this may be tolerated by temporary migrants who do not plan on remaining in the country, it may have serious social impacts for those who stay, such as restrictions on where they may settle, what kind of jobs they undertake, and with whom they interact. De Genova (2002) calls this socio-political condition “illegality” and argues, similar to Anderson (2010), that its existence has been produced by nation-states. Thus, employers and state-created immigration controls structurally produce and institutionalize precarious work and instill feelings of insecurity among migrant labors.

Legal status also has a long-lasting, negative effect on job precarity. That is, once an individual is in a precarious state of work, he or she is more likely to stay in a precarious situation (Goldring and Landolt 2011; Rodriguez and Mearns, 2012). Goldring and Landolt (2011) document this link between immigrant status and increased risks for long-term job precarity by showing how immigrants to Toronto, Canada largely remain in low-paying and insecure jobs, despite years of societal integration and even regularizing (legalizing) of status. They analyze the employment status of immigrants who (1) entered Canada legally and maintain
a secure status, immigrants who (2) entered illegally and who have achieved legal status, and those who (3) entered illegally and did not attain legal status. They find that immigrants from the second and third categories were more likely to remain in precarious work compared to respondents who entered with and remained in a secure status. The authors point to government policy as an explanation for this institutionalization of precarity, arguing that contemporary policies favor “temporary or circular migration” rather than supporting a permanent or semi-permanent labor force (Goldring and Landolt, 2011, pp. 337).

Torres et al (2012) argue that low incomes, lack of documentation, racial and ethnic discrimination, and language barriers inhibit immigrant construction workers abilities to form a sense of belonging in their adopted communities. These barriers add more emotional challenges for workers, which increases likelihoods of long-term job precariousness. However, the opposite may also be true. Having established community ties with supportive networks, individuals may be less likely to want to move even if they will remain in a precarious employment situation (Preece, 2018). The potential risk of moving only to find more insecure, low-paid work is too great and, therefore, people either remain immobile (Preece, 2018) or engage only in temporary labor migration (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011; Radel et al, 2018). Temporary labor migration may also result in long-term precarious employment as workers “never become indispensable enough to the employer to be made permanent or given any kind of special training; they remain casual laborers all their lives” (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011; pp. 231).

A useful concept that provides a summative framework for analyzing these issues of belonging facing migrant workers is Susan Banki’s compelling concept of “precarity of place”, which she defines as “the extent to which an individual is vulnerable to removal or deportation because of his or her legal status and/or possession of documentation, or lack thereof, in the host
country” (2013a; pp. 4). Banki’s framework of precarity of place builds off of Anderson’s (2010) argument that legality—and perhaps more importantly “illegality” (De Genova, 2002)—is constructed by nation-states and that employment opportunities and rights are carefully monitored by the state. Banki takes this a step further and embeds issues of deportability and illegality into the conversation on precarious work. She highlights a critical aspect of precarity for migrant laborers which is the threat of deportation and the insecurity associated with a lack of legal protections. While deportation and low paying jobs are real, visible consequences of the social and political discrimination of migrant workers, the mere threat of removal provokes its own kind of emotional and mental burden on an individual that elevates the experience of precariousness to an ever-present possibility. Banki’s (2013) theory of “precarity of place” illustrates the strong link between precarious employment and subjective experiences of precarity and precariousness—a link that will be reinforced through my findings in this thesis.

**Work for migrant laborers**

Given challenges of legality and deportability, language barriers, education levels, and ethno-racial identity, low-wage, poorer immigrants face difficulties attaining decent, full-time work. Migrant laborers participate in different kinds of employment but are generally relegated to jobs that would be categorized into the secondary (“bad”) sector of the labor market (mentioned above), facing dangerous work, low pay, and irregular and unpredictable work schedules (Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998; Schewe and White, 2017).

Employment opportunities for migrants typically differ based on gender and assumed gender roles. The growth of women entering the labor market has been accompanied by a rise in labor migration worldwide (Courtis and Pacecca, 2014; McMichael, 2016; Christian and Namaganda, 2018). Saskia Sassen (2003) describes this as being the result of the increased
offerings of low-skilled work during the process of neoliberal economic globalization, which created more opportunities for women to insert themselves in the market where they may not have found work before. Rydzik et al (2017) argue that, in the European Union, female migrant workers are more likely to be skilled laborers in comparison with their male counterparts, but that this does not indicate that women will be working in skilled jobs once they migrate. Domestic work such as childcare or housecleaning is a common occupation for female migrants, (Grossman-Thompson, 2019; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Additionally, although historically agricultural work has been more heavily associated with male labor, there has been an explosive growth of female participation in the agricultural sector in recent decades suggesting shifting gendered labor roles worldwide (Raynolds, 2001, 2002; Lee, 2010; McMichael, 2016; Lowthers, 2018). On the other hand, migrant men work more physically demanding jobs such as construction, or day labor (Valenzuela, 2003; Rahman, 2011; Walter et al, 2011; Nelson et al, 2015), as well as agricultural labor (Sexsmith, 2017; Palacios and Sexsmith, 2020). Migrant workers also engage in jobs in the service sector such as in restaurants, hotels and tourism (Joppe, 2012) and in manufacturing positions (Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998), regardless of gender.

Female and male migrants’ migration patterns and use of social networks in finding employment opportunities also differ (Rahman, 2011; Rydzik et al, 2017). A study on labor migrants from South Asia to the Arabian peninsula shows that while potential male migrant workers may have access to greater financial resources due to patriarchal systems of employment and ownership structures in their home countries, female migrants rely on loans from family members and friends in order to aggregate enough funds to migrate (Rahman, 2011). Landry’s (2013) review of Haitian female migratory patterns to urban areas in the Dominican Republic
reveal similar patterns. The new wave of Haitian migration to Dominican urban areas in the 21st century is characterized by an increasing number of young, unmarried Haitian mothers (Silié et al, 2002; Landry, 2013). These young women often rely on family members back home to take care of their children while they are living in the Dominican Republic. No explicit information was given on women’s financial reliance on family in Haiti. However, women’s reliance on family for caregiving reveals a kind of social resource necessary for women to be able to migrate.

Additionally, gender discriminatory practices and laws may force poorer women through informal and unregulated recruitment channels, while men more often go through formal methods of recruitment (Rahman, 2011; Grossman-Thompson, 2019). This leaves women more vulnerable to exploitation. Women may also face more of a challenge to attaining legal status than their male counterparts since they are more likely to go through informal channels to immigrate and to achieve employment (Rahman, 2011; Petrozziello, 2018; Grossman-Thompson, 2019). Petrozziello (2018) has shown how citizenship or access to documentation for children of Haitian migrants has been segregated along gender lines in the Dominican Republic. Over the last several decades Haitian women have faced increasing difficulty registering their Dominican-born children’s birth in order for them to gain citizenship (see 2010 Constitutional Change in Chapter 2). Petrozziello (2018) gives evidence to show how unless a child has a Dominican father to claim them, they will often be detained legal status. This can create multiple generations of families without documentation, which increases their risk for statelessness and limits their employment opportunities.
Age and precarious work

Although age is not a principal factor of analysis for this thesis, it plays a role in the experiences of *batey* residents and merits its own discussion, nonetheless. Age has variable impacts on experiences of precarious work. In certain situations, employment protections that hinder employers’ ability to fire insiders protect older workers. Kalleberg and Vallas (2017) show how in Spain, employers’ inability to fire older workers has had adverse effects for younger workers, as many employers do not want to fall into a similar trap of keeping employees around for a long time and have moved toward the use of more temporary contracts. Furthermore, Witteveen (2017) finds that women, racial-ethnic minorities, and lower-class labor market workers in the United States are more likely to stay in precarious jobs over time, enduring as they age. Finally, older workers (50+) in the United States are at a higher risk for long-term unemployment, regardless of educational levels (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017).

Although more work on the intersection of age and precarious work remains to be conducted, particularly in the Global South, this summary provides a succinct overview of the general trends in age and precarity.

4. Sector specific experiences of precarious work

Due to the high number of *batey* residents working in sectors such as day labor and domestic work (based on interviews and fieldnotes), it is worthwhile to summarize some of the critical literature on those two sources of employment as they relate to precarious work.

**Day Labor**

In day labor, workers undertake various tasks and jobs, such as construction, landscaping, or roofing, for an employer, often for low wages and without a pre-determined work schedule (Valenzuela, 2003; Walter et al, 2011; Nelson et al, 2015). In the United States, young,
undocumented immigrant men tend to constitute the primary labor force in informal day labor; whereas the formal day labor force can be more diverse, including women, non-immigrants, and members of the homeless population (Valenzuela, 2003; Walter et al, 2011). Interestingly though, the kinds of jobs in both formal and informal day labor is similar (Valenzuela, 2003). Recruitment for day labor can occur formally through temp agencies or informally at gas stations, parking lots, or construction sites (Nelson et al, 2015; Valenzuela, 2003; Walter et al, 2011). Without formal oversight, day laborers comprise a “flexible and highly exploitable workforce” (Nelson et al, 2015, pp. 842).

Much of the academic literature that has been written in regard to day labor livelihoods in the Dominican Republic focuses on agricultural labor or on employment in urban settings; however, it provides an informative background on the landscape of day labor in the country. The literature describes working conditions for Haitian laborers in day labor to be informal and ethnically segregated. Wooding and Moseley-Williams (2004) report that male Haitian laborers are often relegated to the lowest-paying forms of day labor in agriculture and construction. While their Dominican counterparts are often given skilled and higher-paying jobs, Haitians are given the most difficult, unskilled, manual labor-intensive jobs. Employers use existing social networks to informally spread the word about upcoming available jobs—which is the way many Haitian laborers find work—and tend to hire people with whom they are already familiar or new workers who are connected to known laborers. (Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 2004; ONE, 2017).

Because Haitian workers are hired informally, employers are more likely to delay or even deny payments to laborers (Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 2004; Petrozziello, 2012). Furthermore, fear of arrest or deportation makes Haitian laborers more vulnerable to exploitation (Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 2004; Petrozziello, 2012). In her thorough examination of
indicators of forced labor among Haitian laborers in the Dominican construction industry. Petrozziello (2012) found similar conditions to those described by Wooding and Moseley-Williams (2004). Furthermore, she found that “excessive working hours” and “threats and physical abuse of workers at the hands of their employers appear to be quite common” (Petrozziello, 2012: 72). Frequent rotation between workplaces and employers is a central characteristic of construction work for Haitian laborers (Petrozziello, 2012). This thesis expands on this existing literature and hones in on experiences of Haitian day laborers living in *bateyes* in the Dominican Republic.

**Domestic work**

Domestic work such as childcare or housecleaning is another common occupation for immigrants, particularly for women, as domestic work is a highly feminized type of labor (Grossman-Thompson, 2019; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Like day labor, recruitment for domestic work may occur formally or informally and may involve a flexible work schedule with odd hours as well as deep emotional burdens (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Increasingly women engaged in domestic labor have to migrate either within their home country or internationally leaving their own children at home with family members, creating a chain of caregiving (McMichael, 2016; Jokela, 2019).

Domestic work is often considered “invisible” (ILO, 2013) since it takes place inside the home and has historically been undervalued as labor in society (Glenn, 1992; Guarnizo and Rodriguez, 2017; Blofield and Jokela, 2018). As a result, domestic workers are often not afforded the same legal protections as laborers in other forms of work such as formal contracts and maximum working hours (ILO, 2013; Pereyra and Poblete, 2018). In fact, Jokela (2019) has found that even in countries with specific regulations and guidelines for domestic labor, workers
experience high levels of employment insecurity. Domestic laborers also experience a kind of informalality in their employment relationships due to the intimate nature of the work (Guarnizo and Rodriguez, 2017) and the fact that many employers of domestic laborers do not consider themselves to be employers nor their homes to be “sites of employment” (Blofield and Jokela, 2018, pp. 533).

Little published literature on domestic work in the Dominican Republic was found (Smith, 1991; Bueno, 2015). However, the literature that does exist highlights the deep stratification based on gender, race, and class in who works as a domestic worker (Smith, 1991; Bueno, 2015). Generally, blacker, poorer Dominican women end up as domestic workers. While their labor “liberates” middle- and upper-class Dominicans from their domestic responsibilities, it creates additional burdens on the family members of domestic laborers (Smith, 1991, pp. 198). This is because most domestics in the Dominican Republic are “live in” workers who stay several days a week or permanently with their employers, making it virtually impossible for them to care for their own children if they have them (Smith, 1991, pp. 198). Instead, grandparents or other family members take on the responsibility of raising domestic workers’ children (Smith, 1991).

Patterns in employment of domestic workers in the Dominican Republic also exacerbate existing social divisions in the country. As mentioned in chapter two and in the above sections on gender and precarious work, discrimination based on race relegates darker-skinned individuals in the Dominican Republic to lower-paying, less secure jobs (Bueno, 2015). The tendency for black women to fill servile, domestic positions in the Dominican Republic, which have little to no opportunities for upward mobility, reinforces this racial, social stratification. This pattern in domestic employment is corroborated by my findings and contributes the
additional factors of ethnicity and legal status to the analysis of domestic work in the Dominican Republic.

5. Summary

Although precarious work has proliferated worldwide in recent decades, it has emerged differently in industrialized and developing nations and has unique implications for workers of distinct social categories. Precarious work is an alteration of employment relations, which shifts risk onto the employee and instills feelings of insecurity due to uncertainty of work arrangements or perceived unpredictability (Bandelj et al, 2011; ILO, 2012; Kalleberg, 2008; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Mosoetsa et al, 2016). In the Global North, this phenomenon has moved across occupational sectors, making once stable jobs insecure (Branch and Hanley, 2014; Sharank and Sahni, 2017). In the Global South on the other hand, economies have witnessed an explosion of the already precarious informal sector (Sharank and Sahni, 2017).

Precarious work literature has historically focused much of its attention on workers in industrialized or developed nations, generally in the Global North (Mosoetsa et al, 2016; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017). However, in recent decades, precarious work scholars have pushed for more analysis of laborers in the Global South and advocated for a more intersectional analytical approach to examine the unique experiences of workers in different social categories, such as gender, race, class, and legal status (Vosko, 2000; Browne and Misra, 2003; Fuller and Vosko, 2007; Banki, 2013; Torres et al, 2013; Lawton, 2015; Mosoetsa et al, 2016; Branch and Hanley, 2017; Schewe and White, 2017). In these critical works, scholars have demonstrated how women, immigrants, people of color, and the poor are more likely to experience precarious work and be engaged in “bad” jobs in the secondary labor market (ibid; Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998). Furthermore, once having engaged in precarious work, laborers are more
likely to remain in precarious forms of employment over time (Goldring and Landolt, 2011; Kalleberg and Vargas, 2017; Witteveen, 2017).

Finally, precarious work is not only the fact of inconsistent employment (objective insecurity), but also the threat or fear of job insecurity (subjective insecurity) (Bobek et al, 2018). Moreover, both the facts of employment (i.e.-wages, work hours, long-term, short-term, or no contract) and subjective feelings of precarity are influenced and exacerbated by one’s individual circumstances and social standing, such as gender, race, class, legal status, and residence in the Global North or the Global South. This thesis aims to contribute to the growing body of intersectional precarious work literature focused on workers in the Global South by focusing on the complex influences of gender, ethnicity and race, and legal status among Haitian and Haitian-Dominican batey residents and how those social identities impact both objective conditions of employment and subjective feelings of insecurity in work.
CHAPTER 4: METHODS

1. Research Design

Despite the 22-year lapse between mass plantation closures starting in 1998 in the Dominican Republic and modern day, only one published report was found that systematically and empirically analyzes the livelihood situations of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in bateyes in the Dominican Republic (FLACSO, 2000), while other literature on Haitian batey residents tend to summarize livelihoods and livelihood strategies as part of a broader focus on legal status and social discrimination (Wooding y Moseley-Williams, 2004; Riveros, 2014). This thesis aims to fill this gap in knowledge by providing a qualitative, empirical case study of current livelihood opportunities and challenges among thirty-nine (39) adult batey residents in Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic through a conceptual lens of precarious work. Notably, it takes an intersectional analytical approach with a critical eye towards the influence of gender, ethnicity, and legal status in order to analyze how social, political, and economic barriers shape the job security of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in rural communities (bateyes) in the Dominican Republic. It further aims to answer the following four research questions:

• (1) What are the different kinds of livelihoods that Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in bateyes pursue?
• (2) How do livelihood practices and opportunities differ based on gender, ethnicity, and immigrant status?
• (3) What are the political, social, and economic barriers to batey residents’ ability to make a livelihood?
• (4) How do they attempt to interpret, address and overcome these barriers?

This thesis uses three (3) complementary qualitative methods—(a) in-depth, semi-structured
interviews with adult *batey* residents; (b) participant observation, and; (c) key informant interviews—to provide a robust analysis of precarious work among Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in rural Dominican Republic.

This thesis takes an intersectional approach to both data collection and analysis. Intersectionality as an analytical framework has not been clearly defined (Rice, Harrison, and Friedman, 2019); however, the literature characterizes intersectional methods as being justice-driven, with a focus on power relations such as social, political, economic, and historical structures. It further aims to give marginalized groups a voice in expressing their own experiences by reducing the power inequalities between researchers and the “researched” and encouraging the researcher to be highly reflexive in her or his research strategies (Crenshaw, 1989; Lawton et al, 2015; Rice, Harrison, and Friedman, 2019). With that in mind, every effort was made to reduce power inequalities between myself and research participants and to prioritize the voice and opinions of said research participants. Elaborations on these efforts can be found in the Researcher Reflexivity section below.

This study received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct anonymized interviews with *batey* residents and key informants. For this reason, all names used for *batey* residents in this thesis are pseudonyms unless explicitly stated otherwise.

2. Study Site

Research for this Master’s thesis took place over the course of two and a half (2.5) months during the summer of 2019 in the rural village of Batey La Luisa Prieta, Dominican Republic, located in the Southeastern Dominican province of Monte Plata. The study site was chosen with the help of the Dominican NGO MOSCTHA (Movimiento Socio-Cultural para Trabajadores Haitianos—Socio-Cultural Movement for Haitian Laborers) on the basis of two (2) principal
The first criterion was that (1) the *batey* can no longer be linked to the Dominican sugar industry, as the focus of this study is to look at livelihood opportunities outside of the traditional sugar sector context. Second, (2) the *batey* must be within two hours driving distance from a city. This is because of the presumed greater variety of livelihood options in cities, which Haitian and Haitian-Dominicans may pursue while remaining settled in the *batey*. This may also provide a more thorough look at the range of livelihood opportunities available. Batey La Luisa fulfills these criteria as it no longer functions as a sugar cane company town and is located in Monte Plata province approximately a one and half (1.5) hour drive from the Dominican capital city of Santo Domingo.

As of 2014, Batey La Luisa had a population of 351 individuals across 98 households. Of that population, 42.19% were under the age of 18, revealing a relatively young community population (MOSCTHA, 2014).

*Figure 1. Geographic Location of Monte Plata Province (Wikipedia)*

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11 Two hours is a reasonable commute time for rural laborers in the Dominican Republic to urban worksites. This time is based on researcher observations during previous trips to the Dominican Republic.
3. Research Methods

(1) Interviews

I conducted forty (40) in-depth, semi-structured interviews with adult Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in Batey La Luisa. The final sample size is thirty-nine (39) individuals; fifteen (15) of which are men and twenty-four (24) of which are women. One (1) interview script was discarded upon completion because it was discovered that the interviewee was not of Haitian descent. Twenty-six (26) respondents were born in the Dominican Republic and thirteen (13) were born in Haiti. To protect research participant identity, no question about age was asked. Based on my knowledge of interviewees’ approximate ages, I estimate this sample to cover an age range of residents from early 20s to mid-60s, with most of the sample being in their late 20s to mid- to late-40s. The average household size of the sample was 3.8 individuals and the average number of children of the sample was 2.75.

Sampling

Qualitative research “does not set out to estimate the incidence of phenomena in the wider population…The precision and rigor of a qualitative research sample is defined by its ability to
represent salient characteristics and it is these that need priority in sample design” (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp. 81-82). Once the data begins to become repetitive and little new information or evidence is obtained, data collection should cease (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). With that in mind, I began this study with the initial goal of completing 30 interviews or more in order to ensure a greater diversity of participants and gain a more detailed view of the different experiences of batey residents. Upon reaching the thirtieth interview, I was still finding diversity in the sample with respect to employment type and experiences based on migrant status and decided to conduct 10 more interviews in order to reach saturation—a reasonable practice in qualitative research (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). After forty interviews, I was satisfied that I had accumulated a more representative sample of Batey La Luisa resident experiences.

I used a purposive, snowball sampling method with two (2) pathways into the community. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to identify the characteristics most salient for the study (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) and can help to ensure that data collected “…adequately represent the entire range of variation rather than only the typical members or some subset of this range” (Maxwell, 2008, pp. 235). Snowball sampling, or chain sampling, uses people’s existing social networks to provide a researcher with potential research participants. One research participant refers the researcher to another person to interview, and so on and so forth (Noy, 2007). This is useful because the researcher does not then require a formal sampling frame such as a list of community members, where such lists may not exist. For this reason, snowball sampling is a popular method for researching vulnerable or ‘hidden’ populations which may not be as accessible to outsiders (Noy, 2007; Guest et al, 2013). However, when using snowball sampling, the researcher relinquishes quite a bit of control to researcher participants and runs the
risk of data being skewed towards certain groups since it utilizes participants’ social networks (Noy, 2007).

In order to reduce the possibility of acquiring a final sample skewed towards one social group or another in the batey, I selected two distinct individuals with which to begin my interviews: the first starting point being a female member of my host family and the second being a relatively recent male Haitian immigrant to the batey. By selecting two distinct starting points, I hoped to achieve a greater diversity in my overall sample. My host family is well-established in the batey and maintains a relatively more stable financial situation than some residents; whereas, the recent Haitian immigrant did not benefit from as many social connections as my host family members nor did he have a stable source of income. I further distinguished the two starting points by gender; my host family member being female and the Haitian immigrant being male.

I then followed the snowball sampling strategy from each of the starting points to achieve a total of twenty (20) interviews from each pathway (for greater balance), for a total of forty (40) interviews. Research participants were asked to suggest another person with whom I should speak based on two main (purposive) criteria: (1) The individual must be an adult, and; (2) The individual must either be Haitian or of Haitian descent. It was also made clear that the participant may be either male or female. Extra precautions were taken to give a detailed explanation of the study and participant criteria after it was discovered mid-way through one interview that the participant was not actually of Haitian descent. I continued the interview and then asked the participant very explicitly to only recommend an individual who was Haitian or of Haitian descent for the next interview. Subsequently, I confirmed individual identity before beginning

\[\text{In modern bateyes there are generally small populations of ethnic Dominican residents. This is based on personal researcher experience and key informant interviews.}\]
each interview to avoid another sampling mishap.

Ultimately, I ended up with far more women than men in my sample. This was unintentional but may be explained by a number of things. First, women were far more likely to choose other women than they were to choose men for my next interview. Men’s suggestions were more equitable based on gender. We may speculate that perhaps women chose this way because they observed me spending more time with women than men in the batey, or women may have felt a greater necessity for the household items provided as compensation for the interview (see Consent and Compensation) and recognized other women’s need, as well.

Consent and Compensation

All interviews were kept anonymous to protect the identities of participants. No names or ages were recorded. In accordance with regulations established by the IRB, participants were asked to give verbal consent to participate and were also given a consent form in either Spanish or Haitian Creole with information about the study, my contact information, and their rights as study subjects. Not all batey residents are fully literate (which is why I opted to conduct verbal informed consent), but most can read numbers, so I made sure to highlight my phone number for them to call with any questions they may have. Participants were asked for their permission to record the interview. Thirteen (13) of the forty (40) interview respondents agreed to be recorded. Handwritten notes were taken during each interview regardless of whether or not it was recorded. Interview participants received a small in-kind compensation of a gift-bag with essential toiletry items (bath soap, toothpaste, and a toothbrush) worth approximately $120 Dominican pesos for their participation (See further explanation on payments in the Researcher

13 Because I was the first foreign researcher to perform a study in the batey (discussed further below in the reflexivity section), residents were unfamiliar with these research methods and were skeptical of the uses of voice recordings. It is for this reason, I believe, that so few people agreed to be recorded.
Interview Process

Interviews covered such topics as research participant livelihood sources, perceived barriers and challenges to making a livelihood, issues of ethnicity, gender, and legal status in attaining jobs, and strategies for overcoming barriers to the job market. I am fluent in Spanish and conversationally fluent in Haitian Creole. Interview instruments were translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole by me and checked for accuracy by a native speaker of Spanish and a native speaker of Haitian Creole. The native speaker of Haitian Creole had years of experience working in *bateyes* in the Dominican Republic and was familiar with dialects and cultural nuances to Creole spoken in those communities. All interviews were conducted by the researcher herself in Spanish or Haitian Creole, based on the participant’s preference. Participants chose where the interview was conducted; generally electing to speak inside their home or on the front porch. Interviews lasted between 20 to 45 minutes.

(2) Participant Observation:

During the project I resided in Batey La Luisa with a host family chosen with the help of my host organization MOSCTHA. I paid rent during my stay that covered the cost of the room, laundry services, and daily meals. By living with a host family in the research site, I regularly observed *batey* residents’ daily activities and interactions. I kept a notebook with me to jot down notes and reminders as I socialized with or observed community members. These notes spanned such observations as small business transactions, resident commentary on social or political issues locally or more broadly, observed gender or immigrant status differences in living arrangements, work schedules, and social interactions, among other daily goings-on. No notes were taken of information provided by residents in confidence or of private conversations. These
extended fieldnotes were then used to supplement the qualitative data from resident interviews to produce a more detailed and robust analysis of community members’ experiences. For example, with this information I was able to understand how community members work together and adapt to precarious circumstances such as irregular incomes as well as better comprehend social linkages and the ways in which people find work or attempt to find work.

(3) Key Informant Interviews:

While in the capital city of Santo Domingo before and after my stay in Batey La Luisa, I conducted interviews with employees from MOSCTHA and three (3) other NGOs working with Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans to get a sense of how livelihoods are changing for these former sugar cane workers across the country. These organizations were: (1) MUDHA (Movimiento de Mujeres Dominica-Haitianas-Movement of Dominico-Haitian Women), which focuses on legal and political advocacy on behalf of Haitian and Haitian-Dominican women in bateyes as well as some community development work; (2) CEDUCA (Centro de Educación para el Desarrollo-Center of Education for Development), which educates young Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans on their legal rights and how to engage in political advocacy; and (3) CCDH (Centro Cultural Dominico-Haitiano-Dominico-Haitian Cultural Center), which conducts community development work and advocacy in active sugar-cane bateyes in Southeastern Dominican Republic. These organizations were chosen based on previous visits to the country and aggregated knowledge on NGOs in the Dominican Republic.

I gained access to the organizations through the volunteer coordinator at my host organization. Interviews covered the history of the organizations, their missions, visions, and primary programs, the current state of Haitian and Haitian-Dominican populations in bateyes in the Dominican Republic, and how the organizations have adapted their programs to address
current issues faced by their target populations. Information from key informant interviews was used to complement or verify data from batey resident interviews as well as to bolster background information on Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic.

4. Data Analysis

All data was made anonymous to protect the identities of research participants and kept confidential over the course of the data lifecycle. No names were written on interview documents and no ages were mentioned. As mentioned above, all names of batey residents used in this thesis are pseudonyms unless otherwise stated. A third-party service was utilized to transcribe all of the interviews recorded in Spanish. The data went through two separate analysis processes. For the more descriptive or short-answer data (i.e.—number of jobs, demographics, type of housing, etc.) data were manually input into an Excel spreadsheet and tabulated and analyzed in Excel. In order to analyze the qualitative data (i.e.—individual experiences, thought processes, opinions, emotions, etc.), transcriptions from recorded interviews as well as scanned copies of handwritten interview notes were uploaded to the qualitative analysis software Nvivo for coding. Handwritten fieldwork notes were coded entirely manually.

Coding of the qualitative data occurred in two distinct, but iterative phases: (1) re-familiarization with the data and open coding, and; (2) focused coding (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011). The first stage of the process was a process of “re-familiarization” with the data (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) coupled with the initial identification of major themes, otherwise referred to as “open coding” (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011). During the process of review and re-familiarization of the data in its various forms (interviews, field notes, etc.), themes arose in two distinct forms: “indigenous” and “analyst constructed”. “Indigenous” themes are those classifications used by participants to describe their experiences.
Whereas, “analyst constructed” themes arise during the analytical process of coding and referring to previous literature (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). During this first stage, I took notes manually on these themes and organized them into an index (see appendix 1), with main themes and sub-categories (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). These themes included sections such as life in the batey and residents’ sense of belonging and integration into community life; political negligence of bateyes and their residents and institutional boundaries and challenges, such as lack of access to money and immigration issues; barriers and challenges to employment; gender roles; social discrimination, particularly based on gender and ethnicity; future aspirations and goals; and individual adaptation to the aforementioned barriers and challenges to secure work.

After reaching saturation (that is, that no new themes seem to be appearing in the data) (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003), I moved to stage two: focused coding (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2011). I scanned through the interview forms (for those interviews not recorded), the transcripts (for those interviews that were recorded), and my fieldnotes line by line to classify interview responses and observation notes into the pre-established themes using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. This focused coding honed in on individual quotes of personal experiences, values, and opinions on the barriers and opportunities for employment. This coding process was iterative, as some themes were refined through closer analysis of the data during focused coding.

5. Researcher Reflexivity

While doing research with human subjects there are many ethical considerations that a researcher must address throughout the research process. Data collection of any kind is disruptive to research participants by making them aware that they are being observed and potentially altering their daily routines (Oh et al, 2019). This is especially true for marginalized
and/or vulnerable populations. For immigrant populations, racial and ethnic minorities and individuals of low socio-economic status, there are additional risks and ethical considerations related to documentation and exposure of legal status, misrepresentation of diversity in experiences, and coercion in sampling related to compensation (Hernandez et al, 2013; Ngo et al, 2014). No research is free of impacts on research participants or biases on the part of the researcher, however unintentional. In order to reduce undue influence or biases in this study, I practiced reflexivity at all stages of research by recognizing my own positionality and frame of reference as an outside researcher, reflecting on my relationships and regular interactions with *batey* community members and host organization employees, and by using this information to inform both my research method decisions as well as best practices for interacting with community members in the least disruptive way (Bickman, 2008; Berger, 2015).

**Positionality**

As a white female from a large University in the Global North, I am extremely aware of how my outsider status may be viewed by those in my host community: with skepticism, distrust, as a (mistaken) superior (based on internalized racism and colonialism), or as a social, political, or financial resource. However, my status as an outsider is softened by my familiarity with the Dominican Republic—the language, culture, politics, and history. Having spent considerable time in the country I am familiar with and use the linguistic slang, am able to dance the local dances, understand how to use the confusing public transport systems, and know how to both do

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14 Lake et al (2018) argue that the IRB definition of marginalized and vulnerable populations are too restrictive as they tend to only cover “pregnant women, human fetuses and neonates, children, cognitively impaired persons, prisoners, students and employees, persons with HIV/AIDS, and educationally disadvantaged individuals” (1). Lake et al (2018) contends that more groups should be included in this definition such as sex workers, immigrants, informants or political activists living under authoritarian regimes, and other individualized who social and political marginalization in a society. Additionally, they argue that vulnerability is context specific and should be considered based on the research at hand.
laundry (a “female” task) and mix concrete by hand (a “male” task). These last two activities are of particular importance as they allow me to play up my connections with both genders instead of being relatable only to female community members. My own familiarity with the culture makes me seem more familiar to the host community and may break down some initial boundaries from being an outsider coming into the batey.

For these reasons I would call my positionality that of a “familiar outsider”. Bateyes are places of mixed cultures—Dominican, Haitian, and something in between—and, therefore, there was (and still is) much for me to learn and grow accustomed to. However, my need to learn more about the batey both as a place and about its residents, means that I did not take pithy daily interactions or tasks for granted and was able to recognize them as potentially powerful evidence and context for this ethnographic case study. Additionally, asking questions about resident’s routines and daily tasks acted as an initial bridge to building trust and bonds that would allow me to do my research without appearing (hopefully) as intrusive. (See more on this in “A note on fieldnotes” below).

Gaining Access

Connections with my host organization MOSCTHA emerged from my extensive previous work and research experience in the Dominican Republic and connections with individuals and organizations working with Haitian and Haitian-Dominican populations in the country. MOSCTHA is well-known nationwide for its commitment to the social, political, and legal rights of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans. In fact, MOSCTHA lawyers led the seminal case against the Dominican government in 2013 on behalf of Haitian-Dominicans who were unable to get Dominican ID cards (used to vote and gain access to resources such as bank loans) due to discriminatory policies (Dandre, M. Personal interview, 2019).
However, despite its positive reputation among Haitian and Haitian-Dominican populations in the Dominican Republic, I recognize that my choice of host organization alters my research opportunities and experiences. MOSCTHA does not operate in every batey in the Dominican Republic and therefore has a more limited range of study sites from which to choose. Additionally, the particular choice of bateyes may have been strategic in order to present me, an outside researcher, with a more positive or glowing representation of the organization’s community interventions. Batey La Luisa had been the recipient of a new water system (built by a MOSCTHA team) only three years prior. Finally, Batey La Luisa is closer to urban areas than many other bateyes which impacts the opportunities and resources available to residents and made it easier for MOSTCHA employees to visit and check in on any ongoing development projects. Experiences in Batey La Luisa could be very different from extremely isolated bateyes and data from this study is therefore not generalizable to all batey populations.

**Immersion**

As a qualitative researcher conducting a largely ethnographic study I myself am an instrument of investigation. By embedding myself deeply in the community and making an effort to understand the social context of batey life I am able to better triangulate my findings and analyze them within the framework of life in the batey. Observation of daily activities and interactions gives the researcher a broader context for and more intuitive understanding of the meaning of the data collected in other methods such as interviews or surveys (Guest et al, 2013). Getting embedded into the study site in an unfamiliar cultural or social setting helps the researcher to gain the trust of community members. And conducting participant observation early on in the research process before beginning any interview or survey data collection enables researchers to “know what to ask” by understanding local perspectives and how locals speak to ask questions that make sense
to interview participants (Guest et al, 2013, pp. 80). As the researcher I ultimately have a “monopoly of interpretation” over my data and have a responsibility to recognize the power that I have in representing and telling the stories of others (Kvale, 2006, pp. 485; Jenkins, 2007). As I got to know batey residents, I not only formed friendships and strong bonds with them, but I also learned about their frame of reference for how and why things happen. It is my hope that by so deeply embedding myself in the community during my fieldwork, I myself have been influenced by my research subjects and will be able to recount their stories in a way that closely represents their own interpretations of their experiences and emotions and reduces my “monopoly of interpretation” (Kvale, 2006, pp. 485). That being said, the close bonds that I formed with community members may also have an impact on how I interpret findings. While coding, analyzing, and summarizing data, I made every effort to equally represent interviewee and resident opinions and reduce overly emotional interpretations of the data that may misrepresent reality (that is, the lived reality for batey residents, and not my own snapshot of life in the community).

Host Family

My host family was chosen by my host organization and this may create certain biases for my case study. MOSCTHA identifies community leaders in each batey in which it works and works with them as promotores (like community liaisons and/or group leaders) for the various development projects the organization conducts in the community. My host mom is one of these liaisons and currently manages a group of approximately twelve (12) women working to build a small handicrafts business. Initially, I was meant to stay with one of the Evangelical pastors of the batey (also a MOSCTHA promotor). However, space was limited in the Pastor’s home and he and my coordinator from MOSCTHA decided that it would be more convenient for me to stay
with a female *promotora* in a slightly larger dwelling. I lived with her, her husband, their three (3) children, and my host mom’s cousin during my 2.5 month stay in Batey La Luisa.

MOSCTHA picked my host family because it is comprised of a group of individuals with whom the organizations works closely and trusts. However, by staying with this family instead of another, there is the possibility that my scope is limited in terms of who I was able to speak to. Although there did not appear to be any obvious conflict between my host family members and any other families or *batey* residents, bias may still arise simply based on who my host family interacts with the most.

In order to counteract potential biases in data collection, I spent time socializing and getting to know *batey* residents by myself (without my host family members present) to ensure that I was visiting with all residents as equitably as possible and reducing the negative attention directed towards my host family. For example, my first week in the *batey*, my host family members were the ones walking around with me to make introductions to residents. In one instance, I recall wanting to walk down a particular path to present myself to some residents and my host father appeared visibly uncomfortable and reluctant to go down that path. In that moment I conceded and let him direct me elsewhere, but I made sure to go down that path by myself at a later date to introduce myself and get to know the residents that lived down that way. In the two and half months that I spent in the community, it is still unclear as to why he was reluctant to introduce me to residents of that area.

*Getting embedded into the community*

Before beginning the interview process, I spent the first two weeks in the *batey* visiting all of the *batey* residents to introduce myself and get to know them as well as the physical and social layout of the community. As a field researcher, I am aware that my presence disrupted
daily activities of community residents and also required regular aid from my host family and
host community (Oh et al, 2019). In order to break down boundaries and build trust between
myself and batey residents, I attempted to balance my time-consuming research activities by
helping out my host community whenever possible during my daily social visits. I assisted my
host family with laundry and cleaning of the household on a regular basis. When I would visit
other residents, I tried to make myself useful by helping to shell pigeon peas or hanging laundry
as we chatted. I made these social calls to residents’ homes every single day even when I was not
conducting interviews as a way to embed myself in daily life as much as possible. Additionally, I
was asked by a group of batey youth to teach a weekly English class for the community. As a
former community organizer with immigrant groups, I had experience in English education and
so agreed to teach six language classes (on Sunday afternoons) during my duration in the batey.
Ultimately, I believe that this attempt at reciprocity aided me throughout the whole research
process. Residents were more willing to share their stories with me and I was able to gain a
deeper understanding of daily life and interactions amongst residents in the batey.

Building up and breaking down boundaries

During my fieldwork, I was acutely aware of my position as a young female in the batey. In
rural areas in the Dominican Republic, it is considered inappropriate for young women and
young men to spend too much time speaking to one another\textsuperscript{15}. To prevent any presumptions of
impropriety, I was very vocal about my status as an engaged woman\textsuperscript{16} and very rarely spent any
time around men alone unless I was with other women or speaking with a much older man, since

\textsuperscript{15} This is based off of researcher experiences in the Dominican Republic as well as conversations had with females
in rural areas of the country.

\textsuperscript{16} I actually referred to myself as “married” because “engagement” is not a culturally salient concept in rural
Dominican Republic. People are either novios (boyfriend and girlfriend) or married. In rural Dominican Republic
being married often does not equate to legal marriage, but rather indicates co-habitation.
elderly men are not considered to be the same threat as young men. Although I believe this to have been the most prudent decision, I recognize that my limited interactions with men impacts on my interpretations of goings-on in the batey. If I had spent more time in the community and been able to establish a stronger rapport with residents, I may have relaxed this rule slightly in order to open up conversations to gain a greater understanding of male resident experiences.

Although I wanted to establish strong relationships and even friendships with batey residents to aid in data collection (and for my own personal wellbeing while staying in the community), I also made sure to maintain a professionalism that would allow me to continue to conduct my research with as few biases as possible. There were several incidents in which people shared very personal information with me and then asked me to comment my opinion, generally in regard to another resident. I often had to strike a balance between being sympathetic to the speaker while being careful not to express any opinion, positive or negative, about the person or people of whom they spoke. Any expression of personal opinion in regard to other residents may have reduced people’s trust in me and potentially bias my research since people would feel less comfortable sharing their stories and lives with me.

Another crucial method through which I embedded myself in the community was through the local church. I am not personally religious; however, the batey community is a religious one. Nearly every resident is a member of the Evangelical church and attends services at least once a week, though often twice or three times. This Evangelical sect maintains fairly strict rules on personal dress and social activities. These include no jewelry, no pants for women (only long skirts), no makeup, no nail polish, no alcohol, no dancing (except for at church gatherings), and no music except for Christian music. I tend to dress conservatively while doing fieldwork in general in order to demonstrate respect. However, I redoubled my efforts to follow these
religious rules. I wore no jewelry except for my wedding band to indicate my relationship status and I wore no makeup except for lip balm for the dry, hot air. Additionally, I attended church services twice a week, which served the dual purpose of providing me with a more profound understanding of *batey* social relations and context and also embedded me further into the community by establishing me as a *mujer seria* (a serious woman)—a common phrase in the Dominican Republic used to characterize a respectable and respectful woman who is hardworking and a person of integrity. (The male version is *hombre serio*). These efforts were recognized and met with regular praise by my host community.

*A note on field notes*

It is not uncommon in ethnographic fieldwork for notetaking to produce feelings of awkwardness (on behalf of the researcher) and distrust or discomfort (on behalf of the researched) (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995). It may also disrupt the social interactions between ethnographer and the community member. However, jotting down observations or comments at the time they occur is a practical way to ensure accuracy in reporting (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995).

In past trips to the Dominican Republic, I have often taken notes not only for research purposes but also to learn about daily practices of residents. For example, if an individual were making homemade hot chocolate or building a new home or other structure, I would ask them about the creation process and take notes simultaneously. This form of notetaking was often positively received, and people became so accustomed to the activity that they would frequently request that I document something that they said or did or would ask where my notebook was if it were absent from my hands. I used this same strategy when I first arrived to the *batey* so that residents would become more comfortable with my notetaking, therefore, making it more
socially acceptable for me to jot down notes during social situations. However, so as not to be impolite or miss an important comment or interaction, I did not fully document situations and observations until the evening, at which point I had more time to collect my notes and thoughts from the day’s activities and write down more complete reactions and connect fieldnotes to observed themes.

Interviews

Sampling

My visit to Batey La Luisa was the first time that an outside researcher had ever spent time in the community. Although my host organization MOSCTHA conducted programs in the batey and several church groups had come throughout the years on charity trips, batey residents were unfamiliar with academic research practices. This proved particularly difficult when it came to the sampling procedure for interviews. I considered snowball sampling to be the most convenient way to sample and the best way to deal with potential jealousies. That is, because I only chose the first two interviewees, I assumed that this would reduce any confusion or negative attention towards the study or any presumptions that I chose interview subjects based on personal preference.

While some residents understood the process, people’s reactions to my research often seemed to convey feelings of rejection or frustration at having not been chosen or not receiving a gift bag. There were several instances in which residents asked me for their own gift bag, despite having not participated. Although I attempted to explain the research procedures to them, they often appeared to not be convinced that I had not simply left them out on purpose. I believe this to have been also impacted by residents’ experience with other outsiders and charity work.

During my fieldwork in the batey, two different American church groups came to hand out
foodstuffs, clothing, school supplies, and other items to residents. It became clear that, as an American, I (in the minds of community members) was associated with these charity groups and that it was expected that I would provide some sort of gift to every resident as well. While I maintained strong bonds with most batey residents, it was clear that my research practices caused some strife and jealousies, which may have caused some residents to limit the amount of information that they shared with me, thereby reducing the robustness of my ethnographic snapshot of the community.

Language and Interruption

Although I consciously conducted research in research participants’ native tongue so as to reduce potential power inequalities between myself and participants, I am aware that “linguistic capability does not translate to cultural fluency” (Chacko, 2004, pp. 54). That is, I must be aware of the potential to mis-represent someone when translating back and forth between languages, despite my language abilities. Giving participants the option to conduct interviews in their language of choice as well as the opportunity to choose the location of the interview was done in an effort to reduce hierarchical relationships between researcher and participants (Jenkins, 2007; Koven, 2014; Kvale, 2006). However, language still presented challenges in other aspects of the interviews.

No interviews were ever conducted without other family members or close friends present. Although I offered to ask those family members for privacy, all interviewees were undeterred by the presence of additional people. In past experiences in and observations of communication between people in the Dominican Republic, privacy is not a culturally salient concept. It is common for others to be present at all times, particularly amongst family and in
Additionally, people consistently interject and speak over one another in social interactions.

However, this is not considered impolite, but rather a normal mode of communication. In fact, this interruptive style of speaking, called “simultaneous talk”, is well documented and shown to be more highly tolerated in certain cultures (Makri-Tsilipakou, 2015). Scholar Julia Goldberg breaks down these conversation styles into three distinct categories: (1) relationally neutral interruptions in which “interjections by the listener that seek to repair, repeat, or clarify something the speaker just said”; (2) power interruption in which “interruptions are understood as acts of conflict and competition, and are viewed as rude, hostile, disrespectful, and/or uncaring about the speaker”, and; (3) rapport interruption in which interjections “display mutuality and generally conveys the impression that the interrupter understands and empathizes with the speaker and/or the content of the speech” (1990, pp.3-5). In this case, I would place these interjections somewhere between categories 1 and 3 because conversational interjections were considered to be a cultural norm and did not appear to rattle or annoy interviewees. It is important to recognize that it was more common for men to interrupt during conversations, but that the gender of the interviewee was unimportant. Men interrupted both female and male interviewees, which may potentially display a form of power interruption.

Ultimately, the presence of other family members was an aid to both me and interview participants in interviews conducted in Haitian Creole when there was a mix up in words. As mentioned previously, some words in Haitian Creole among batey residents are location specific.

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17 In my own experiences, a lack of privacy pervades even the most personal spaces. In the United States we have a very strict concept of doctor-patient confidentiality. In my own visits by myself or with others to hospitals and clinics in the Dominican Republic, healthcare conversations will occur in the open and in the presence of other patients and medical professionals, with occasional interjections from these other patients or medical professionals in one’s conversation to give advice or opinions. This often does not occur due to lack of appropriate, dedicated private spaces or resources, but rather because it is considered the norm.
and outside of the purvey of my formal language education. Occasionally, family members with a greater understanding of *batey*-based and traditional Haitian Creole would jump in to clarify words or phrases for me and the interviewee. Although helpful during the interview process, it is crucial to recognize these interruptions as disruptive to me as the researcher and as potentially altering the course of conversation.

*Payments*

As the *batey* is a poor community, my initial plan was to provide monetary compensation for research interview subjects at the rate of 100 pesos (approximately $2 USD) for a one-hour interview. This remuneration was chosen according to a 2017 study from the Dominican National Office of Statistics which reports that the average hourly wage of a Haitian-born laborer in rural Dominican Republic is 62 pesos (ENI-2017). In accordance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards as well as the Rural Sociological Society’s Code of Ethics, I would not be offering “excessive” or “coercive” inducements for research participation. Instead, I would offer a compensation slightly higher than the average hourly wage rate for rural Haitian laborers as a show of respect for their time taken to participate in my study.

Despite careful planning, several members of my host family as well as the volunteer coordinator of my host organization urged me to choose a different method of compensation. They argued that by providing people with money I could place myself at risk of being constantly asked for money by residents. Because not all *batey* residents knew or understood my sampling strategy of snowball sampling, they may assume that I was choosing individuals to whom to give money based on personal preference, which could invite negative attention. Additionally, monetary compensation could create potential dangers for my host family. If it was known that I kept cash in my host family’s house, there could be a potential for robbery.
Furthermore, my host family worried that, regardless of the monetary amount offered, that *batey* residents may assume that my host family members influenced me in my decision of the amount in order for them to receive any money left over. In order to protect my and my host family’s reputations as well as our physical wellbeing, I elected to provide small gift bags with essential toiletries to research participants instead. These items were practical and universal enough to be useful to each participant but did not incite excessive jealousy between participants and non-participants.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

*Unless otherwise stated, all names of batey residents used in this thesis are pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality. *

1. Foreword

The entrance to the batey is announced by a large sign that proudly displays a project to “rehabilitate bateyes” (with no promise of what kind of rehabilitation this will be) on the side of a main paved road. Lico, the development and volunteer coordinator at my host organization, is dropping me off at my host family’s home where I will live for the next two and a half months. On our drive here we went by countless cattle ranches stretching out across low, green plains and were passed by restless young men speeding by on their motorcycles kicking up dust and gravel as they go. The road into the batey abruptly changes from asphalt to dirt, replete with scars of potholes, which slow us down immensely. The sides of the road are littered with trash and animal feces intermingled with tropical flowers and palm trees. As we drive down to the central portion of the batey, Lico waves to residents and asks after their families.

The batey, in contrast with most places I have been to in the Dominican Republic, is a very dry, dusty place. The overwhelming greenery and oppressive wet heat are replaced here with shorter trees, scrubby plants, and a dryer heat, more conducive to the cultivation of sugar cane. Most houses are made of crumbling concrete blocks painted a striking array of bright colors and sheet metal roofs, which trap heat inside the house, forcing everyone outside onto their porches early in the morning.

While many people associate rural areas with a peaceful, quiet tranquility, the batey is a constant chaos of movement and sounds. As one Haitian resident put it, he likes life here except for when “people come knocking at your door early or come to bother you”. The day starts early
for most people in the batey—generally around 6 or 6:30 in the morning—when the air is still cool from the nighttime breezes. People compete to see whose speaker can play the loudest music and clanking in the kitchen announces people putting the coffee pot and oatmeal on the stoves to cook. Overlaying all of these sounds are the proud roosters obnoxiously announcing their presence to the world throughout the morning. By 7:30am most people are dressed and out of the house. The nearby general stores and small food stands are open for business well before the day laborers and other early workers head over for coffee or other snacks on their way to work, or to esperar (both ‘to wait’ and ‘to hope for’ in Spanish) for work that may or may not come that day.

Most days in the batey go by slowly, particularly the mid-afternoons, once everyone has eaten lunch and there is nothing to do but wait for the oppressive 95°F heat to dissipate to get back to work. At this point, the many women who perform the endless routine of domestic labor finally rest—but never for long—before they get up to work on another household task like hanging the laundry or preparing lunch for their children. For many people (mostly women) who cannot find work here in the batey, every day is both perpetual housework and a listless waiting game. “If you want a peaceful life”, one young woman told me, “the batey is perfect. If you want progress, you must get out”. But, for those batey residents born in Haiti and lacking documents, ‘getting out’ is not necessarily an option. And so, they patch together a livelihood, in this precarious rural place.

2. Overview

These findings present the complex and unequal experiences of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic. The results begin with a rich description of the kinds of work reported by batey residents and their experiences in those jobs.
Because so little has been published on the livelihoods of *batey* residents since the privatization of the sugar industry in 1998, my results also present some basic descriptive data on current livelihoods and their characteristics that I was not able to draw on literature to obtain. Current employment is then compared with past work experiences to further demonstrate the divisions in work opportunity based on individual identity. It further shows how inconsistent and insecure work is for many residents by describing the quick turnover in many jobs and how many people work multiple jobs at one time. The employment examples demonstrate how even seemingly stable or permanent forms of work can be fraught with similar feelings of insecurity as temporary jobs. Moreover, the most precarious forms of these “stable” jobs are often feminized whereas documented, male residents have a greater range of job opportunities. Next, the difficulties in finding, attaining, and maintaining employment are discussed. Finally, the section closes with stories of adaptation, resiliency, and misery trying to survive in the *batey*. Throughout the chapter, I weave in an intersectional analysis based on different aspects of one’s identity such as gender, race, and legal status.

3. “There’s no work here”: Current employment opportunities among *batey* residents

For nearly every person that I interviewed, the lack of sources of income in the *batey* was the principal reason for their individual and collective poverty. Since the closure of the sugar cane plantations in the early 2000s, residents have had to look for new sources of work with the limited skills that they have developed in the agricultural sector (FLACSO, 2000). For women, who were often seen as merely domestic companions for their male partners (Landry, 2013; Martínez, 2007), the prospects for paid work were even slimmer. The jobs that did become available after the closures were casual, irregular forms of work that did not provide the kind of security—however exploitative— that work on the sugarcane plantations had provided
(FLACSO, 2000). Many interview respondents reported going months or even years without finding employment even after leaving the community to look for work elsewhere. Taking “whatever shows up” in order to survive is a common response when asked what kind of jobs interviewees look for or want.

While a dearth of jobs is something nearly universally observed by batey residents, individual identity, such as gender, ethnicity, and legal status, plays an important hand in the search for and prospects for gaining a livelihood. It is important to note that, for this thesis, I am using birthplace as a proxy for both nationality and legal status. In order to protect vulnerable populations, I did not ask interviewees about their legal status in the Dominican Republic. However, many individuals offered up this information without prompting during the interview in discussions of barriers to work. These barriers will be discussed further below. Most individuals that I interviewed who had been born in Haiti did not have legal status in the Dominican Republic and, when discussing other Haitian migrants to the batey, interviewees often stated that nearly all of the other migrants lacked documentation, as well. I used this proxy as a denominator to determine the differences in the kinds of jobs attained by Dominican-born and Haitian-born batey residents. Figure 2 and tables 2 and 3 below summarize the types of jobs respondents reported and employment as differentiated by gender and birthplace.

The following section describes the current employment of interviewed batey residents, including information on category or sector of work, employment characteristics (working hours, responsibilities, etc.), employment relationships, and payment methods for interview participants. It further compares current employment with the past employment of residents to gain an understanding of barriers and challenges to maintaining employment once acquired and the differences in job opportunities based on individual identity. It demonstrates how irregularity
of work, inconsistency in payment, and fears of job insecurity create an environment of precarity among *batey* residents.

**Current employment among *batey* residents**

The most commonly held jobs by *batey* residents are in agricultural and small business sectors. Fourteen (14) respondents reported having no current employment or personal source of income; although they generally received financial support from spouses, ex-spouses, or other family members. Of those fourteen (14) respondents, thirteen (13) were women. Three (3) out of four (4) Haitian women (or 75%) interviewed did not have a job; whereas, ten (10) out of twenty (20) Dominican women (50%) interviewed did not have a job. On the other hand, all Haitian men interviewed were currently employed and only one Dominican man was unemployed.

Those who were currently employed at the time of the interview (26 out of 39) reported maintaining between 1 and 6 jobs and/or sources of income. Twelve (12) of these individuals reported having more than one job and/or source of income in order to make ends meet. Therefore, the total number of sources of income reported is different from the total sample size.

*Figure 3. Current Employment: Types of Jobs*

*Multiple responses allowed.*
Table 1. Current employment differentiated by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Job</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Labor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military/Security</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables demonstrate that an individuals’ birthplace is also associated with the kind of job (or lack of job) that they have. Because the sample is skewed towards more Dominican-born individuals than Haitian-born individuals, no generalizable distinctions can be made. However, a summary of the sample is still helpful. More Haitian men in the sample reported working in day labor and agriculture than Dominican men, who were more often found working in social services and as military members or security guards. An even more striking distinction exists between Dominican and Haitian women. Ten (10) Dominican-born women reported running a small business, whereas only one (1) Haitian-born women ran two different small businesses.

Table 2. Current employment differentiated by birthplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DR</th>
<th>Haiti</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Job</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Labor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military/Security</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agricultural labor

One of the largest sectors of employment among batey residents despite the closure of plantations years ago is still that of agriculture. Two respondents worked for an agricultural company outside of the batey, but the majority held jobs as laborers for Dominican farm owners in the batey or worked on their own small plot of land. There were a few designated areas on the outskirts of the batey for personal agricultural use.18 Several residents, generally older males, had vegetable and fruit plots and/or raised livestock, such as pig or cattle, to sell for meat or milk. I was never made aware of any women owning agricultural plots (although I did know of two women who owned real estate property in the batey), demonstrating an important gendered exclusion for this opportunity. The vegetable and fruit plots generally produced food for family subsistence only, but one interviewee reported occasionally selling small amounts of yuca or fruit grown on his plot.

For older residents without other sources of income, maintaining agricultural plots is a full-time job. One of these older men was Emilio, our next-door neighbor in the batey. Emilio woke up around 3 or 4am every day to tend to his field, generally waking me up in the process as he called out to his wife for coffee or greeted other residents heading out to work on their plots. He is a slim, but sturdy man, probably in his mid-60s, and missing the majority of his teeth, which does not stop him from laughing and smiling—his near constant state. Whenever I saw him, he was generally wearing the same black rubber work boots and black pants with a belt that

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18 According to one older male resident who had previously worked on the sugar cane plantation the batey belonged to, these plots were distributed to batey residents after privatization on the basis of legal residency and age. Most Haitian laborers did not have a legal status in the Dominican Republic and got their children aged 18 or older to apply for a plot on their behalf. I have not been able to confirm this with key informants or in the literature but take the resident at his word.
holds his machete loosely by his hip. The only thing that changed was his shirt, unbuttoned at the top, and always drenched in sweat from working in the hot sun.

Emilio came here as a sugar cane worker in the 1980s, just before the Dominican sugar cane industry began to collapse. He has worked nearly his whole life to help feed his family, never having had the chance to attend high school, but he is desperate to learn. Whenever he sat down outside his house for more than 15 minutes at a time, he called me over and pulled out a very raggedy notebook. He asked me to teach him a few phrases in English, mostly translations of religious phrases like “God bless you” and “Jesus loves you”. He wanted to know enough to make other people, like myself, feel welcome when they attend church.

He always told me that one day, he is going to get a new notebook and take real English classes, but that right now the money no alcanza (‘doesn’t cover the cost’ in Spanish). Although he worked from dawn until dusk on his agricultural plot and sold fruits and vegetables to middlemen to sell in the market, he still could not make ends meet. He did not even have enough money to buy a small notebook, which probably cost around 150 pesos (roughly $3 USD).

Sometimes he did odd jobs for my host family or other residents for a little extra cash. He was supposed to be receiving a pension from the government for his time working in the sugar cane industry but, like many of the older men in the batey, was still waiting on this earned income. Some older men had solicited their pensions as early as 2006 and were still awaiting their share.

One former plantation manager, Agustín, argued: “I would love to work, but at 65 most people will not hire me. So, I rely on my wife. I applied for my pension in 2006, but I still have not received it”. Out of necessity these older residents relied on family members or on their small subsistence plots to provide a basic source of food and income to survive. The limited opportunities for older workers reveal an important link between age and precarity. Not only
does one’s age inhibit their ability to gain employment, but slow (and often discriminatory) government bureaucracy forces them to scrape together whatever funds they can find as they esperar for their pensions and their time to finally rest.

For younger residents with other jobs or sources of income, agriculture and livestock raising is generally a secondary, passive form of income sometimes handled by their teenage children. On several occasions I went with some of these youth to help feed pigs or check on cattle herds as part of their daily chores when not in school. The majority of the residents’ pigs live in small pens down a grassy path not too far behind some of the old barracks leftover from the plantation days. All the pens are side-by-side in this small section of land. It does not appear that anyone owns this particular piece of terrain, which is perhaps why so many residents have clustered their pigs together here in order to avoid paying rent elsewhere. The first day that I visited these pens, I went with my host siblings (the children in my host family) to feed six piglets that their father had just purchased to raise and sell for meat. Some people breed pigs to sell to others, while some raise the pigs for meat only.

Raising livestock, in comparison with fruit and vegetable growing, is a particularly profitable venture. Several men mentioned wanting to save up enough income to purchase their own pigs or cows one day as a means of supplementary income. Indeed, one man claimed to have survived much of the past year exclusively selling milk from his dairy herd. In the past he had worked as a full-time chauffeur and now only sporadically found work, mostly through his friends. When asked why he had stopped working as a chauffeur, he stated that sometimes there simply was “no work” and that, like many, he just had to wait (esperar) until a job appeared. Without work as a chauffeur, he created a livelihood based on milk sales and reliance on family support. Agriculture remains an important livelihood opportunity for male residents in the batey.
Although it often does not provide the wages people need to survive, it functions as crucial supplemental income and sustenance, particularly for older male residents who have been unable to receive their pensions and finally retire. However, the exclusion of women from owning agricultural plots and working as agricultural employees limits female residents’ livelihood opportunities within the batey.

Day labor

The inconsistency of work is a primary source of precarity for many batey residents. Instead of moving from one job to the next over a period of years, many shuffle between jobs on a daily basis, or at least every few weeks or months, looking for their next source of income. Of all the residents, those facing the greatest irregularity in income are day laborers. Five respondents reported working as day laborers and labored mostly in construction or harvested guava from a nearby guava tree stand. Day laborers, who are all men and nearly all Haitian-born, congregate at a community pavilion in the central part of the batey each weekday morning in order to await job opportunities. On busy days, all laborers have found employment by 7:30 or 8am. On slower days, they may wait until 9 or 9:30am or go without work for the day.

One morning I walked down to the central portion of the batey around 8:15am to observe some of the early morning food vendors. I sat with Yuderka and Yesi, a mother-daughter team, as they took turns making empanadas for day laborers and caring for Yesi’s infant daughter, under the shade of a very haphazardly perched corrugated tin roof stand. Although women are excluded from masculinized day labor opportunities, this gendered segregation opens opportunities for women to create crucial businesses nourishing hungry workers. During a pause in conversation, Yuderka sighed and said “Look, how sad. There must be no work today”. I looked at her quizzically and she pursed her lips and pointed them away from us and towards the
community pavilion. A group of five young men, all in work boots and wielding machetes, were huddled around an old stereo, listening to Haitian konpa music and talking loudly. I had assumed that they were just socializing. Yesi explained to me that the men were waiting for someone to come contract them for work for the day—sometimes for the whole day and sometimes only for a partial day’s work. Yuderka sighed again and proclaimed, “Oh well, better no work here than no work in Haiti”, implying that life in the Dominican Republic was still more stable and jobs were more abundant than in Haiti, a generalization that I heard often.

Before I could ask her more about this, one of the young men from the group strutted over to us. He asked Yesi, who also sold cellphone recargas (minutes/data in Spanish), for 100 minutes and handed her two very crumpled 50-peso bills. Yesi pulled her phone out of her satchel and busied herself with that while the young man sat down on a tree stump next to me. He introduced himself in Creole as Eri and said he already knew my name from the talk in the batey about “the American”. He smiled a lot and fiddled with his machete and brushed off his boots as we talked. I asked him if he thought he would get work today. He suddenly became more serious and squinted upwards towards the sun, pursed his lips, and shook his hand. “It’s too late”, he reasoned, but went back to waiting at the pavilion anyway after receiving his recarga. By this he meant that, if an employer were to need workers, that they would have come already. However, despite believing that he would get no work, Eri held out hope (la esperanza) that something would come. Much later in the day around 4pm while I was sitting with another resident, I watched as Eri passed by on the road in front of us covered in dirt and mud. I called out to him and asked “Ou travay jodiya?” (Did you work today? In Creole). He grinned and waved a hand in affirmation, and continued walking home.
Eri’s experience is typical for those residents engaged in day labor. It tends to be a waiting game in which there are an untold number of unknowns. This adds immense emotional and financial pressure on poor Haitian migrants who are often supporting not only themselves, but also families in the batey or back in Haiti. Employers can show up at any time of day looking for an extra pair of hands. These employers are generally Dominicans who own farms or other properties nearby. The only time batey residents act as employers of day laborers are when they are helping out a friend in even greater impoverishment than themselves who needs the extra income. For instance, my host family occasionally contracted out the young mute man who lived next door for odd jobs that he may not get otherwise due to his disability.

Day laborers’ jobs often consist of construction work but may also take the form of household or other property clean up, such as cutting grass in someone’s lawn, chopping firewood, or painting walls. Interviews and casual conversations with these young men revealed that, at the time of hire, potential employers describe the kind of work a laborer will perform and how much money they will receive in cash for the work. “When they [employers] come, they say that they are looking for two or three workers. They tell me that I will cut grass or I will paint. Then they tell me how much they will pay me,” one young day laborer recounted for me. All of the day laborers I spoke with were young, male Haitian immigrants to the batey. Most had arrived only within the past year or two and were trying to get themselves on their feet without knowing Spanish and with few social connections. Sometimes more experienced or linguistically capable (in Spanish) laborers will try to negotiate higher wages, but this is not common. While it is possible that Haitian-Dominicans also participate in waged day labor, I only personally observed Haitian-Dominicans doing construction or other physically demanding household labor
for their own homes or for family members. Although I cannot know for sure that this was unpaid, it is reasonable to assume that work within close family would be unpaid.

Similar to day labor is the practice of harvesting guava for sale in food markets. Although the harvest of guava is agricultural labor, I have separated it into the day labor category due to its irregular nature and because of the tendency of community members to group day labor and guava harvesting together as one form of work. According to the batey residents, the guava tree stand near the batey where workers pick fruit is not owned by anyone as it had been abandoned by its owners several years prior. Although I only interviewed one female who reported harvesting guava, I observed several other women walking back and forth from the grove each day carrying buckets filled with guava on their heads. Residents told me that the only women who participated in this work were Haitian-born and generally more recent migrants to the batey. These women worked nearly all day, only stopping for quick meals. Because of this, I was unsuccessful at getting to know them very well.

Laborers only engage in this work during the guava-harvesting seasons, which occur twice a year for two to three months at a time. Harvesters sell their loot to an intermediary who pays them below market-price for the fruit collected. For a full five-gallon bucket of guava, harvesters make about 100 pesos (about $2USD). That price covers not only the fruit, but the picking of the fruit and the additional labor of delivering it on foot one bucket at a time to intermediaries. On average, harvesters walk 3-4 miles for each round of picking and selling. The intermediaries, of which I met two, are other batey residents who have generally harvested guava for many years and been able to build a small surplus of savings. They travel two to three times a week to a market in the capital city of Santo Domingo to sell their stock.
When there is no guava to harvest, workers participate in other forms of day labor or supplement this work by selling foodstuffs or other petty commodities (mostly women). However, day labor, as mentioned above, is available only for men who employers believe to be more physically capable of doing manual work. On the other hand, women may engage in small business as a supplement to guava harvesting. The single female guava harvester that I interviewed also sold small quantities of gasoline for motorcycles out of her house. However, I did not observe any of the other female harvesters engaging in any other income earning activities. This gendered differentiation in livelihood opportunities is indicative of the general gender segmentation in the labor market across occupational sectors in the Dominican Republic.

Small business

One of the largest sectors of employment for batey residents, particularly for women, is in small business. Fifteen (15) individuals reported either owning or working in a colmado (like a bodega—small general store) or operating their own small business. In general, male residents tend to be owners of colmados while women run other small businesses. Only one female interviewed owned a colmado and it was the smallest one in the batey. There are at least four full-sized colmados in operation in the batey and they are generally run by an owner and his or her family members who work as both paid and unpaid employees. Colmados sell necessities such as rice, bread, coffee, sugar, vegetables, sausage, soup mix, basic medicines, and toilet paper, as well as alcohol, candy, and other snacks. Residents frequent colamdos on a daily basis to purchase necessities in small amounts. Most batey residents do not have working refrigerators because electricity comes and goes sporadically and, therefore, cannot make large purchases of perishable items at one time. Colmados, on the other hand, have back-up generators and can store perishable items for several days. It is also more economically viable for families to
purchase small quantities of items at a time when they have the funds to do so, especially since many people are paid in cash irregularly.

Because the *colmado* provides necessities for everyone in the *batey*, it is a fairly secure form of income. However, providing essential services creates a double-edged sword for store owners and employees. All three individuals working in *colmados* (2 male owners and one female employee) that I interviewed described being unhappy with their jobs and having dreams of doing other kinds of work. In fact, two of them only worked in a *colmado* because they could not find other sources of income. One male *colmado* owner who worked as a security guard at night for additional income described running a *colmado* as “*una esclavitud*” (a form of slavery). The owner’s store did not earn enough profit to allow him to hire additional help and so he worked from 8am to 8pm at the store and worked a part time night shift as a guard at a business outside of the *batey*, demonstrating that even consistent sources of income may be insufficient to cover living expenses. A female *colmado* employee argued that you do not really make a profit owning a *colmado* because “if you try to raise prices, people will get mad at you and they will just go to another *colmado* instead”. Because the *batey* is such a small community and there are several stores selling the same or similar products, attempting to raise prices to turn a profit will quickly backfire on any owner. Despite being a steady source of income, owning or working at a *colmado* is not necessarily lucrative.

Those who reported operating a small business other than a *colmado* sold foodstuffs such as roasted peanuts, home-made juice, prepared chicken, and ice cream; did hairstyling for other residents, mended and sewed clothing; sold gasoline in small amounts for motorcycles; and sold cellphone *recargas*, or minutes for calls and texting. Most of these businesses would be considered part of the informal economy, operating out of individuals’ homes and on a cash-only
basis with few or no social safety nets. They generally provided only small and inconsistent incomes to their operators to supplement other jobs or sources of income. This is a crucial point and one that should not be overlooked. While colmados provide a daily income to their (mostly male) owners, other small business owners, who are generally female, do not enjoy the same consistency in income. This illustrates an important gendered difference in precarity. Although engaging in similar forms of employment with respect to small business ownership, men experience greater stability in colmados, ventures that are gendered masculine, while women’s incomes are less predictable.

Similar to colmado owners and employees, many entrepreneurs did not generally enjoy operating these small businesses and felt compelled to do it out of necessity. “No hay más nada” (“There’s nothing else” in Spanish) one woman, Sarai, lamented. Sarai lives in one of the old plantation barracks’ rooms with her five children. She has only one bed and some of the older children sleep on mats on the floor while the youngest sleep in the bed with her. Sarai is the only female guava harvester that I interviewed. She also purchases gasoline from gas stations in nearby towns to sell in the batey. In the past she, like many women in the community, worked as a domestic worker in the capital for one year but she left that job five years prior because it did not pay enough for her to support her family. She would like to take some technical courses in beauty services to open her own salon in the batey, which would give her a steadier stream of income as well as allow her to not “have to be doing so many things”.

Sarai expressed visual frustration at having to string together different incomes to make ends meet. Her impoverishment was obvious, even in comparison with other community members, and she did not have any family members or a spouse to share the burden with her. Most of the other women who ran small businesses primarily relied on income from their
husbands or family or alimony payments from ex-spouses and used the small business ventures as supplemental funds. As a single mother with little family nearby, Sarai did not have that option.

It is curious to note as well that all of the women running small businesses in the batey, except for one woman, were Dominican-born. This did not become apparent to me until the data analysis stage of this project; therefore, I do not have commentary from residents on why this may be. However, we may conjecture that part of starting a small business is having surplus funds to buy preliminary supplies—surplus funds that new immigrants may not have.

Additionally, as we will explore further below, community ties and mutual relationships are a principal factor in survival and business in the batey. For immigrants with few connections, this may inhibit their ability to start a business and, indeed, may create community strife if their small business unwittingly encroaches on a neighbor’s territory. This hypothesis makes sense when we consider that the solitary Haitian-born small businesswoman in the community had been living there for nearly 20 years and had well-established social ties.

The sheer number of small businesses and the divided territories for business also helps to explain why no one individual had established a financial monopoly or cultivated greater comparable wealth in the batey. It is understood by community members that there are certain rules for business, similar to the sociological framework of moral economy (explained in discussion). For instance, if you live next to a coffee and empanada stand, you cannot open your own stand selling the same products next door. These rules are enforced by the social pressures of living in a small place in which everyone is either related or has known each other for nearly their entire lives. Social ties and location in the batey also determine who your customers are.

Residents tend to frequent colmados and other small businesses owned by their family members
and friends. Additionally, once you have established your loyalties to one business or another, you must continue going to that business unless they have run out of the goods you need. To do otherwise is considered a social offense and incites community strife and gossip. For this reason, no one business comes to dominate commerce in the batey and no one person accumulates vast quantities of wealth in comparison to others. In contrast, many residents felt that employment outside of the batey may offer greater opportunity to earn a larger income. However, opportunities to ‘get out’ of the batey to look for this work are differentiated based on gender and often more limited due to Haitian ethnicity and a lack of legal status, as I go on to explain.

Social services

Seven (7) respondents, three (3) women and four (4) men, reported working in what I have categorized as “social services”. Laborers in “social services” were of mixed ethnic background, almost evenly split between Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans. This category includes two (2) educators (one man and one woman) for Quisqueya Aprende Contigo (Quisqueya—the indigenous name for the island of Hispaniola—Learns with You), a government-run literacy program targeted at reducing illiteracy among older populations in the Dominican Republic (UNESCO, 2015). According to Dominican Republic’s National Bureau of Statistics, in 2010 12.83% of the country’s adult (aged 15 and over) population was illiterate, with a little over half (53.2%) of that population being men. Interestingly, the 2010 national census found that almost two-thirds (59.8%) of the illiterate population live in cities (UNESCO, 2015). Educators teach two to three students at a time for a curriculum of several months, depending on literacy levels of the students, for six hours a week for a modest salary. Respondents also reported working as a math teacher at a nearby middle school, as a government
public health worker, a driver for a school meals program, a community Evangelist pastor, and as receiving social security benefits from the government.

Most of the respondents in this category felt an emotional connection to their work and felt that they did critical work in educating and supporting their fellow batey residents. In fact, during my stay, I spoke with many residents (both male and female) who expressed desires to become a schoolteacher, demonstrating that education is an attractive employment option for many regardless of gender. This may be due to its supposed consistency in hours and wages. That being said, those working as literacy educators and the lone government worker all contradicted this assumption and recounted their struggles in receiving regular payment, as explored more below. The community pastor also loved his work but struggled to make ends meet day-to-day. He was one of two pastors in the batey, both of whom were former sugar cane cutters waiting on their pensions from the government. Like Emilio, they lived off the meager wages from their (almost) daily work—mostly from church donations. They, too, relied on their spouses and family members to provide for them in their old age. These workers stories reveal that even seemingly stable and reliable sources of income can be fraught with insecurity, regardless of gender and ethnicity.

Military members and security guards

Another form of employment outside of the batey is in the military or security services. The sole military member interviewed was a young woman, though she was one of only two female military members observed during field work. The other military members that I met in the batey were all young men and all were Dominican-born. To join the military or the National Police, in fact, the very first requirement is “ser dominicano” (‘be Dominican’ in Spanish) and you must prove this by demonstrating a certified birth certificate as having been born in the
Dominican Republic (Ejército de la República Dominicana, n.d.; Policía Nacional, n.d.). Having established ethnicity (not naturalized citizenship), cadets can be either male or female. As of February 2020, there were 5,279 active duty female personnel in the Dominican Armed Forces, in comparison with 13,295 active duty male personnel (Relación de miembros activos, 2020).

Although the number of women in the Dominican military has been growing in recent years, the number of women that reach higher ranking leadership positions is still proportionally lower than that of men (Méndez, 2018). The Dominican military serves a similar purpose to the Dominican national police force. It does not engage in warfare with other nations, but rather patrols the Dominican-Haitian border—highlighting the important social and political divide between the two nations—and acts as peacekeepers or security during protests or other forms of civic engagement.

Elizabeth, the only female military member that I interviewed, professed to love her job. She served in a special unit of the military dedicated to drug enforcement and regularly spent several months outside of the batey for trainings and raids. She is a very light-skinned Haitian-Dominican mother of two small children and she says that the military “opens a lot of doors” for her family. As a military member she has access to medical insurance for herself and her children and military personnel may receive special loans to go to school and help them build a house, similar to the United States GI Bill. She hopes to use her loan to go back to school to become a physical trainer.

Although Elizabeth claims that her generation is “muy avanzada” (very advanced, progressive) and does not feel as though she has faced any gender discrimination while in the military, she recognizes that her job is not one that comes easily to all women. She like many other women in the batey previously worked as a domestic laborer in Santo Domingo. Elizabeth
says that her employers mistreated her but that domestic work is “pretty much all that there is for women”, and so she remained in that job for several years. She managed to get a military job through an uncle, who provided her with a recommendation. Elizabeth also has an extensive family support system, including a grandmother who acts as the primary caregiver for her two children while she is away for work. This kind of support system is something many women have argued that they either do not have or feel guilty utilizing in order to fulfill their work responsibilities, which is perhaps why so few women in the *batey* are in the military. However, gender is not the only barrier to entry in the Dominican military.

Samuel, a young Haitian-Dominican man serving in the military, chatted with me one day while I visited his sister-in-law at her home. He had recently returned from a three-month service station at the northern Dominican-Haitian border checkpoint in Dajabón, Dominican Republic and was staying with his brother and his sister-in-law while waiting for his next assignment. When a neighbor passing by greeted me in Haitian Creole, a look of surprise flashed across his face and, switching to Creole, Samuel asked me how I spoke the language. We talked about languages for a few minutes when suddenly he mentioned that he did not speak Creole that much aside from when he spoke with his mother:

“At work, I pretend like I can’t speak Creole so they won’t know that I’m Haitian. One time at the border, there was a woman who tried to cross over, and she was bringing things that aren’t allowed. And the other soldiers yelled at her in Spanish to leave the stuff behind. But she couldn’t understand. Somehow, when she looked at me, she could tell that I understood when she spoke in Creole. She asked me to tell them to let her cross with her things, but I pretended I didn’t
understand, and I yelled at her in Spanish, too, so that they [the other soldiers] wouldn’t know [that I could speak Creole].”

I heard similar stories from other military members from the batey. To be of Haitian descent was something shameful and even though speaking Creole could be a useful skill on the job, many preferred to pretend that they did not know the language so that they would not be categorized as “Haitian”. Many feared that if others, especially co-workers or employers, knew that they were of Haitian descent that they would lose their jobs or would face discrimination and harassment at work. Instead, they hide their identity to protect their job security. It is crucial to note that Samuel is lighter skinned and is able to “pass” as ethnically Dominican, but this opportunity is not afforded to those with darker skin.

Working as a security guard did not seem to have as many social barriers in employment as both Haitian-Dominican and Haitians worked as guards. Although, all those who reported working in security were men. Security jobs appear to be an emerging form of work for young male batey residents, since the spouses of several unemployed young female interviewees were engaged in this kind of employment. According to one interviewee, employers actively recruit young men from the batey to work as security guards and that is how many men got their current jobs. All of these jobs are outside of the batey for agricultural processing plants or manufacturing centers or, in one case, at a school. Those working as security guards did not appear to mind their work, but they did not find it to be the most engaging employment. Most felt that the job was relatively easy and relaxed. However, working at nighttime, as most of them did, and 30 minutes to an hour away from the community posed issues for their social and family lives.

Military and security guard jobs all require that residents leave the batey to go to work. For military members, they may leave the community for several months at a time to fulfill duty
stations elsewhere in the country. Security guards are not required to be gone for so long, but tend to work longer shifts, upwards of 10-12 hours per day. Two of the men working as security guards also had other jobs and worked in security as a convenient supplemental income for their daytime employment. Jobs in the military and as security guards are more stable sources of income and most respondents reported having been in their current positions for several years already. That being said, there is a crucial gender divide in job availability for this kind of work. Women are less likely to enter into the military and no female residents worked as security guards. Instead, men are more likely to benefit from the stability of this source of employment, while women either stay at home or look for work in more feminized areas of work.

**Domestic work**

In contrast with the highly masculinized field of work that is the military and security, women are more likely to be found laboring as domestic workers. Only two (2) female respondents reported working as domestic laborers at the time of interview. However, domestic work is a very common form of employment for young women in the batey and many reported having worked as domestic laborers in the past. All women, except two, who were working or had worked as domestic workers were Haitian-Dominican. Several women discussed having found this work through a temp agency in the capital or through another family member working in the sector. In one instance, as I sat with a group of six young women during the typical mid-afternoon rest time, one of the young women, Yuli, was showing her friends job opportunities that had been posted as “stories” to the business Whatsapp profile of the capital city temp agency. Each “story” listed the required domestic duties, the salary, and the number of days of work. When a potential job interested one of the women, they asked Yuli to message it to them so that they could apply. This modern application process is a welcome and helpful change to a
form of employment that has historically been the main (and sometimes only) source of work for poor, young women in the Dominican Republic.

Domestic work is a female-dominated field and, it appeared, was almost a rite of passage for many young women from the *batey* when they first enter the labor market. Demand for domestic labor is high and it is easy to find employment. For some women this kind of work was fulfilling. They enjoyed working with children or with elderly employers who needed assistance. However, many more felt forced into or stuck in this highly gendered form of employment. One of the first women that I interviewed, Yamila, a Haitian-born mother of three, has been working full time and attending university for the past four years. She has dreams of becoming a middle school math teacher but has been obliged to take jobs such as domestic work to make ends meet.

“My aspiration in life is not to be a house worker. Life doesn’t get any better for those that work in that. They stay stuck in the same position”.

To Yamila, the fixed salary and servile position of a domestic worker means that you never move up the socio-economic ladder. Her cynicism is particularly understandable given her past. Yamila has been working as a domestic laborer since the age of nine. When her father left, her mother could not care for all six of her children, so she sent the older ones to work as child domestics, or *restavek* in Haitian Creole. Yamila slept on a piece of cardboard in the kitchen and was forced to attend to her employer’s family, including a girl her own age, even when she got sick with malaria. When she was 13 her uncle who lives in Batey La Luisa sent for her to come live in the Dominican Republic, but she still had to earn her keep by contributing financially to the household. Yamila has created several other small business ventures to bring in supplemental income for her family while she is in school, but she is pessimistic about her future job prospects even after she achieves her degree. She fears that she will be forced to remain in a subservient
job such as domestic work and will not be able to provide a better life for her children, especially if people find out that she is of Haitian descent.

Other women also professed that domestic work does not always provide the flexibility that many women are looking for in a job and, in fact, a lack of *respeto* (‘respect’ in Spanish) for employees was common in domestic work. Elizabeth, who is currently an active duty military member, recounts her experience looking for work as a domestic laborer: “You ask the temp agency for a job that is 3-4 days a week and they give you a live-in job”. She expressed immense frustration at having to settle for a live-in position despite the strain it put on her familial duties. Wealthier families in the capital city of Santo Domingo or other cities often hire domestic laborers to act as nannies, cooks, cleaners, attendants for elderly family members, and to perform other general housekeeping duties. This work often requires women to sleep at their employers’ homes for four or more days each week. Although I neglected to ask a consistent question on written contracts, most women stated that they had only received verbal information regarding their salary and terms of employment.

This became a problem for some women who were occasionally obliged to stay at their employer’s home for durations outside of their stated agreement. Anyileidy, a single mother of an infant son, has worked as the caregiver for her elderly employer for four years. Before starting as a domestic worker, she was taking classes at a university in Santo Domingo. However, she ran out of funds and had no financial support from her family. Shortly thereafter, she discovered that she was pregnant, but the father neglected to provide financial support. Therefore, she took the first job that she could find. Every Sunday evening, she leaves the *batey* and takes two different public buses for a total of two and half hours to arrive to her employer’s home. When you are
taking care of someone, she says, “…that is not the kind of work you can miss. Sometimes you feel forced to go. I want to be able to live and sleep in my own house”.

If her employer’s children did not arrive on time to care for their elderly mother during the weekend, then Anyileidy would be stuck there for an extra three days receiving no extra pay and leaving her mother to take care of her son in the batey. This would not be so bad, Anyileidy argued, if her employer were kind to her. But the elderly woman was “nasty”. She called her names and even threw things at her occasionally. Anyileidy did not want to be in this job, but she felt forced to stay because she needed the money. Desperation and a lack of alternatives keeps her from exercising her rights and demanding that her terms of employment be respected.

Alexandra, a young woman who currently works at a small colmado in the batey owned by her brother, used even harsher language to describe her experience as a domestic worker: “I would like to have a job where they treat you with more respeto. Sometimes when you’re working for someone else, they think they can treat you like a slave. As if they owned you”. Like Yamila and Anyileidy, she felt that she did not have many other options for work outside of the batey that would allow her to achieve “una vida major” (a better life) and that she only got her job because of her brother. As if to prove her point that domestic work is a fallback for many women, she tells me about when she had to help support her sister financially with the little income that she had when her sister spent six months looking for a job in the zona franca (free trade zone) in a garment factory near the capital. After months of being turned away, her sister eventually took as a job as a domestic worker and has been in the same job for five years.

Domestic labor appears to be a comparatively stable and consistent form of income for women as many reported having been in or remained in their jobs for several consecutive years, despite not receiving written contracts detailing terms of employment. However, it is not
necessarily a desirable source of employment. Several women, like Elizabeth, argue that
domestic work is “really all that there is for women”. Some, like Elizabeth, Alexandra, and
Yamila, were successful in transitioning careers after quitting their jobs as domestic workers
because their social connections helped them to find alternative employment. However, domestic
work remains a highly femininized field (Glenn, 1992) and acts as fall back for women who
cannot find decent work elsewhere.

Characteristics of Employment

Employment Relationship

For each job or source of income an interviewee had at the time of interview, I asked
them to describe their employment relationship. I broke these relationships into four (4) different
categories: self-employed; direct employment; via a contractor; and informal and/or irregular.
Informal workers, as defined by the International Labor Organization (ILO) are: “employees
holding informal jobs in or for formal enterprises, or in or for economic units in the informal
economy, including but not limited to those in subcontracting and in supply chains, or as paid
domestic workers employed by households; and (d) workers in unrecognized or unregulated
employment relationships” (ILO, 2015, pp. 5). The ILO also often includes self-employed
individuals in this definition when discussing the informal economy as a whole. I do not do the
same here in order to differentiate more clearly between the kinds of employment in my sample.

As shown in the literature review chapter, the grouping of self-employment into the
category of ‘informal work’ confuses the study of the employment relationship between
employer and employee (Mosoetsa et al 2016). However, I do categorize self-employment as
irregular. I define irregular employment as work that is inconsistent or not occurring on a regular

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19 The ILO also often includes self-employed individuals in its definition of informal work (ILO, 2015) but, for this
thesis, I have differentiated between self-employment and informal work.
basis. This does not have to do necessarily with the employment relationship or contract between an employer and employee, but rather with how often a person is selling their goods and services to customers. Therefore, informal and irregular work arrangements generally go hand-in-hand but are not necessarily the same.

Out of the total income sources of 43 jobs, fifteen (15) respondents reported self-employment; fifteen (15) reported direct employment to another person or company; four (4) reported employment at a business via a contractor; and nine (9) reported informal and/or irregular employment. Slightly more women (42%) than men (33%) (proportionally) described themselves as being self-employed, running consistent with the number of women engaged in small business described above. On the other hand, more men (53%) than women (0.04%) described their work as informal and/or irregular. Similarly, more men than women reported working via a contractor. Keep in mind that, as stated above, respondents gave multiple answers for the number of jobs or sources of income they had. Therefore, the total number of responses is higher than the sample size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Employment relationship differentiated by gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (Total Responses=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (Total Responses=24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses (N=43)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More Dominican born interviewees than Haitian born reported being self-employed, but only by a difference of one. Nine (9) Dominican born respondents reported working directly for their employer, in comparison with six (6) Haitian born respondents. An equivalent number of
Dominican born and Haitian born respondents worked via a contractor. Finally, only one Dominican born female reported informal or irregular work. All Haitian born individuals who reported working in informal or irregular work arrangements were male and were engaged in day labor or agriculture.

Table 4. Employment relationship differentiated by birthplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Employed</th>
<th>Direct Employment</th>
<th>(via a) Contractor</th>
<th>Informal/Irregular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic (Total Responses=20)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti (Total Responses=23)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses (N=43)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although a question about written contracts for workers was inconsistently asked in interviews\(^2\), respondents often brought up the lack of formal contracts naturally during interviews. Those who reported being self-employed had no written contracts, as is the nature of self-employment. Those working for contractors or informally were often verbally told their salary and the responsibilities and requirements of employment but did not receive written confirmation. Those in direct employment were more likely to receive a formal written contract although it was still uncommon among the sample. A lack of formal contracts allows for discrepancies in income and insecurity in job permanence because workers lack a reference for their own employment rights and guarantees (Lozano, 2013). Mickey, a male Haitian migrant, illustrated an extreme example of this issue for me.

Mickey worked for a nearby company that processed agricultural products for sale in markets. Their primary commodity was milk which they purchased from local dairy farmers.

\(^2\) This question was asked inconsistently because it only became apparent that it was important part-way through the study.
Mickey said that he made good money from this work and felt that he received fair treatment, but quickly pivoted when asked how long he had been working in that job.

“Look”, he said, “I have been working there for seven months. But every 3 months, you get fired and then 2 weeks later they hire you again”. After seeing the confusion on my face he continued, “It’s the law here that after three months, you have to formally contract your workers if they haven’t signed a contract yet. So, to avoid that, the bosses fire you every two to three months and then hire you back a week or two later”.

This institutionalized casualization of labor seemed to be a way for companies to avoid being responsible to fulfill the rights of full-time employees guaranteed in the Dominican Labor Code (Ley No. 1692). A few months after I did that interview, Mickey told me that he had been fired again and was waiting for them to hire him back. That time he was more anxious to be re-hired since his child was to be born soon. When asked during the interview why he did not just leave to look for work elsewhere, Mickey told me, “I tried to work in construction in the capital, but I was too afraid of immigration. By working at this company, I don’t have to travel anywhere”.

Although Mickey has fake residency documents, he still fears immigration enforcement and avoids traveling outside of the batey except for when absolutely necessary. Mickey’s is an extreme example of how precarious legal status can influence informality of employment experiences.

Payment Methods

The vast majority of interview respondents received income payments in cash (36), while a minority received payment via direct deposit to a bank account (7). While direct deposit

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21 I have not found information to corroborate this claim so take Mickey at his word. Regardless of the accuracy of his legal knowledge, the fact remains that firing and re-hiring happens regularly.
appears at first to be a more secure form of remuneration, interviews revealed that deposits for some respondents were inconsistent and also not easily accessible since the nearest ATMs with cash withdrawal were 30-45 minutes away in the provincial capital of Monte Plata. Interviewees receiving cash payments reported receiving them daily, weekly, every two weeks (or quincenal, every 15 days, in Spanish), monthly, or sporadically for irregular work like day labor or irregular purchases for small business owners.

As mentioned in the “social services” section, three (3) of the seven individuals who received income via direct deposit reported that they did not receive these payments regularly. On occasion two to three months would pass without payment. Once they were finally paid, it was often not the amount that they were owed. Additionally, the closest available ATMs were 30-45 minutes away from the batey, forcing respondents to look for transportation at a cost to them and limiting their ability to regularly access funds. Even more concerning about these claims is the fact that those making them were employees of the Dominican government, which should guarantee more income security.

One of these people was Adonis, a middle-aged Haitian-Dominican who is handicapped from the waist down when someone attempted to rob him decades ago. Adonis is a prolific and well-respected educator in the batey, providing much of the early childhood education for batey children and works as a literacy educator for Quisqueya Aprende Contigo. He lives by himself in one of the old plantation worker barrack bedrooms—a tiny, stuffy cement block room with just enough room for a bed and a desk. As a closet he has strung up a wire across the wall and drapes his shirts and pants over it. Adonis uses a walker to move about and several years ago an NGO came to the batey and built him a ramp where before there was only a crumbling concrete
staircase. His legs are virtually nonfunctional but can help to support him if he stands momentarily.

Because of his disability and how few family members he has that live close by, he must often rely on neighbors for food, laundry, assistance getting to the bathroom, and rides to the school where he works at the entrance to the batey. Still, he remains very positive and only briefly mentioned his handicap during our interview, choosing instead to focus on the general needs of the community. That being said, he struggles immensely on his inconsistent salary, and even more so given the fact that he must ask for assistance to get to Monte Plata to withdraw his money. He is unable to take the public bus because it is not equipped for disabled passengers and, regardless, he would require someone to accompany him to help him navigate the city. Instead, Adonis must rely on one of the only batey residents who owns a car to take him once every month to two months to make a withdrawal. If there is no money in the account, as he and others argue often happens, he must wait several more months to try again and borrow money from friends in the meantime. Adonis’ experience is an extreme example but, nonetheless, provides a vivid description of the inconvenience and even desperation some individuals endure waiting for their promised salaries.

The current employment situation of residents in Batey La Luisa is precarious. Many have melded together a mixture of different sources of income in order to make ends meet. Residents often rely on the limited income from small business or agriculture and day labor. These forms of employment provide irregular sources of income, generally in the form of cash payments. However, even seemingly stable jobs, such as working as a military member, security guard, government worker or domestic worker, were characterized by precarity. And those “stable” jobs that were more insecure were highly feminized, giving men an advantage and
greater job security. These “stable” jobs were also almost entirely exclusive to Haitian-Dominican workers. Moreover, a lack of banks nearby makes the secure deposit and retrieval of funds difficult. Additionally, many individuals lack formal written contracts for their employment and instead rely on verbal agreements with employers—an indicator of informality in employment. These insecure circumstances are not new and are illustrated by the high turnover in employment among batey residents. The indelible precarity of livelihoods among batey residents can be further exemplified by an exploration of past employment situations.

**Past Employment**

*Batey* residents not only have different job opportunities available to them based on individual identity but are further distinguished by their ability to maintain regular, secure work. Work for *batey* residents is consistent in its inconsistency. That is, they frequently shuffle back and forth between different jobs, maintain multiple jobs or sources of income at one time, or participate in irregular income-earning activities that they may not consider to be a “past” job when asked to recount employment. For example, some residents reported having worked in construction on and off for years and counted that as a form of “current” employment. Although they may not have participated in that work for several months, it was an option that they may pick up again in the future. Often, people claim to take “lo que haya” (whatever work there is) for however long that may be. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to produce a timeline of employment for *batey* residents. This inconsistency and short-term nature of work is, in itself, a crucial aspect of the longstanding precarity felt by Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans.

**Table 5. Female Past Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic Work</th>
<th>Other services*</th>
<th>No previous work/Never worked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Women (Total N=24)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Community projects, selling foodstuffs, working in clothing factory*
Out of twenty-four (24) total female respondents, 58% had previously worked as domestic laborers in houses in the capital city of Santo Domingo or in other cities several hours away from the batey. The incredible majority is further evidence for how immensely gendered this form of employment is for women. Most interviewees reported working as domestic workers for many consecutive years for the same family and had ended their service once they had their own children. Indeed, when compared with the chart of current employment, ten (10) of the thirteen (13) unemployed females had previously worked as domestic workers.

There is very little variety of opportunity for work available for women and many felt that the opportunities available were restrictive and did not allow them the flexibility that they wanted to fulfill their domestic duties as well as employment responsibilities. Nearly every woman I spoke with who was not currently employed but had worked previously said that they had been forced to leave their jobs to attend to the needs of their children or they were Haitian women who had been unable to find work in the Dominican Republic. This will be explored in further detail below.

**Table 6. Male Past Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Other Services**</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Men (N=15)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses allowed
**literacy educator, police officer, driver, veterinarian

By contrast, men had previously been engaged in a wider range of economic activities: six (6) in agricultural work; four (4) in construction; six (6) in other services such as police officers, chauffeurs, veterinarians, and educators; one (1) had previously been a direct government employee; and only one (1) young man had never previously been employed before starting his current job. Men did not often complain a lack of variety in job opportunities available to them, but rather a general deficiency in the number of jobs available. For this reason,
they shifted back and forth regularly between jobs, picking up what was offered, even if only temporarily. This was particularly common among recent Haitian immigrants who did not have family members to fall back on and were desperately trying to make ends meet. Indeed, most often these extremely impoverished men, were also taking care of loved ones back home so any money that they made was spent before they could save it.

The story told by the previous charts is one that reveals two crucial sticking-points for achieving secure employment for batey residents: gender and migrant status. In comparison with female batey residents, male respondents have a more diversified cache of potential employment. Ten (10) of the women who reported working as domestic workers in the past reported having no current employment (shown in Figure 3). For the majority of those women, an inability to balance domestic duties with time in the labor force was the primary reason why they left their jobs. However, location and social discrimination also play important roles in this issue. Several women argued that women could not find good jobs in the batey, other than small business ventures, because the only jobs that were available were mostly for men. Additionally, searching for work outside of the batey would conflict with the needs of their children.

Ethnicity and legal status add additional barriers to secure employment. In this sample most Haitian men had worked as day laborers or in agriculture their entire adult life and remained stuck in these irregular and informal forms of employment due to lack of documents and a fear of deportation if they left the batey to look for work (explored further below). By contrast, few Haitian women had had previous employment and instead maintained the household and took care of children while their spouses worked. For this reason, past employment charts differentiated by birthplace did not offer much for comparison. However, having no previous work experience does not indicate a lack of trying to gain employment, but
rather reveals similar barriers of legal status and ethnic discrimination as experienced by their counterparts, coupled with discrimination based on gender.

**Summary of batey resident employment opportunities**

The above section has given a summary of the current and past employment of 39 adult batey residents in the Dominican Republic and has disaggregated the data based on gender and birthplace. It shows that the main employment sectors for batey residents are in small business and agriculture. It further shows that many individuals labor outside of a formal arrangement of work and tend to receive wages in cash only. Inconsistent incomes and a lack of written contracts are typical characteristics of employment for these individuals, exemplifying the precarious nature of work among batey residents. Precarity prevails from the most irregular sources of employment, like day labor, all the way to seemingly stable forms of work, like military or security jobs.

However, further exploration of experiences of and barriers to employment are necessary. A crucial argument of this thesis is that a lack of current employment does not mean that an individual is not experiencing precarious work. In fact, the struggles and difficulty in finding employment is part of the experience of precarious work, especially for those who work irregular jobs like day labor in which waiting around for (esperando) work is a large part of that type of employment. Additionally, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and legal status make finding a job in the first place (and keeping it) more difficult, contributing to the feelings of insecurity many batey residents feel. Individuals must often patch together many jobs, creating both objective and subjective insecurity, illustrating that entire livelihood practices are precarious, not just specific jobs.
4. *Chache lavi*: Barriers to secure employment

As we saw in the section above, women’s options for employment are not as diversified as those of their male counterparts. The lack of opportunity is generally described by female interviewees as primarily being the result of traditional female roles as domestic laborers and primary caregivers for their children. Embedded male and female gender roles in Dominican and Haitian cultures limit women from pursuing and maintaining jobs that do not allow them to balance employment and domestic responsibilities. At the same time, ingrained categorizations of men’s versus women’s work further limit women’s employment opportunities to those associated with those traditional domestic roles (Baud, 1997; Murphy, 1991). Ethnicity and legal status add further complications since societal discrimination towards dark-skinned people (those considered to be Haitian) and fear of deportation relegate many undocumented Haitian or dark-skinned Haitian-Dominican women to only the narrow band of employment to be found in the *batey*. Many women in the *batey*, including those who were currently employed, were determined to pursue an education which would allow them to find better (more stable, higher paying) jobs that would give them the flexibility to work and tend to the needs of their children.

Male *batey* residents, on the other hand, tend to find work in a variety of sectors both in and outside of the community. However, the search for work is still rife with challenges. One of the most commonly cited methods for finding work was through friends or family. If you do not know someone you either won’t get a job or will be stuck doing “*trabajo bruto*”—manual labor. This was the sentiment across all sectors of employment from agricultural work to government jobs. In contrast with their female counterparts, male interviewees did not place much weight on education or qualifications as a priority for gaining employment. Instead who you know

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22 *Chache lavi* (pronounced: shashey lavee) is a commonly used Haitian Creole term that literally means to look for life. It implies a struggle to find work and a stable income to survive.
determines your success. In order to survive you must *chache lavi*—look for life—by building connections with people (Beckett, 2019). But finding work to sustain yourself and your family is not as easy as it sounds. For Haitian men without papers job opportunities are limited based on fear of deportation and employers’ unwillingness to contract undocumented individuals. The majority of the time these men end up in low-paying, irregular forms of work with little to no job security. They must often work multiple jobs to support their families, particularly given the added difficulty Haitian women face in gaining employment, which limits their abilities to contribute financially to the household.

*Work for women: Barriers to achieving and maintaining employment*

Finding work as a woman was a difficulty that many women in Batey La Luisa faced. Similar to their male counterparts, women echoed the lamentation that few jobs were available in the community in general. However, the methods for finding work differed greatly from those of men. Time and time again I heard women mention having to visit an *agencia de trabajo* (a temp agency in Spanish) in the capital city to find work. They would have to take a public bus an hour and a half into Santo Domingo to present their CV to the agency. Turi, a mother who has never worked outside of the *batey*, told me how she has watched many young women struggle to look for work: “They have to go to the agency to request work and if they [the agency] finds work for them [the women], they have to pay the agency 2,000 or 1,500 pesos. And if they don’t have that money to pay the agency for that job, then they are stuck”. Turi describes two substantial challenges for attaining work as a domestic worker: the physical distance and the financial barrier that not all poor *batey* residents are able to sacrifice. The *batey* is an hour and half away from the capital city where more jobs are available and you must pay to ride a public bus in order
to get there and subsequent public cars to get to your exact destination. These transportation costs along with the costs of hiring a temp agency to find a job are not feasible for all to pay.

Faced with geographic and financial limits to where they can find work, many women search for opportunities in the batey itself, but are often limited to only a few types of livelihoods based on gendered stereotypes of men’s and women’s work. “Where there are two women, there are ten men”, commented one young woman, who argued that women have to fight harder to find jobs. Some female interviewees discussed the first-hand or perceived discrimination for employment that women face in the batey.

Several women reported that they had solicited work such as construction or agricultural labor in the batey and were turned away in favor of male laborers. One woman called Simona recounted asking for work: “…There are things women can do, but men tell us, ‘No, you aren’t capable’, and so that makes it [finding work] harder for women”. Simona was somewhat of an anomaly in the community. She had her own motorbike (not a scooter, which was considered a more feminine mode of transportation) that she rode to and from work and was the primary breadwinner for her family. Her husband had taught her how to ride the motorbike and how to do many of the tasks required in construction of homes. She wanted to do more physically demanding jobs or to work as a chauffeur but could not find employment in these sectors.

Another woman argued that the lack of women in agricultural and construction jobs was not from men’s belief that women were not capable, but simply because it was not socially allowable or acceptable. However, not all women were in agreement with this view. One woman argued that the gendered labor roles the other women said that men used against them were, in fact, true. She further claimed that women were not capable of doing construction work, and that
that was “men’s work”. Gendered ideas of labor roles are embedded in residents’ minds and impact what kinds of job opportunities are available to women.

At the time of interview nearly half (12 out of 26) of the female respondents interviewed were not working and were dependent on a spouse, an ex-husband, and/or other family members for their income. For many of these women, this is a less-than-ideal situation. Reliance on a spouse or alimony and child support from an ex-husband provides only limited income and creates its own form of precarity that left women feeling helpless. Despite not experiencing the insecurity of employment first-hand, some feared for the stability of their spouse’s livelihoods and the future financial security of their family. This second-hand sense of precarity is an important example to support my argument that a lack of current employment does not mean that an individual does not also experience precarious work.

Angie discussed her husband’s employment as a trash collector in the capital city of Santo Domingo. Although he has worked for the waste disposal company for ten years, “they fire people all the time”, and she fears that he will be next, leaving their family with no source of income. Although she has tried her hand at small business before by selling ice cream out of her house, she feels that these petty ventures only give you the ability to barely scrape money together. Being functionally illiterate, Angie expresses feeling like she was constantly “rompiendo la cabeza” (“beating her head against the wall”) trying to come up with ways to supplement her husband’s income that did not require her to read or do much math. As we spoke her face screwed up in pain several times. She had been suffering from chronic pain in her legs and feet for almost a decade, which severely limited her ability to do physically demanding tasks. She lamented the fact that she could not even stand at the counter to prepare food and often had to sit at the table and enlist her children to help her. Angie’s anxiety about the
longevity and reliability of her husband’s job was exacerbated by the fact that she felt that she was intellectually and physically incapable of gaining employment or initiating her own successful small business.

Others also expressed frustration at not being able to contribute to their household’s income. Blanca, a middle-aged woman with seven children, had opened her first food stand only in the past year and reflected on her own experiences staying at home. She argued that she had always wanted to work but that her husband never allowed her to get a job before.

“I like to be doing business, not sitting around not doing anything. Nothing more than getting up to sit back down—I struggle so much with the children, I struggle with the housework, the chores in the house, with tending to my husband and all of that…With the little that there is that I can help him with…so that I don’t have to just sit here while he’s the only one putting food on the table”.

It is notable that Blanca devalues her own domestic labor as “doing nothing”, while also describing the toil of housework. Women in Batey La Luisa almost never stop working. It can take hours or even days to do laundry, especially if unexpected rains come and drench the drying clothes. Even though some people own small washing machines, most do not trust that it fully cleans the clothes and so, many begin by handwashing everything before putting it through the washer. There are no dishwashers or even sinks to clean plates and cups. Residents must fill two large bowls with water, one for scrubbing and one for rinsing, to clean all the dishes. Living so close to nature (including the chickens that walk through the house regularly) means that dirt tracked through the house must be swept and mopped on a daily basis. And without functional refrigerators, there can be no leftovers to make women’s jobs easier the next day. Every day they must cook every meal. Despite the immense effort and time women invest to maintain the
household, many of them, including Blanca, believe that waged labor is what counts as work. Despite the fact that she is actually the person “putting food on the table” every day, she claims that her husband is doing everything to maintain the household.

Blanca was not the only woman that undervalued unpaid domestic labor. In a discussion with two young women whose husbands were currently employed, they expressed their desire to earn their own income and their frustration with being unable to work outside of the home. Both had young children, under the age of 1 year old, and expressed desires to go back to school and find employment. The first woman, Mireily, lamented the fact that she could not rely on her husband to help her pay for schooling (so that she could find work) even with his current job because it did not pay well enough. “Even though my husband can help me…there are times when…I say [to him]: ‘I need money today’, and he doesn’t have any”. Similar to Angie, Mireily felt anxiety and frustration about her family’s lack of financial security. “Us women need to have our own sources of income! Because, you never know. Your husband could leave you one day and then how would you take care of your children”? This was not an unheard-of notion among women in the batey. Many couples in rural Dominican Republic are not married by law but are rather joined in an union libre, or “free union”, and separation is a common occurrence (Baud, 1997; Raynolds, 2002).

Mireily’s friend, Estefania, whose tiny house we sat in front of as we chatted, asserted that, in order to set a good example for her young son, she wanted to get an education in law. She did not want her son to see her “doing nothing” all day. Although Estefania maintained the household and conducted all of the domestic chores, she did not see her labor as a financially valuable contribution. Estefania was poor even in comparison with others in the batey. Her house

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23 In this study sample, 16 individuals reported being in a “free union”, while only 5 individuals reported being legally married. The rest were single.
was only 9 feet long and about 6 feet wide and was made of thin, flimsy wooden boards placed directly on the dirt rather than on a concrete floor. It was prone to flooding during storms and caused a rotting smell to fill the tiny space. Holes in the wood were large enough that animals like rats frequently invaded her kitchen and ate through her small bags of rice.

Despite her immense poverty, loyalty to her fellow women kept her from starting her own small business. When encouraged by Mireily to open a food stand out of her house, Estefania lowered her voice and gestured behind her: “I can’t open a cafetería (food stand) with Blanca right there! I’ll have to make do with the heladería (ice cream business)”. Estefania made small batches of ice cream that she sold out of her house for 5 pesos (about $.10 USD) which she said helped her to buy formula for her baby. She frequently told me that the number of ice creams that she sells determines whether her son will get to wear diapers during the week or if he would do without.

Women who had already separated from their husbands eeked out a living on child support and sometimes engaged in petty commercial ventures like Estefania. One woman relying solely on child support for her income stated that: “Two or three times a week I find a need to work” [emphasis in original recording] in order to cover basic necessities for herself and her children. However, childcare and domestic duty was the reason most often cited by women for why they could not work, especially outside of the batey. Even if the women had family members to care for their children while they were gone, they worried that their children would not receive the proper care that they felt they could give them. Mireily, the young mother who wanted to have her own source of income, argued that:

“All after having children, a mother thinks only of them [the children]. Even though I could leave my son with a family member…it just doesn’t feel...
the same. If your child is sick, all you do is worry. If my son is sick and I cannot be there with him, I feel terrible”.

For Mireily, there is a sense of guilt of leaving your child with someone else while you work. She, like many women in the batey, felt that not having a livelihood was still better than leaving her child to be cared for by someone else. Moreover, for women that lack legal status, leaving the batey is not even an option.

For Haitian women without documents, their reliance on spouses for income is emotionally and mentally exhausting. Similar to Angie and her fears that her husband may lose his job, Haitian immigrants without papers face the added fear of deportation. Roseline, a Haitian woman who had arrived to the batey two years prior with her husband expressed immense frustration with not being able to work while he risked deportation by going out to work to provide for their family. She, like many other women, argued that jobs for women simply were not available in the batey. In order to find work, you must leave and go to the city. Although she would like to go to the city to work, she is afraid of being picked up by immigration. This was a fear commonly expressed by Haitian immigrants and one that was not quite corroborated by interviews with key informants. While discrimination as well as more limited access to goods and services in the city was common for Haitian immigrants or darker-skinned Dominicans, actual deportation rates, according to key informants, were not as high as people feared. However, fear alone, however real or imagined it may be, is a massive barrier to job opportunities for Haitian immigrants living in the batey, adding an additional emotional and mental aspect to the precarity of their situations in the Dominican Republic.

Roseline has a sickly two-year old daughter who she often has to send with documented neighbors to go to a clinic outside of the batey. “If her father and I both get deported, then there
will be no one left to take care of her”. In contrast with Haitian-Dominican women who felt guilt at leaving their children for too long with another family member while they worked outside of the *batey*, most Haitian immigrants did not have any kin on whom to rely if they were forcibly deported. The panic of potentially abandoning their children with no one left to care for them generally keeps Haitian women at home, regardless of how desperate their financial situation is.

Some women try to find work where they can. The only waged work observed during fieldwork in which Haitian women took part was guava harvesting. In contrast with the Haitian-Dominican women who argued that women could not get jobs in agriculture, Haitian women appeared to have picked up this work without much effort, indicating that perhaps this kind of employment was simply less desirable and only for the most desperate individuals. This hypothesis appears to be confirmed by the employment data in Table 3, which shows that almost twice the number of Dominican-born individuals (42%) as compared to Haitian-born individuals (23%) reported having no job currently, perhaps demonstrating that more Dominican-born women are able to stay at home because they have financial support from someone else.

While a lack of documents prevents many Haitian women from pursuing work out of fear, societal discrimination towards Haitians or those even perceived to be Haitian (people with darker-skin) may also impact ability to gain employment, regardless of legal status. In speaking with one young Haitian-Dominican woman, Nephtalie, she told me about her most recent endeavor to find a job. The following excerpt is from my field notes:

“In an attempt to find work, she contacted the capital city temp agency via Whatsapp 15 days ago. Based on her last name, they asked her if she was foreign and asked her to send photos of herself. Since she sent the photos, she has not
received word from the agency. She believes this to be because of her skin tone, even though she is documented. ‘They don’t like to hire Haitians’, she said”.

Nephtalie’s reference to herself as Haitian, despite having been born in the Dominican Republic and holding Dominican citizenship, reveals the deeply embedded prejudices inherent in Dominican society, particularly the concept of “anti-haitianismo” (anti-Haitianism). The mere association with a Haitian background makes her ineligible for a job as a domestic worker and further limits who opportunities for financial security.

It is clear from these interviews that many women felt a desire to not rely on husbands for their livelihoods. However, nearly every woman I spoke with cited domestic duty as the primary barrier for their entry and ability to stay in the job market. Women wanted enough flexibility in their jobs that they could take care of their children and not fear losing their job if they needed to take a day off to take their child to a doctor’s appointment, for instance. Many felt that the kinds of jobs available to them currently were too insecure for them to risk taking time off every now and then. Education was commonly argued to be “the way out” towards a “better life” and a “better job” that would give women the flexibility to fulfill their dual roles. One young woman asserted that “If you are not academically prepared [educated], you cannot find a good job”. Most women I spoke with were either in school paying for a few classes at a time in order to find more specialized and stable jobs or had dreams of attending school and simply had no time and/or money to do so.

However, the aspiration for higher education was one almost entirely reserved for Haitian-Dominican women. Without proper documentation you cannot gain access to higher education in the Dominican Republic (Wucker, 2015). Only Yamila, the Haitian-born woman I spoke with about her experience as a domestic worker, had been able to get documents.
However, she attained these illegally under a false name in order to attend her university. It was also with these documents that she was able to buy property including land, a motorbike, and a cellphone. According to key informant interviews, this was a fairly common practice if you could gather the money to pay for it. But for most poor Haitian women this was not the reality. With no documents they fear even leaving the batey to find work to pay for legal documents and, as a result, remain stagnant in their poverty.

Work for men

While men’s employment in the batey is more diversified than that of the women, men tend to work more than one job at a time and switch jobs regularly. Most men argued that the way to find work was to “know people”. Social linkages are crucial to finding a job, especially when the nature of much of the work that they do is very fleeting, such as day labor. Because many of the Haitian-born batey residents have only been living in the Dominican Republic for a few months to a few years, they do not have the same social networks as the Dominican-born residents and therefore struggle to find consistent employment.

Wilner, an undocumented Haitian-born father of four children, has four sources of income currently. Only one of these jobs, as a security guard, has fixed hours. The rest of the jobs required him to use the few social connections he has built since he moved to the Dominican Republic to search for employers. When asked for how long he had been working in construction, he replied: “Well, if there’s a person who is building a house, and they are looking for people to work, then you work a month, or maybe a week, or…whatever shows up”.

Because the work that Wilner has found is in mostly in temporary jobs such as construction and agriculture, he is constantly on the lookout for new jobs and does not maintain a stable source of income.
“If you don’t work for one day, you don’t get paid. Sometimes you have to force yourself to go to work, even if you feel bad, so that you can earn money…Sometimes you only make enough to pay the gas for the motorcycle”.

Wilner says that sometimes he goes a whole day without eating or he walks an hour to his job as a security guard instead of paying to put gas in his motorcycle so that there will be enough money to feed his children. He expresses constant anxiety and stress about not knowing where his next paycheck will come from and, particularly, how long it will be until the next payday arrives.

Desperation for work and linguistic barriers (in the case of recent Haitian migrants) often lead people to accept any work that they can get. As they make more connections, some are able to transition to more stable forms of work. Tifre, a former day laborer, recounted meeting his current employer for whom he has now been working for two years:

“I work very hard, so I never have trouble finding work. One day when I was working construction my (current) boss was there. He saw me and asked someone ‘Who is that man? I want him to work for me’. They told him, ‘That’s Tifre’. And since that time I have been working on his farm”.

Tifre was adamant that, if you work hard and prove that you are a good worker to potential employers (essentially showing merit), you will not have any trouble finding a job. Although this argument seemed accurate in his case, it was not the reality for many others who worked multiple jobs to achieve a livelihood, like Wilner, or even for more educated batey residents.

Men’s insistence that social ties were the most crucial factor at attaining good work was a source of pride for those who had more connections and an injustice for those lacking key social relationships, or sometimes both. Bryan, a Haitian-Dominican man who had attained a job as a
government employee, boastfully spoke of his college degree and his many friendships and connections in the federal and local governments. One of these connections was his friendship with a municipal congresswoman for whom he had supposedly drummed up many votes amongst community members. He currently works for the Ministry of Public Health and previously worked in the Ministry of the Environment. Bryan alternated between pridefully sharing his many accomplishments and listing his important relationships to soberly discussing all of the poverty experienced in the batey.

“There is no work here. Women have to go to the capital to work in other family’s homes and men work as security guards. Everyone has to leave the batey to find work”.

Bryan recognized the desperate need for jobs in his community and explained it as “the politics of employment”. “If you do not have friends in the government, you cannot get a job. If you want work, you have to know people”. He was careful, however, to not directly link his own success to his relationships to more powerful individuals. Bryan, like many others, linked secure employment to the number and quality of social relationships you have. Kennedy, another long-term resident of the batey originally born in Haiti, had a much harsher interpretation of the apparent nepotism or corruption in the labor sector:

“Everything in this country goes to the highest bidder. Los jurados se venden.

(“The jury is rigged” in Spanish).

For Kennedy, most people did not have a chance at a better job or upward mobility because they lacked the money to buy their status. This was especially true for Haitian immigrants.

Immigration status and a lack of documents were the principal concerns of every Haitian-born batey resident, and their precarious legal statuses shaped their work and personal lives. For
many, it is the main reason why they felt they could not find better jobs. “There have been many times I’ve been offered work, but when they ask you for documents…well, they don’t accept you because of that [not having documents]”. Wesley, a guava harvester, has been looking for steady work for two years and has not been successful, which he explains by his lack of documentation. He went further and firmly declared: “In a country without papers, you are nothing”. Without papers, Wesley was denied work by employers and felt that there was little hope that he would find work. When asked why he hadn’t applied for residency, his answer was simple: money. To apply for citizenship, he was often told, it cost around $20,000RD (approximately $400USD). At one point, Wesley says, he nearly fell victim to a scam in which a supposed lawyer demanded $40,000RD to file for citizenship on his behalf. Shortly afterward, Wesley had attempted to purchase fake papers, but those also proved too costly.

The price of papers pushed many poor immigrants out of the running for application, but not all. Mickey, a young, precocious Haitian man who was providing for himself and his young, pregnant wife, had purchased his papers a year prior to our interview. Many people in the batey did not even know his real name since he went by his fake identity as often as possible to maintain the guise of legality. As described in the section on employment relationships, Mickey has an extremely insecure agricultural job. However, despite his desires to gain more stable work elsewhere, he feared leaving the batey at the risk of being deported, despite having (illegal) documentation. The price of applying for formal documentation is not only monetary, but social. One man said that he could go to the capital to get papers but he’s too afraid to leave in case immigration grabs him. The fear of deportation is pervasive. One Haitian man who is currently working and does not have papers said: “In a couple of months immigration could come and grab
me. I don’t know when that day could come”. The uncertainty and unpredictability of Dominican law enforcement officials keeps Haitian migrants on edge.

Fear of deportation is not an unwarranted one. In the batey, immigration vans and national police vehicles were observed making rounds at least once a week supposedly for regular community safety patrol. But they do not make residents feel safe. Rather, they have the exact opposite effect. Community members feel anxiety or even annoyance that the government is watching them. In the past, the Dominican government has conducted several rounds of mass deportations of Haitians from the country; the most recent time being 2013 after a constitutional change left thousands of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in the Dominican Republic stateless (Wucker, 2015; Joint Submission, 2018).

A colmado owner, Jean, recounts his experience being uprooted from Batey La Luisa for the first time when he was 9 years old in 1991. Despite having lived in the batey since he was an infant, he and his family fled back to Haiti “voluntarily” before they could be forced to leave by immigration that was picking up groups of Haitians and dropping them off at the Haitian-Dominican border. His use of the word “voluntary” to describe their hasty departure from the Dominican Republic belies the emotional toll of being forced to leave one’s home and the economic burden of losing any sources of income that have been gained. Jean’s mother had managed to start up a small food stand a few months after they arrived in the batey the first time and his stepfather had a steady agricultural job nearby. When they finally returned to the community 2 years later, his parents were forced to start from scratch. The threat of deportation instills a fear and deep feelings of insecurity among Haitian migrants, even when they have managed to attain steady sources of income.
Despite the hardships, fears of deportation, and difficulty achieving stable employment, Haitian men were adamant that life in the Dominican Republic was favorable to life in Haiti. Mickey claimed to never have gone “more than 15 days without getting paid” in some form, even when he had been laid off from his job at the agricultural processing plant. Whereas in Haiti as a middle school teacher at a private school he went two to three months without receiving pay from the equally as poor parents of his students.

Men tend to rely on their social connections to find work. For Haitian-born men without papers, they face the added challenge of achieving residency or some other form of regularized status before being able to find more secure forms of employment. In comparison with women whose employment opportunities were shaped by their domestic roles, men rarely mentioned their children unless directly questioned on the topic, demonstrating the continuing traditional gendered division in labor. Both men and women argued that the best way to find stable and higher paying jobs is to migrate to other areas such as the capital or resort zones like Punta Cana. However, men are more likely to migrate than women, as women feel restricted by the needs of their children, particularly Haitian immigrant women who fear abandoning their children if they are deported.

5. Precarity of place: Worries beyond the workplace

“al desnudo le llega todo menos ropa” -Spanish saying

(“The naked man receives everything, except clothing”)

Precarity for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic extends beyond employment situations and into their everyday lives. Fears of deportation, racism and xenophobia, and gendered divisions of labor have already been described as having a profound effect on batey residents’ feelings of security and ability to find employment. For Haitian-
Dominican women and Haitian immigrants, these factors may preclude them from finding work in the first place. However, in addition to influencing work opportunities and challenges for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans, these factors also have important impacts on their well-being and sense of belonging in the Dominican Republic.

The *batey*’s isolation from cities with a larger range of job opportunities and the lack of investment of public funds and resources, coupled with discrimination towards Haitians and their descendants exacerbates the immense poverty experienced by *batey* residents. Although the *batey* is a legal municipality and is represented in Dominican government, they do not have any of the amenities that a municipality is supposedly guaranteed. Both the water system and the electricity were installed by Dominican NGOs several years before prior. That being said, *batey* residents did not have to pay for electricity or water expenses, which many claimed to be one of the main reasons why they did not move out the community. The cost of living in the *batey* is low, but so is the quality of life.

According to a few mothers, the politicians that represent the district where the *batey* is located had been promising to build an elementary school and a baseball field for years and had never done so. Instead, all of the children go to schools located in other towns. During the last month of my fieldwork, political candidates and their campaign staffers began to descend on the *batey*. Sometimes they held small rallies at the community pavilion to drum up support and conducted raffles where they gave away items as big as a refrigerator. One afternoon while I was sharing coffee with an old Haitian woman named Guerlande on her front porch, we began to see groups of people walking over to the pavilion which was in front of her house. She apologized to me, saying that she had forgotten that there was a rally today. I asked her if the rally was for
someone she was going to vote for. Guerlande, a very serious older woman, cracked a smile.

“Oh, I don’t vote. I just go for the free stuff”.

This was the attitude of many batey residents. Jean, the colmado owner, told me that politicians: “venden sueños y después, cuando ganan, ni pasan por aquí” (“They sell us dreams and then, when they win, they don’t even come around here” in Spanish). Many felt disillusioned by the Dominican politic system and described it as “corrupt” and that politicians “don’t even do anything”. They argued that they had been “neglected” and “forgotten” by their government and, like Guerlande, did not even bother voting. After being approached by a group of young campaign staffers from the capital while she grated coconut for coconut rice, Lourdes, a middle-aged Haitian-Dominican woman, commented to me:

“The law in the United States is made for justice. Here, the law is created to make money”.

Lourdes felt that money was the way to get ahead and that if you were poor, you did not matter to politicians. But her opinion also extended to other areas of life for her and the other batey residents. “Some doctors won’t even see you if you don’t have papers. That happened to one of my friends”. A friend of Lourdes sitting nearby chimed in: “Yeah! And if you have dark skin, they treat you badly, too”. Both Lourdes and her friend feel that institutions such as government and even healthcare are not meant for people like themselves. They do not receive equal consideration when compared with their documented, lighter skinned compatriots. One of the most widely cited examples of this racial and xenophobic injustice was that of not being able to even purchase SIM card for one’s phone without a cédula (Dominican identification card). This is an illegal practice, but one that people argued happened frequently to individuals that store
employees or owners believed to be Haitian. Mickey, the young Haitian man who had purchased fake papers, stated:

“There are Dominicans that are racists. Not just towards Haitians. There are white Dominicans that don’t want anything to do with black Dominicans”.

Mickey identifies a key social issue in the Dominican Republic—that of racial discrimination and its role in the stratified opportunities people have based on the color of their skin. Tifre, the same Haitian man who claimed that hard work was the deciding factor in finding secure employment, relented later in his interview and told me that “Being black is harder”, not only when it comes to getting a job, but also in daily social interactions. People were afraid of him and he just interacted with other Haitians instead or building more bonds with Haitian-Dominicans or ethnic Dominicans. The color of Mickey and Tifre’s skin automatically disqualified them for many opportunities as darker skin is associated with an inferior status. Even with fake documents, Mickey was still working a job in which he got systematically laid off every couple of months and he was afraid to leave the batey. For those lacking documented status, there are even greater limitations to their movements, decisions, and opportunities. An irregular immigration status, as previously discussed, keeps Haitian immigrants with improper or no documentation in informal forms of work and curbs their access to resources like SIM cards and bank loans.24

In addition to an even more limited access to resources than their Dominican born neighbors and fears of deportation mentioned above, a sense of isolation pervades Haitian

24 Many Dominicans use bank loans to be able to build their own homes. Without access to loans, people must rent or live in a “borrowed” (“prestada”) home. In the DR, there is an informal system of house lending by which a homeowner lends the use of a supplementary home, free of charge, to another individual or family. Whenever the homeowner desires, they may request that the inhabitants vacate the home. 30% of Haitian-born residents interviewed live in borrowed homes, whereas only 7% of Dominican-born residents live in borrowed housing. Living in a borrowed home is even more precarious than renting since there is generally no lease and no formal tenant rights and the owner could request for tenants to leave at any time.
migrants’ experiences in the batey, particularly for Haitian women. Although they clarify that other residents are kind to them and they have never experienced outright conflict with any resident, they do not feel as though they are truly part of the batey. This is in contrast with their male counterparts who all express, at least in the interviews, a sense of belonging in the community (although not in the larger Dominican society). The gender differences in feelings of assimilation may be due to the amount of socialization each group attains. While men are often out of the house working and interacting with other batey residents, women are nearly always inside the home.

Female Haitian immigrants’ social interactions tended to be quite insular and were often limited to their immediate neighbors, family members, or close friends. Haitian men, on the other hand, often interacted with community members outside of their immediate social circle. Although many of these women felt that the needs of their children were the principal reason why they stayed at home, they also expressed cultural barriers to their socialization. Some voiced nostalgia for their homes and friends in Haiti and lamented the linguistic barriers between them and batey residents who had been in the Dominican Republic for a longer period of time or were born in country.

Jiliet, a young mother with four children, frequently told me about the “misè” (misery/suffering) and the boredom that she felt every day staying at home while her husband worked. She only spoke a few words of Spanish and because all of her children were under the age of 7, she could not leave the house to socialize often. When I visited Jiliet I would tend to her infant daughter while she finally took a moment to bathe or fix her own hair, which she normally kept twisted into small buns on her head because it was the easiest and fastest solutions to keep it out of the way while she did her domestic duties. While she groomed herself, she told me stories
about what life was like in Haiti when her and her husband still had their small farm, how she lived across the street from her mother, and how she knew all of her neighbors. Here, she lived in a half-burnt down old church with other immigrants that she met when she arrived. Her and her husband shared one room and one bed with their four children. She barely knew anyone and did not have any family to help her with the children. She dreamed of returning to Haiti. The only time she felt any relief was when she went to church. In the batey, services are conducted in both Spanish and Haitian Creole and her husband sometimes led the congregation in religious songs in Creole.

Esther, a young woman without children, expressed her misè in terms of differences in identity with those in the batey. When asked if she felt a sense of belonging the community, Esther stated: “No. Because I am Haitian. And everyone else is Dominican”. Although many in the batey were ethnically Haitian and spoke Creole, Esther felt that she could not connect with them socially or culturally. Instead, she sat on the front porch of her house every day staring out at the road and watching people pass by. Occasionally she would go to visit some of the other Haitian women, like Jiliet, and she was participating in the Spanish literacy program “Quisqueya Aprende Contigo” (mentioned above). However, she felt embarrassed by her incomplete and broken knowledge of Spanish and inhibited by the cultural disconnect she experienced between herself and her more socially embedded neighbors.

Nearly all of the Haitian immigrant women I spoke with indicated an intense feeling of boredom and a desire to be doing something else with their time. They used the word misè often to describe their situation but were careful to distinguish the suffering they felt in the batey with the suffering that they experienced back in Haiti. In Haiti the misery sprung from hunger, poverty, and desperation. In the Dominican Republic, they still live in poverty but feel devoid of
social interaction. Only two immigrants expressed real desires to go back to Haiti one day, while most demonstrated a kind of resignation that they would continue living in the Dominican Republic indefinitely because “_Nan Ayiti, pa gen anyenn_” (“In Haiti, there is nothing” in Creole).

A lack of resources due to relative isolation and government negligence along with societal discrimination and feelings of solitude keeps _batey_ residents in a perilous living situation. Faced with a dearth of options, community members must take it upon themselves to “make it work” and keep one another from falling off the precipice in greater poverty.

*Adapting to precarity*

> “*Vivimos de nuestra propia inteligencia*”

(“We live off our own ingenuity” in Spanish. Or, necessity is the mother of invention.)

Despite living in abject poverty, most _batey_ residents have not considered leaving the community (though this appears to be changing within the youngest generations). There is a sense of security in the _batey_ because residents can rely on extensive family member networks and friends for support. The various forms of mutual aid and support was most often referred to as “*convivencia*”. “*Convivencia*” literally meanings cohabitation, living together, or coexistence, but in Spanish it has a much deeper meaning that entails a reciprocal, communal lifestyle. People spoke of the “unity” of living together and being able to count on others if they needed help.

This _convivencia_ was obvious in even the smallest interactions such as people bringing over hot cups of coffee and plates of food to their elderly neighbors who were unable to take care of themselves, or more substantial instances of mutual aid such as documented residents taking their undocumented neighbors’ children to the clinic when they needed medical attention.

Additionally, _colmados_ extend credit to extremely poor residents to give them more time to pay for food.
Facing a lack of formal institutions (particularly banks) in the *batey*, residents have set up their own savings groups. As mentioned above, the lack of banks is particularly troublesome for those receiving their incomes in cash. With no secure methods for safeguarding one’s money, the only options available are to hide money in your home—which runs the risk of being stolen or ruined in a storm—or joining a savings group. There were several active savings groups in the *batey*, in which group members would participate in various rounds of savings called a “*san*”. Every week or couple of weeks, members give a pre-determined amount of cash (i.e., ~200 pesos each) to the savings group leader. They may also add more as a tip to the leader for coordinating the group. At the end of each “*san*” (generally after a few months), one person, determined by a rotating list of the group members, would be allowed to take out their money or request additional funds as a loan from the group. After the next “*san*”, they must pay back the amount that they borrowed to the collective fund so that someone else may use it. Each group has their own norms and rules, but this was the general mode of operation. These kinds of groups have been documented in the Dominican Republic for decades and provide important savings and income opportunities for rural residents (Baud, 1997). However, while innovative and helpful, the lack of secure institutions available for rural residents demonstrates how community members feel that they must rely on one another for survival, rather than on the government or other service-providing institutions or businesses.

One of the most compelling instances of *convivencia* observed was a women’s group that met nearly every day to discuss job opportunities and needs in the community. Often these group meetings were comprised mostly of younger Haitian-Dominican women with children, although some Haitian immigrant females occasionally stopped by. Yesenia, a very intelligent young woman working for a local Christian non-profit, seemed to lead the group and was often
proposing new ideas to help out her fellow women. One of the plans was a childcare pact, in which the women would, on a rotating basis, take care of one another’s kids if one of the others wanted to go out one weekend night or if they needed to go to the doctor’s or some other appointment and did not want to bring their children along. The women would not charge one another for taking care of the children since it was a mutual group. I saw this group activated multiple times for a variety of circumstances. However, this group was not meant to act as a means of regular childcare so that the other women might work outside of the batey. That kind of childcare was the responsibility of each woman’s family members when necessary, although, as mentioned above, many women felt guilty about leaving their children for extended periods of time with family members.

*Convivencia* (or *konbit* in Creole) amongst Haitian immigrants looked different than that among Haitian-Dominicans. Despite living in the same community, there was an obvious separation or barrier to Haitian-Haitian Dominican mutual aid. As Jiliet and Esther described, there was a distance between themselves and Haitian-Dominicans in the batey. They did not feel that they could ask for the same kinds of assistance with their children or other domestic necessities from Haitian-Dominicans as they could with Haitian immigrants. The need among Haitian immigrants was often subjectively much more desperate and urgent than that of Haitian-Dominicans because they did not have the material nor social resources to support them.

For instance, several of the Haitian immigrants lived in crumbling buildings just beyond the reach of the batey water system. In many cases, they had to wrap their dirty clothing up in bedding and carry it on their heads to the house of one older Haitian woman who lived near the water source in order to do their laundry, bringing their children along so that they could keep an

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25 This has also been documented in banana *bateyes* by Kimberly Wynne (2014). Further explanation is given in the background section.
eye on them as they washed. This process often took several days because the water would occasionally stop for a few hours at a time. Haitian immigrants also relied more often on (relatively) wealthier batey residents for small jobs to earn enough money for food or to repay a kindness done for them. My own host family often gave extra food to our Haitian neighbors or drove their children to the clinic on their behalf. Those same neighbors could be found around our home the next day chopping wood or doing other small tasks for the family.

Survival in this poverty-stricken batey requires the cooperation of all residents. Despite the lack of resources and job opportunities, many remain in the community for its sense of familiarity, security, and reciprocity. It is still comparably cheaper to live in a batey than it is to live elsewhere, and Haitian migrants feel better shielded from the threat of deportation than they would in a city. Residents rely on one another and “conviven juntos” (“coexist together” in Spanish). Every act of reciprocal assistance is a way to keep each other from falling off the precipice. Batey residents very lives are precarious, and they are constantly battling with poverty and finding new ways to survive.

6. Summary

Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in bateyes in the Dominican Republic struggle to survive in immensely precarious situations. Experiences of irregular and insecure forms of employment are exacerbated by a lack of resources and institutional support, discrimination, and irregular legal status. The challenges and opportunities to achieving secure employment are further mired by individual identity. Men are more consistently able to find employment both inside and outside of the batey when compared with women. Female residents are often limited by domestic responsibilities as well as gendered ideas of labor which hinder the kinds of job opportunities available to them. Employment opportunities are further reduced based on ethnicity
and legal status. Haitian immigrants feel limited to jobs within or near the *batey* for fear of deportation and societal rejection based on race and Haitian identity. Similar to Haitian-Dominican men and women, men are more often employed in waged work, while women are responsible for domestic labor such as childrearing and cooking.

Strategies for attaining work also differ based on gender, ethnicity, and legal status. While men regardless of ethnicity and legal status argue that social networks are the key to finding employment, women argue that higher education is the best method for finding the kinds of jobs that pay well and afford them the flexibility to fulfill both domestic duties as well as job responsibilities. However, the kind of support that *batey* residents receive in the community also influence and impact their ability to attain “good” jobs. *Bateyes* face a lack of resources and institutional support such as public funding for water, electricity, good roads, and schools and a lack of jobs ever since the closure of sugar cane plantations in the early 2000s. To make up for this lack of outside support, *batey* residents engage in an elaborate and creative practice of “*Convivencia*”, or reciprocal living and mutual aid to meet their needs. The intersectionality of the different aspects of an individual’s identity massively impact the kinds of job opportunities available to them, the strategies they use to find employment, and their experiences of everyday precariousness living in the *batey*. 
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

1. Overview

The case of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic provides a vivid example not only of precarity in employment, but a deeply emotional sense of insecurity in residents’ daily lives. An intersectional precarious work framework can help to analyze and explain batey residents’ complex experiences of insecure employment by identifying the social and institutional (political and economic) challenges to achieving decent work. A lack of legal status, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and race, and a lack of access to resources in a rural, isolated place compounds and exacerbates experiences of precarious work, and perhaps just as importantly, precludes people from entering the labor market in the first place.

Often, precarious work is distinguished from the concepts “precarity” or “precariousness”. Precarious work analyzes the employment relationships of laborers, while precarity or precariousness has been used to describe a general social situation or feeling. In recent years scholars have moved to promote an intersectional analysis of precarious work by examining the role of individual identity such as gender (Vosko, 2000; Lawton, 2015; Mosoetsa et al, 2016), race (Bueno, 2014; Branch and Hanley, 2017), and legal status (Goldring and Landolt, 2011; Banki, 2013) in experiences of precarious work. This thesis considers the diverse aspects of individuals’ identities to show how one’s circumstances can exacerbate experiences of precarious work and also preclude her/him from gaining employment in the first place. In Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic, residents’ struggles to find work and keep it are differentiated based on gender, ethnicity, and legal status. These stratified employment experiences coupled with the pervasive informality and irregularity of many work opportunities further impact
everyday feelings of insecurity and precarity and create emotional burdens for batey residents. Often, residents must patch together a variety of income sources in order to create a livelihood. Finally, this thesis also complicates ideas of “good” and “bad” jobs in the theory of dual labor market segmentation (Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998; Browne and Misra, 2003) and shows how even seemingly stable jobs can be fraught with insecurity. Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates how aspects of individual identity interact and complicate experiences of precarity, by influencing not only the kind of work one attains, but also if and how they attain it, and, furthermore, how they adapt to insecure circumstances.

This discussion chapter begins by illustrating the precarious social and legal context in which Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans must attempt to make a living in the Dominican Republic. Next, it summarizes the opportunities for employment for residents in Batey La Luisa and demonstrates how even ostensibly secure jobs are precarious and unreliable and incite feelings of insecurity for both the workers and their families. Then, it discusses how batey residents adapt to their circumstances and come to rely on one another in order to survive. In conclusion, it presents the theoretical contributions of this thesis based on the patterns in precarity summarized in the previous sections.

2. The social context of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic

Haitians and their Dominican-born descendants face immense social and political discrimination in the Dominican Republic which impacts their sense of security and belonging in the country and influences the kinds of jobs they are able to attain and they ability to keep those jobs. The social concept of antihaitianismo (anti-Haitianism), which “justifies” discrimination towards Haitians generally based on a subjective categorization of “blackness”, relegates Haitians, those with Haitian descendancy, and even dark-skinned ethnic Dominicans to a lower
rung of societal standing (Bueno, 2015; Moya Pons, 1998; Riveros, 2014; Santos Ramírez, 2014). *Anti-haitianismo* designates those with darker skin tones and (presumed) Haitian ethnicity as “undesirable” inside the Dominican Republic.

Attempts to rid the country of ethnic Haitians have taken the form of mass rounds of deportations throughout the 20th century (Murphy, 1991; Raynolds, 2001, 2002; Doris, L. Personal interview, 2018), constitutional changes retroactively stripping birthright citizenship from children born of immigrants 2013 (leading to more mass deportations, including deportation of dark-skinned ethnic Dominicans) (Wucker, 2015; Blake, 2017; Petrozziello, 2018); and even physical violence, the most horrific being the slaughter of an estimated 30,000 or more Haitians in the 1937 Parsley Massacre (Wucker, 1999). Even Haitian-Dominicans, born and granted citizenship in the Dominican Republic, have their status and very existence in the country regularly questioned. The Dominican state’s stratified approach to citizenship and legality and the continuous threat of deportation create a feeling of “deportability” and “illegality” among Haitian-Dominicans (De Genova, 2005; Anderson, 2010). It is within this precarious, discriminatory and sometimes violent context that Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans must attempt to make a living and survive.

Here, Susan Banki’s (2013) framework of “precarity of place” succinctly describes how immigrants’ internal anxieties about potential external threats like deportation limit their employment opportunities and create a sense of insecurity not just because of precarious working conditions, but also because of precarious living situations (ie deportability). By understanding this context for Haitian migrants and Haitian-Dominicans, we can begin to see how precarious work is more than just the facts of employment; precariousness is a pervasive feeling of insecurity that impacts job opportunities and their ability to make a livelihood.
3. Intersectional trends in employment opportunities among *batey* residents

After the closure of the sugarcane plantation in Batey La Luisa in the early 2000s, the principal source of income for many Haitian workers disappeared, plunging residents into a deeper poverty than previously experienced. Since then, no large-scale employment opportunities in agriculture or other sectors have appeared and residents must often leave the community to find jobs (FLACSO, 2000; Doris, L. Personal interview, 2019). Haitian migrants, who had often found job stability and consistency in the sugarcane industry—albeit at low wages—and had established strong communities in the *bateyes* were forced to risk deportation by migrating to the city or make do with the few opportunities available in the *batey* or nearby (FLACSO, 2000; Silié et al, 2002; Rivero, 2014; Doris, L. Personal interview, 2019). Moreover, the local economy of the *batey* was not initially created to support a female role (Landry, 2013; Petrozziello, 2018). Women, who were previously excluded from paid work on sugarcane plantations and relegated to unpaid domestic labor roles (Landry, 2013), suddenly had to find a way to provide for their families, especially given the newly inconsistent wages of their spouses.

The employment opportunities amongst residents of Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic are limited and impacted by a range of factors including aspects of their individual identities. Differences based on gender, race and ethnicity, and legal status create intricate layers of experiences, often excluding certain *batey* residents from certain jobs altogether. Both women and Haitian migrants face unique barriers to finding and attaining decent, secure employment because they are often relegated to the limited kinds of jobs available in or near the *batey* itself. The most common sources of employment in and near the *batey* are agricultural labor, day labor, and small business, all of which provide inconsistent streams of income and irregular working hours. Most are also informal sources of employment as many individuals are contracted out to
different employers every day (if there is work available) or they are self-employed, which provide few to no social safety nets to fall back on.

Agriculture provides a mixed bag of employment opportunities, all of which are entirely exclusive to men—both Haitian and Haitian-Dominican. Three respondents reported working as “permanent” employees for agricultural companies or for Dominican owners of land nearby. However, none of these workers signed labor contracts and one young Haitian migrant (Mickey) reported being fired every couple of months and rehired after a one to two-week gap so that employers could avoid having to provide formal contracts for workers.

Some older male batey residents received small agricultural plots from the government after sugarcane plantation closures, but these do not provide enough income or sustenance to feed their families. There is also a crucial age factor which separates residents working on their own agricultural plots from those working as employees for larger agricultural farms or businesses. Nearly all of the residents who cultivate their own plots are older Haitians who used to work in the sugarcane industry. Their age has precluded them from finding employment as waged agricultural laborers and discriminatory bureaucratic processes have prevented many from receiving the pensions that they are owed from their years working on sugarcane plantations. Additionally, years of poverty and relegation to precarious forms of work based on racial discrimination and a lack of documents have prevented many of these older men and newer Haitian migrants from accumulating enough surplus income to be able to switch to the more profitable form of agriculture: livestock raising. Haitian-Dominicans are the near exclusive owners of pigs and cattle, which provide larger incomes from meat and milk sales. Agriculture provides a clear example of the divide between opportunities for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans, in which both young and old Haitian migrants are often relegated to irregular and
low-wage sources of employment or subsistence farming, while Haitian-Dominicans are able to accumulate monetary and material wealth to gain larger incomes through livestock agriculture.

One of the most common forms of employment for many Haitian migrants is day labor. As day laborers, Haitian migrants work on construction projects, landscaping, and occasionally agricultural jobs for employers in and near the batey. Staying close to the community means that there is a lower risk for deportation. However, this informal and irregular source of employment does not offer high nor consistent wages and leaves workers entirely at the whim of employers, spurring a pervasive sense of employment precarity (Valenzuela, 2003; Nelson et al, 2015). Several male Haitian migrants described the desperation they feel trying to make ends meet and feed their families. Wilner, a father of four children, stated that he sometimes went without food for the day or walked to work instead of using limited funds to purchase gasoline so that his children could eat instead. Another Haitian day laborer, Wesley, peddles together multiple jobs to keep his family afloat and hopes to one day get documentation so that he may leave the batey to search for work without fear of deportation.

The physically demanding nature of day labor keeps women from participating since many employers prefer male workers who they associate with greater strength and stamina. However, desperation for income does lead some female Haitian migrants to participate in the lowest paying form of day labor—that of guava harvesting. Although most Haitian-Dominican women claim that they cannot find work in agriculture or as day laborers due to gender discriminatory practices, several female Haitian migrants were observed harvesting guava throughout the summer, indicating a further ethnic division between female work opportunities. Many Haitian-Dominican women have extensive family networks in the batey and feel that they have others on whom to rely for a source of income. Meanwhile, female Haitian migrants often have smaller
social networks and are generally poorer than Haitian-Dominicans. Therefore, their desperation pushes them to take even the least desirable and lowest paying forms of work in the batey to make ends meet.

Finally, small business pursuits are an extremely common method for bringing in extra income, particularly for women. Because of traditional ideas of male and female gender roles, many women feel limited to work they can find in the batey which allows them to continue caring for children and the household (Baud, 1997, Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997). Small business ventures, which generally operate out of people’s homes, offer a balance between (paid) work and domestic responsibility (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997). Most small businesses provide only a small income to their owners, forcing those owners to rely on family members to provide supplemental financial support (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997). Similar to small business are colmados (small general stores) which are generally owned by men and provide necessary goods to batey residents every day. This is a crucial point and one that should not be overlooked. While colmados provide a daily income to their (mostly male) owners, small business owners, who are generally female, do not enjoy the same consistency in income. This illustrates an important gendered difference in precarity. Although men and women are engaging in similar forms of employment, men experience greater stability, while women’s incomes are less predictable.

There is also an ethnic hierarchy in who is able to run a small business. Haitian-Dominican women have greater social and monetary resources, which allow them to carve out a space in the tightknit, socially agreed upon barriers to business zones in the batey, as well as purchase fundamental goods to start up their businesses with surplus income. Female Haitian migrants are generally poorer than their Haitian-Dominican counterparts and rely on the low and inconsistent wages that their husbands earn (see agriculture and day labor above). Therefore, they do not have
the available surplus monies to purchase preliminary goods for their businesses. Furthermore, Haitian women, similar to Haitian-Dominican women, face the pressure to care for their children, but do not have the same social networks to provide support for them to be able to participate in waged work. Moreover, tight social networks in the *batey* dictate who can open a small business, of what kind, and where. Without the requisite social connections and surplus income, female Haitian migrants are unable to carve out a place in the *batey* economy. The only female migrant who had been able to accomplish this had lived in the *batey* for over twenty years and had established the necessary connections and accumulated little by little enough surplus income to break into the local market.

Ethnic and gendered hierarchies create barriers to entry in even the least desirable forms of work and push poorer and more marginalized groups into even greater situations of precarity. Traditional gender roles mean that women’s paid work opportunities are often dictated by the needs of their children, limiting them to the few (female-oriented) kinds of jobs available in the *batey* while requiring them to lean on spouses and family for support. The financial burden that this places on families creates anxiety for many women, but the majority feel that it is the most appropriate strategy for them to be able to balance work and domestic roles, similar to the findings in other studies on modern working mothers both in the Global North (Webber and Williams, 2008) and in the Global South (Espinal and Grasmuck, 1997; Lee, 2010).

Haitian migrants, many of whom are undocumented, express immense anxiety at the prospect of being deported and often do not risk leaving the *batey* to search for work. Male migrants often end up in short-term and inconsistent agricultural jobs or day labor, which pay little and have no job security. Haitian women, on the other hand, are less likely to find any work at all. This is not only because of marginalization based on their ethno-racial status and their gender, but also
because they tend to the lack the social networks to provide them with emotional and in-kind (monetary, childcare, other goods) support that would allow them to take greater risks to find employment. In contrast with Haitian-Dominican women who felt guilt at leaving their children for too long with another family member while they worked outside of the batey, most Haitian immigrants did not have any kin on whom to rely if they were forcibly deported. The panic of potentially abandoning their children with no one left to care for them generally keeps Haitian women at home, regardless of how desperate their financial situation is. As a result of their perceived “deportability” (Anderson, 2010) and “precarity of place” (Banki, 2013) because of social and political discrimination, Haitian migrants are often relegated to low-paying, irregular work or no work at all. Migrants’ struggles to find work also demonstrate a devaluation of Haitian labor, particularly dark-skinned and female Haitian labor (Bueno, 2015; Shenaz Hussein, 2015).

Finally, most of the jobs available for Haitian migrants and Haitian-Dominicans looking for work in or near the batey, are informal sources of employment. Being a part of the informal economy keeps individuals from being able to benefit from social security in the future and forces them to keep working well past general retirement age in order to survive (Guarnizo and Rodriguez, 2017; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Witteveen, 2017). This enduring informality and precarity is evidenced by the older former sugarcane workers still living in the batey who must make ends meet through subsistence farming and the support of their families.

**Stable jobs?**

“If you want a peaceful life, the batey is perfect. If you want progress, you must get out”. -

Yuleidy, young, female Haitian-Dominican batey resident
It is generally stated among batey residents that in order to find secure, higher wage employment, one must “get out” and leave the confines of the community. That being said, these relatively stable jobs are reserved for a particular set of batey residents—generally documented Haitian-Dominicans. Moreover, even relatively stable kinds of employment come with difficulties, both in relation to employment conditions and subjective feelings of insecurity. The majority of these jobs were as military members, security guards, government employees, educators, and domestic laborers, which many stated provide a good income and generally consistent hours, although they may not be the ideal or preferred source of employment.

The vast majority of the individuals working in these relatively stable jobs were Haitian-Dominican and had lived in the batey most, if not all, of their lives. Having legal documentation and “looking” Dominican (i.e.-lighter skinned) provide an upper hand for workers in the Dominican labor market. Indeed, some individuals expressed open anxiety about being discovered as being of Haitian descent. Samuel, a young Haitian-Dominican military member, shared his fear that any discovery of his ethnic background may lead to harassment on the job or even a loss of work. Another Haitian-Dominican woman, Nephtalie, spoke of how the mere presumption of Haitian ethnicity based on her skin color, precluded her from getting a job as a domestic laborer in Santo Domingo, despite being born in the Dominican Republic and having documentation. Similar to the women in Cruz Caridad Bueno’s (2015) study on precarious employment in Dominican urban centers, having dark skin (and the implications it has for assumed Haitian descendancy) pose an incredible challenge when looking for a stable job. Association with Haitian ethnicity or descendancy has real repercussions for batey members as they attempt to attain and maintain employment.
Within this ethnic hierarchy in job opportunities, there are clear gender barriers to attainment of jobs, as well. Again, traditional framing of gender roles influences the kinds of work available for men and women, relegating women to roles as caretakers and men to more physically demanding, *macho* jobs. Only women work as domestic laborers and while I did interview a female military member in the *batey*, it is much more common for men to gain employment as both military members and security guards. Furthermore, women must seek out these jobs outside of the *batey* while many men are able to find work more passively, generally through their usage of preexisting social connections. One security guard interviewed, Papo, shared how businesses nearby (but still outside of) the *batey* regularly “send recruiters to seek out young men” for work as security guards at nearby agricultural processing plants or small manufacturing operations. In this way, many young men have found jobs, whereas women must travel an hour or more to the capital city to solicit work at temp agencies and *esperar* (*to wait for* or *to hope for* in Spanish) a response.

Even once women have found work through a formal institution, many women experience a kind of informality in their employment status and responsibilities that has been commonly documented in domestic work (*ILO*, 2013; *Guarnizo and Rodriguez*, 2017; *Pereyra and Poblete*, 2018; *Blofield and Jokela*, 2018). Because the Dominican Labor Code does not require employers to provide written contracts to their employees, many workers are subject to the whim of their bosses (*Verité*, 2012). Some women, like Anyileidy, were regularly forced to work overtime at their jobs as domestic workers for no additional pay. Additionally, there is no guarantee of longevity in work because employment is based on the often-temporary needs of the employer. One woman described being let go with only a week’s notice after her employer decided to move without telling her. Although the Dominican Labor Code does have specific
guidelines detailing labor rights, breaks, vacation time, and time off (Labor Code, Book 1, Title 1, Article 4), this is no guarantee of employment security (Jokela, 2019). However, despite the injustice and inconsistency in working conditions for domestic laborers, it is often a “secure” back up for many women that cannot find decent work elsewhere since it is a highly feminized source of employment (Glenn, 1992).

Work in government positions and education appear to be more gender inclusive and equitable within the limited sample of batey residents interviewed. However, finding work in those sectors is based on an exclusive set of privileges, such as one’s social connections and education levels—things that many batey residents do not have because of their relative social isolation and lower levels of education due to lack of funds available to pay for schooling. Even once this work is attained, there is inconsistency in payment, requiring workers to find other jobs to supplement unsteady income streams. Three batey residents working in both government jobs and as educators, shared extreme examples of their income insecurity.

One male interviewee worked as a literacy educator for a government program and also as a security guard to supplement that income. The female respondent was also a literacy educator for a government program and ran several small businesses on the side. The other male respondent was a government public health employee who also raised and sold pigs to supplement his inconsistent income. All three residents detailed how they would often have to wait three months (sometimes up to six months) to receive payments via direct deposit from their government employers. Once the payments were finally received, they were not always the amount that employees were owed. Payment via direct deposit also requires residents to travel 45 minutes away to the nearest town with an ATM to take out money. Many residents do not have personal
transportation and have to take infrequent public buses. Additionally, for those with a physical
disability (such as the first male interviewee), this process is even more daunting and exclusive.

More consistent, higher-paying forms of employment are generally reserved for Haitian-
Dominican *batey* residents who have more social connections and are generally documented.
Past this ethnic hierarchy, traditional attitudes around male and female gender roles tend to
separate the genders into different kinds of work—with women as domestic workers and men as
military members or security guards. Methods of finding work also differ based on gender. Men
tend to have fewer difficulties in finding jobs both inside and near the *batey* because of greater
social connections as well as gender discriminatory attitudes that preclude many women from
attaining jobs in the first place.

Once work is attained however, there still exist difficulties in gaining job security. Despite
overcoming the ethnic barriers in attaining more “stable” employment, residents like Samuel
expressed anxiety about losing their job based on discriminatory attitudes toward those of
Haitian descent. Even for those *batey* residents who were born in the Dominican Republic and
hold Dominican citizenship, their very existence in the country is constantly questioned by
Dominican society, revealed through the jobs that they are allowed to take and the jobs that they
are able to keep. Additionally, traditional gender roles inhibit women’s ability to maintain their
jobs for long periods of time since many women feel pressure to stay at home with their children.
Finally, wages, while higher than those offered in other forms of work, may be inconsistent,
leading to income insecurity. These examples complicate the theory of dual labor market
segmentation by revealing how even seemingly “stable” jobs do not guarantee employment
security and by demonstrating how precarious work in the Dominican Republic has proliferated
across occupational sectors. This finding is similar to observations the proliferation of precarity
across sectors of work in the Global North (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Shankar and Sahni, 2017).

**Irregularity of employment**

A key characteristic of work for *batey* residents is the subjective feeling of insecurity that many Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans express based on the contingent and temporal nature of many of the jobs available to them. The mere threat of job insecurity creates immense emotional burdens for both workers and their families (Bobek et al, 2018). Insecurity in employment coupled with fears of deportation, experiences of discrimination, and sweeping poverty, create an all-encompassing sense of precarity (Banki, 2013; Torres et al, 2013, Preece, 2018). It spurs incredible frustration and anxiety for all, including many women who feel both a desire to engage in paid work to help their families financially and restricted due to gendered attitudes of labor and fears of deportation. Despite not experiencing the insecurity of employment first-hand, some women fear for the stability of their spouse’s livelihoods and the future financial security of their family. This second-hand sense of precarity is an important example to support my argument that a lack of current employment does not mean that an individual does not also experience precarious work. Instead, this second-hand experience is a clear facet of the precarious livelihoods that workers attempt to create.

This precariousness also prompts ingenuity and adaptation to difficult circumstances. In terms of labor, it means that many look for new or additional jobs to supplement their incomes using their social connections, making any linear description of resident employment difficult. Most women interviewed argued that education was the primary method to find better jobs in the future. However, *batey* residents also find ways to adapt that are unrelated to employment and not contingent upon waged work.
4. Adaptation to precarity

Regardless of the kind of job that one has, poverty is nearly universal in the *batey*. Decades of economic insecurity and social and political discrimination has produced an intergenerational poverty, which restrict new generations’ ability to move up the socio-economic ladder (Bueno, 2015). Despite being a formal municipality under Dominican law, the *batey* does not receive the same kinds of resources (like electricity, water systems, or schools) nor political representation that it is due. In order to cope with both precarious employment and precarity in everyday life, *batey* residents rely on one another for survival through a mutual system of *Convivencia* (communal living or mutual support/aid in Spanish).

**A moral economy?**

Moral economy has been explained by the critical author James C. Scott as a concept of justice and fairness in reciprocal relationships, both economic and social, primarily in peasant economies (Edelman, 2005). A lack of monetary and physical resources forces *batey* residents to establish relationships of mutual assistance in order to survive. Community created savings groups called “*san*” take the place of unavailable formal banking institutions. An informal women’s group shares waged work opportunities among its participants and has also established a childcare pact in which women take turns caring for one another’s kids to ease burdens on the mothers. Men and women use their social connections to find jobs both in and outside of the *batey*. And those with greater financial resources occasionally offer short-term jobs to their neighbors to help them feed their families.

As mentioned in a previous section, reciprocity also dictates who is able to establish small businesses in the *batey* and the locations of those businesses. This prevents any one person or family from accumulating an unequal surplus of income and keeps the local economy “fair”.
In this way, the *batey* economy is deeply embedded in social relationships and “who you know”. It mirrors the greater Dominican national economy in that connections and networks provide incredible economic benefit (i.e. the ability to find “good” work) to those who have them, and disadvantage to those that do not—a trend described by many *batey* residents. Both in and outside of the *batey*, Haitian migrants with fewer social connections struggle to find secure employment and are not as able to rely on their Haitian-Dominican neighbors for mutual aid because they feel that they do not have the relationships with those neighbors that are necessary to ask for favors. Indeed, one Haitian woman argued, that, “I am Haitian. And everyone else is Dominican”. Despite Haitian-Dominicans’ similar ethnic background to recent Haitian migrants, there was a palpable social divide between the two populations living in the *batey*. Instead, migrants tend to rely on one another within the greater social fabric of the *batey*, revealing a second tier to this supposed “moral economy”.

This is consistent with findings from Kimberly Wynne’s (2014) ethnography on Haitian and Dominican neighbors in banana *bateyes* which demonstrates how ethnic Dominicans distinguish themselves from Haitian migrants by establishing moral hierarchies and dominance, despite living in similar situations of poverty. This has important implications for Haitian migrants’ mental health while living in the *batey* and their perceived self-worth (Kaiser et al, 2015; Keys et al, 2015). Although most migrants admitted that living in the Dominican Republic is better than living in Haiti, there was a general feeling of *misè* (misery in Haitian Creole), especially among female migrants, because of the lack of social networks and support systems.

**Convivencia**

However, despite these internal divisions, the *batey* is a place of *Convivencia* that provides residents with both social and material support. Most residents describe the *batey* as a
place of unidad (unity) and tranquilidad (tranquility) in which they know they can rely on their neighbors and close kin networks to help them if they are struggling financially. It is also a much cheaper place to live than most urban locations where residents must pay for rent and utilities. In the batey, houses are built by hand and electricity and water services have been provided by NGOs at no cost to residents.

The batey is also a kind of safe haven for many Haitian migrants who feel too exposed to the possibility of deportation by living elsewhere. For this reason, most residents do not express a desire to leave the batey, despite its relative lack of resources and job opportunities. This has been documented among immigrant populations in the Global North, as well. Having established community ties with supportive networks, individuals may be less likely to want to move even if they will remain in a precarious employment situation (Preece, 2018). The potential risk of moving only to find more insecure, low-paid work is too great and, therefore, people either remain immobile (Preece, 2018) or engage only in temporary labor migration (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011; Radel et al, 2018). That being said, findings of fears of deportation in urban areas among Haitian batey residents are curious, given the large shift in Haitian migration from rural areas to cities in the Dominican Republic (Silié et al, 2002; Landry, 2013; ONE, 2017). More research needs to be done to provide a more robust analysis of the social reasoning behind migratory patterns.

5. Summary of findings

This thesis aimed to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What are the different kinds of livelihoods that Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans living in bateyes pursue?
- (2) How do livelihood practices and opportunities differ based on gender, ethnicity, and
immigrant status?

- (3) What are the political, social, and economic barriers to batey residents’ ability to make a livelihood?

- (4) How do they attempt to interpret, address and overcome these barriers?

The subsequent sections summarize the principal findings of this thesis and further present the theoretical contributions of the research.

**Patterns in precarity in Batey La Luisa**

The intersectionality of experiences relating to gender, ethnicity, and legal status among Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans impact who gets jobs, what kinds of jobs they are, and if/for how long they are able to keep those jobs. The incredible complexity of the intersectionality of batey residents’ experiences makes it impossible to generalize the situation for all batey members. However, the data do reveal patterns in precarity within my study sample.

Whereas men appear to have a more diverse array of opportunities for employment both inside and outside of the batey, women are generally beholden to the needs of their children and must modify their job search (and how long they remain in a job) based on domestic responsibilities. Traditional gender roles create masculine and feminine job opportunities. Men find employment in more physically demanding lines of work such as agriculture, day labor, security, or as military members. On the other hand, women feel that they are relegated to only a few areas of employment such as small business (which allows them to work from home and take care of their children) or domestic labor. Women’s experiences of discrimination in employment reveal a devaluation of women’s labor in the Dominican job market (Bueno, 2015). Additionally, the pressure to balance waged work and domestic responsibility limits the kinds of
jobs women feel they are able to take. Most of these sources of income require residents to expend a lot of energy in searching for jobs and esperando (waiting) for employment.

However, when considering ethnicity, race and legal status, this picture becomes blurred. Gender differentiation still plays an important, albeit secondary role, but ethno-racial distinctions and a lack of legal status make stable livelihood opportunities become more difficult to obtain. Haitian-born residents both documented and undocumented feel a kind of precarity based on fears of deportation and societal discrimination that prevent them from seeking work far away from the relative security of the batey. Even after having found more stable work, some Haitian migrants fear that “immigration could come any day”. This “precarity of place” (Banki, 2013) is pervasive and impacts individuals’ ability to both find work and maintain job security. These fears spur Haitians and their descendants to look for work based on what is available in and near the batey—which tend to be lower-paying, informal sources of employment. Moreover, being a part of the informal economy keeps individuals from being able to benefit from social security in the future and forces them to keep working well past general retirement age in order to survive (Guarnizo and Rodriguez, 2017; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Witteveen, 2017). This enduring informality and precarity is evidenced by the older former sugarcane workers still living in the batey who must make ends meet through subsistence farming and the support of their families.

Furthermore, undocumented Haitian women with children face a different kind of burden than documented, Haitian-Dominican women. While most Haitian-Dominican women are able to rely on spouses, extended family networks, or friends to support them when they have no personal source of income, Haitian women lack many of these connections. Moreover, a fear of deportation further inhibits their willingness and ability to search for work. Without the aforementioned social connections, Haitian women fear their children will be left behind with no
one to care for them. That being said, with their spouses generally making a meager wage, some Haitian women do engage in work that many Haitian-Dominican women claim is “unavailable” for them—such as guava harvesting within the batey. This demonstrates an important gender and migrant status divide in employment opportunities and, perhaps more importantly, choices.

**Theoretical contributions of findings**

The patterns in employment precarity presented above reveal the difficulties batey residents face in their search for a job, while on the job, and in keeping a job. It demonstrates how precarity is experienced at all levels of employment and differs based on an intersectional array of factors (Vosko, 2000; Browne and Misra, 2003; Mosoetsa, 2016; Branch and Hanley, 2017). Experiences of precarious work are differentiated based on individual identity and circumstances, but also differ within those circumstances.

More specifically it shows how, in rural areas in Dominican Republic, Haitian migrant’s job opportunities are limited (1) to the jobs found nearby—due to fears of deportation in other geographical areas; and (2) because of social discrimination based on ethnicity and legal status (specifically, a lack of documentation). It also demonstrates how women, particularly black women (Branch, 2007; Bueno, 2015), in the Dominican Republic experience a devaluation of their labor in the job market and feel forced to enter into feminized forms of work such as domestic labor to make ends meet. This is further complicated by the commonly cited need to balance waged work with domestic responsibilities such as childcare, which prevents many women from entering the labor market in the first place (Webber and Williams, 2008). Female Haitian migrants’ experience is combination of the aforementioned situations, since they experience discrimination based on both gender and race/ethnicity. Fear of deportation limits them to work in the batey while domestic responsibilities further restrict their ability to engaged
in waged work. However, relative poverty and a desperation drives some into the least desirable, lowest paying and most marginalized forms of work. This findings are consistent with other scholars’ work on the compounding effects of gender and race (Branch, 2007; Bueno, 2015) or race/ethnicity and migrant status (Torres et al, 2013; Nelson et al, 2015) and reveal how experiences of precarious work are racialized and differentiated based on gender and immigrant status.

Stratified opportunities for employment are indicative of a labor market segmentation. The theory of dual labor market segmentation divides jobs into “good” (with high wages, employment stability, and good working conditions) in the primary labor market; and (b) “bad” (with low wages, high turnover, and poor working conditions) in the secondary labor market (Guerin-Gonzales and Strikwerda, 1998). Precarious work scholarship demonstrates that, in general, poor women, women of color, and immigrant women are more often stratified into precarious forms of employment in the “secondary market” (“bad”) (Browne and Misra, 2003; Bueno, 2015; Branch and Hanley, 2017). This rings true in this study; however, with some caveats. Male Haitian migrants are generally found in irregular, low-paying forms of work, ostensibly the “secondary market”. However, women, particularly female Haitian migrants, have trouble even finding work in the first place and can be found in even more marginalized livelihood practices and income generating activities. Even within the “bad” jobs, there are hierarchies based on gender and migrant status. Additionally, even comparatively “stable” forms of employment among batey residents demonstrate aspects of insecurity, such as inconsistent payments and a disregard for terms of employment. This demonstrates how experiences of precarious work in the Dominican Republic has proliferated across occupational sectors, similar to observations of work in the Global North (Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Shankar and Sahni,
2017). It further supports my assertion from the literature review chapter that “informality” in work (lack of formal contracts does not necessarily equate to “precarity” in work).

Another critical contribution this study makes to the literature is a reinforcement of the idea that the concept of “precarious work” is both the objective conditions of employment (i.e.-irregular hours, lack of contracts, irregular payment schedules) and the subjective feelings of the worker about the future (i.e.- job loss, feelings of insecurity) (Alberti et al, 2018; Bobek et al, 2018). Moreover, both the conditions of employment (i.e-wages, work hours, long-term, short-term, or no contract) and subjective feelings of precarity are influenced and exacerbated by the intersection of one’s individual social identities circumstances, such as gender, race, class, legal status, and residence in the Global North or the Global South. Susan Banki’s (2013) theory of ‘precarity of place’ is an excellent example of how the mere threat of deportation due to a lack of status impacts experiences of precarious work. This thesis supports Banki’s findings and begins to illustrate an even more complex, intersectional description of precarious work among workers in the Global South.

Furthermore, a crucial argument of this thesis is that the insecurity that individuals experience when attempting to peddle together a livelihood creates an overall sense of precarity, which impacts not only laborers, but also their families who must deal with the repercussions of job insecurity. In fact, the struggles and difficulty in finding employment is part of the experience of precarious work, especially for those who work irregular jobs like day labor in which contingency and “waiting around for” (esperando) work is a large part of that type of employment. Additionally, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and legal status make finding a job in the first place (and keeping it) more difficult, contributing to the feelings of insecurity many batey residents feel. Finally, this thesis posits that it is possible to experience
effects of precarious work second-hand through a spouse of a family member on whom an individual relies for their income. This “second-hand precarity” is further impacted by individual circumstances such as general poverty or a fear of deportation or “deportability” (Anderson, 2010).

Finally, an important part of intersectional analyses is the focus on historical and cultural underpinnings of situations to understand the generational experiences of phenomena like precarious work (Havinsky, 2012; Rice, Harrison, and Friedman, 2019). Basically, it argues that people’s experiences do not arise out of nowhere. Rather, social categorization has compounding, intergenerational effects leading to entrenched inequality (Sharank and Sahni, 2017; Alberti et al, 2019). This thesis shows that the poverty-stricken experiences of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans are borne of deep historical antagonisms and ethnic discrimination that shape modern-day employment opportunities. Furthermore, it shows how age has important implications for individuals’ ability to find work and also demonstrates how once one enters informal work they are more likely to stay in informal, precarious work Guarnizo and Rodriguez, 2017; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2017; Witteveen, 2017).

6. Conclusion

“Los haitianos son una población que vive en el aire”

-Liliana Doris, Director of MUDHA in Santo Domingo, DR (“Haitians are a population whose future is up in the air”).

Haitian and Haitian-Dominican residents of Batey La Luisa, Dominican Republic live a precarious existence—attempting to patch together multiple income-generating activities to create a livelihood while facing severe social and political discrimination. Precarity is felt not
only in insecure working relationships, but also in everyday experiences of prejudice based on an
intersectional range of social factors. Gender, ethnicity, and legal status interact with and
complicate experiences of precarity, by influencing not only the kind of work one attains, but
also if and how they attain it, and, furthermore, how they adapt to insecure circumstances. These
stratified employment experiences coupled with the pervasive informality and irregularity of
many work opportunities further impact everyday feelings of insecurity and precarity and create
emotional burdens for batey residents.

Precarity of employment and feelings of insecurity in one’s everyday life interact with
and influence one another, demonstrating how precarious work is not just what one experiences
on the job, but is also an everyday sense of insecurity. Often, residents must patch together a
variety of income sources in order to create a livelihood. The precarious patchwork of
employment could be better described as precarious livelihoods—as it informs and is informed
by social factors outside of the workplace.

This thesis finds that gendered conceptions of work, discrimination based on ethnicity
and race, and difficulties generated by a lack of legal status instill feelings of precarity in batey
residents’ everyday lives and inform the kinds of work and sources of income that they are able
to obtain in order to create a livelihood. Haitian born individuals with no documentation are
relegated to the lowest paying, most irregular, and often informal sources of income and
employment. Fears of deportation coupled with experiences of ethnic and racial discrimination
by Dominicans towards Haitians limits the jobs available to Haitian migrants to those jobs
available in the batey. While Haitian-Dominicans have greater opportunity to leave the batey in
search of higher-paying, more secure forms of work, even these relatively stable jobs are
threatened by feelings of insecurity imparted by feminized segregation of jobs and fears of losing work because of ethnic identity.

In general, women experience greater difficulty in obtaining and maintaining work because of traditional domestic duties and are therefore relegated to staying at home with children and searching for meager income-generating activities such as small business. These limited opportunities for women inside the batey are further differentiated between Haitian-Dominicans and Haitians. Without extensive social networks, Haitian women cannot enter into the local batey economy as small business owners and, instead, the most desperate women engage as informal guava harvesters for low wages. In general, this thesis finds that Haitian women without documentation are heavily marginalized and forced into the lowest paying and least desirable sources of work, if they are able to find work at all. However, another important finding of this thesis is that even those without work (mostly women) feel the effects and emotional insecurity from experiences of precarious work. The stress of financial insecurity due to precarious employment impacts family members and spouses of workers as well as workers themselves.

In order to survive in Batey La Luisa, Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans work together in a kind of moral economy. Although the batey is geographically and socially isolated and lacks material resources and its residents all live in a general state of poverty, they support one another through mutual aid. Residents engage in savings groups and women offer to tend to one another’s children. However, this version of the batey moral economy is segregated based on one’s background. Haitian migrants do not feel as though they can request the same kind of mutual assistance as do Haitian-Dominicans or those Haitians who have been living in the batey for an extended period of time. The amount and depth of one’s social connections impacts how
much and what kind of support one receives. This two-tiered moral economy reinforces distinctions between Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans and makes it more difficult for Haitian migrants to improve their socio-economic standing within the batey, let alone in Dominican society in general. However, the batey still acts as a safe haven for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans alike, providing familiarity, a sense of security, and a mutually supportive network that may not be found in urban areas.

A growth of income opportunities for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in urban areas in the Dominican Republic since the privatization of the sugar industry has led to a shift in migration patterns from rural areas to urban centers (Silié et al, 2002; Landry, 2013). However, despite the lack of high-paying, secure jobs in rural bateyes, many residents remain. This thesis identifies the livelihood opportunities still available for batey residents and further examines how Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans adapt to their precarious circumstances while remaining in rural areas. While it does not provide a blanket reasoning for why these populations stay in zones with few employment opportunities, it begins to provide an illustration of how marginalized rural batey residents have patched together livelihoods in an urban-centered Dominican economy.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Stage Two (Focused) Coding: Initial Themes Index

Life in the Batey
1. Familiarity
2. Security/Tranquility
3. Access to things
4. Affordability
5. Reciprocity (Convivencia) → this could even be small business territories
6. Acclimation
   a. Some do, others do not
7. Belonging
   a. Isolation

Institutional/Political Barriers/Challenges
1. Access to money
   a. Lack of banks
   b. Hard time getting loans
   c. Predatory Loans
   d. Not enough money in the batey itself
2. Immigration
   a. Difficulty of life in Haiti
   b. Lack of documents
3. Political negligence
4. Distrust of the government/employers
   a. Nepotism
      i. “Para conseguir trabajar tiene que conocer a alguien”. If you don’t have friends in the government, you can’t get a job.

Work
1. Paid vs. Unpaid
2. Payments: regular, irregular, formal, informal. Cash, direct deposit, check?
   a. Fear of lack of money
3. Consistency of work
4. Employment: Who gets what jobs and where
5. Logistics: location of job, how get there, how often
6. Barriers to getting job
   a. Lack of jobs available
   b. Children
7. Other
   a. Take jobs because they need it to survive. Not because they like it.
   b. Other characteristics of making a living

Social Discrimination
1. Fear: of immigration/deportation, of discrimination
2. Gender-based
3. Raced-based (fewer access to jobs/services)

Gender Roles
1. Women = domestic laborers/caretakers first
2. Men = principal breadwinners/physical laborers
3. Power differential: women’s reliance on men

Adaptation/Making it work
1. Multiple jobs
2. Reciprocity/reliance on others (savings groups could be included here)
3. Faking It: documents, identity
4. Other
   a. Lotería

Aspirations and Goals
1. Barriers/Challenges
   a. Mobility
   b. Disability

Appendix B. Semi-structured Interview Instrument: Batey La Luisa (English)

Demographics, Family, and Migration:
1. Gender:
2. Age:
3. What is your civil status? (single, married, divorced, widow/widower)
4. Do you have children? How many?
5. Where do your children live?
6. Where were your children born?
7. What type of house do you live in? (rent, own the house, other)
8. How many people live in your home?

Livelihoods
1. How do you earn a living?
2. For each job (if participant has multiple sources of income), answer the following:
   a. How long have you been working in that job?
   b. How did you find that job?
   c. Where do you work? (physical location: in the batey, city, or both)
   d. What are your specific tasks at that job?
   e. Do you work directly for the employer or for someone else? (ex: a labor contractor)
   f. How do you get paid? (Cash? Daily, weekly, monthly?)
   g. Do you like your job?
   h. How do you get to work?
      i. Do you have to pay?
ii. How long does it take?
3. Have you ever worked in other kinds of jobs in the past?
   a. Why did you leave that job?
4. What kinds of things do you look for when looking for a new job? What do you like a job to offer? (ex: pay, benefits, distance from home, etc.)
5. Have you ever faced any challenges when looking for a job or other source of income?
6. For female participants:
   a. Is there anything in particular about finding a job that is harder for women?
   b. Are there any challenges you face at your job because you are a woman?

Migration/Batey Life
1. How long have you lived in the batey?
2. Where were you born? (city, province, country)
3. If born outside of the Dominican Republic, when did you first come to the Dominican Republic?
   a. Why did you decide to come to the Dominican Republic?
   b. How did you adjust to life in the Dominican Republic?
   c. How did you decide to stay in the Dominican Republic?
4. What are the advantages of living in the batey as opposed to living elsewhere?
5. What are the disadvantages of living in the batey as opposed to living elsewhere?

Future aspirations
1. What are your long-term goals/aspirations?
2. What are barriers or challenges to achieving those goals?