Kids on the Frontline of Haiti's Fault line

- Children's Perspectives on Their Earthquake Relocation -

Talitha Stam
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CHAPTER 1: Goudou Goudou

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1.1 EARTHQUAKE STORY OF THE 11-YEAR-OLD HAITIAN GIRL MARYSE

Goudou goudou (the sound that the earthquake made), my bucket of water falls on the ground. The ground is shaking. I could barely run to my house (a shantytown home in one of the poorest areas in Port-au-Prince). I hear my baby sister crying from outside the house. There is blood over my baby sister. A rock fell on her head. I am looking for my father, but he is not at home. He works in a factory. I don't know what happened to him. Is he still alive? The new wife[1] of my father, I hate her, she is hurt too. She says that she is going away. She tells me that my father died. How can she know? I ask her if she has seen him. No, she says. 'But do you see him now? He is not here, so he died.' Then she leaves. She says something about *Sengdomeng* (Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, many earthquake victims were trying to get medical aid at the Dominican Republic). Now I am all-alone with my baby sister. She is still crying. I am very scared. Do you know that small children are being kidnapped? Everybody tells that all the time. I am very very scared! I don't know what to do. I'm hungry too. We have not eaten for days. As I walk outside with my baby sister, we see *white bodies* (due to the dust from the collapsed buildings people were covered with white dust) everywhere. People are screaming and praying. One of my neighbours is on the streets as well. She tries to call my aunt. No phone is working. Later, my aunt comes. She has a baby son. So my baby sister has to leave. 'To difficult for her here', my aunt says. We put her on a bus (days after the earthquake the Haitian government offered free busses for people to go to the countryside). I want to get on that bus too. But my aunt demands me to stay with her. We go back to my house and there we stay. Then, *goudou goudou*, again (the initial quake was later followed by twelve aftershocks, some greater than magnitude 5.0)![2]

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[1] Her own mother died before the earthquake. The mother was murdered when the young girl was around 8 years old.

[2] Maryse, like the/my other children, did not tell her story in one go, as it is written above. It is a collection of her experiences she told me over the period of my fieldwork.

1.2 HAITI AND LITTLE HAITIANS

EARTHQUAKE

On January 12th, 2010, just before 17h00 Haitian time, an earthquake, magnitude 7.3 on the Richter scale, shook Haiti for 35 seconds. *Goudou goudou* is the Haitian Creole name for the earthquake of 2010, which is based on the sound it made.

Its epicentre was close to the town of Léogâne, approximately 17 km southwest of Port-au-Prince, the capital. The earthquake affected the country's most populous area as well as its economic and administrative centre. In the immediate aftermath, around 1.3 million people were living in temporary shelters in and around Port-au-Prince and over 500,000 people left the disaster areas to seek refuge with relatives and friends in other areas of the country (PNDA 2010).

Map of Haiti in the world[3]

Facts[4]

Country:	Republic of Haiti
Capital:	Port-au-Prince
Official languages:	Haitian Creole, French
Population:	Over 10 million

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[3]Source:http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Haiti_%28orthographic_projection%29.svg
[4] Source: Institut Haitien de Statistique et d'Informatique (IHSI) /Direction des Statistiques Démographiques et Sociales (DSDS) - Mars 2009.

LOCATIONS

This thesis documents a study of three different post-earthquake child relocation destinations:

(1) A camp for internally displaced persons in Port-au-Prince;
(2) Belladere city, a rural town outside the stricken area;
(3) Elías Piña, a Dominican town along the border.

My first research location was at camp Delmas, which was one of the camps for internally displaced persons in Port-au-Prince. I do not have a methodological justification for choosing this particular camp. It was the nearest to where I stayed at that moment, and Junie Bertrand, a Haitian-American medical student living in a makeshift camp was helping me gain access to this camp. Given the very challenging disaster environment, I was often faced with a shortage of time within which to carry out each stage of this research (cf. Cisin and Clark 1962 in Stallings 2002: 23).[5]

From February until June 2010 (with the exception of a two month period) I was in camp Delmas on a daily basis. In July and August I was there in the weekends. During the months of April and May 2010, I was at my second research location, Belladere city and my third location alongside the Haitian (Belladere city) and Dominican (Elías Piña) border area. This area is one of the four official border-crossing points between the two countries.[6] I visited all four official border-crossing areas and chose these locations based on the access I had to the key informants at this site.

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[5] In the subchapter 1.4, I will elaborate more on the challenging disaster methodological approaches.
[6] From January 27th until August 20th 2010, I was in Haiti, but beside this field research I also worked as a journalist, mainly at the beginning and at the end of the research period.

Map of Haiti[7]

LITTLE HAITIANS

The title of this document; *Kids on the Frontline of Haiti's Fault line* refers to the Haitian children's perspectives on their post-earthquake relocation experiences. The children who participated in this research were between the age of 10-15 years old; an age range that represents 36 percent of the Haitian population (Lunde 2009:15). Relocation of Haitian children was not a new practice, as prior to the earthquake more than half of Haitian youth has moved at least once (Lunde 2009:43). In camp Delmas, I focused on post-earthquake relocated children, mainly boys, who were left behind in the wake of the earthquake by either death or migration of their biological parents. In Belladere city, I attended to post-earthquake children, mainly girls, who had been

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[7] Source: http://www.haiticulture.ch/HaitiMap.html

relocated (perhaps as *restavèk*[8]) before the earthquake to Port-au-Prince and, as a result of the earthquake, returned to at least one of their biological parents. This practice of sending children to live with relatives in Port-au-Prince has been common in Haiti due to limited educational opportunities in rural areas. According to Lunde (2009), pre-earthquake girls were more likely to move to urban areas of Haiti, while one-forth of young boys were sent to the Dominican Republic (2009: 133). Since this trend of girls being sent to urban areas was reversed, I was left with mostly boys who were left behind in this process after the earthquake at the border area.

Children's participation was a key element in this child-centred study in order to tell their own stories through their own perspectives. Before the children took part in this research, I participated in their community. In February 2010, I entered camp Delmas for the first time and Bertrand introduced me as another Haitian-born young professional, who returned to Haiti after the earthquake in order to listen to people's stories. The camp residents were very curious who I was and invited me into their 'homes', in order to first listen to my story. Little by little, they opened up to me, telling me their stories and even letting me play with the kids. From then on I was able to hang around in the camp every day, observing and participating in the daily life of the camp.

In total 300 children have participated in this research through surveys, life histories, informal conversations, and photos.[9] After noticing the children's interest in telling their own stories, I selected individual children on whom I focused further research. Thus, this thesis documents the in-depth stories of Maryse (11-years-old), Obert (13-years-old), David (14-years-old), Lovelie (15-years-old), Stephan (13-years-old) and Christophe (11-years-old). I believe their stories in particular are representative of the many post-earthquake relocated children in Haiti.[10]

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[8] The concept of *"restaveks"* is from the French words *rester* (to stay) *avec* (with), and refers to children who are living apart from their biological parents in order to attend (good) schools in the capital. Chapter three will examine this matter further.

[9] Subchapter 1.4 will elaborate more on the challenging disaster methodological approaches.

[10] Their names have been changed to safeguard their privacy as much as possible.

1.3 IT'S PERSONAL

Beginning with the story of 11-year-old Maryse, this thesis explores the stories of her and other Haitian children as a lens through which to frame earthquake experiences from the perspective of the children. Throughout this thesis the story of Maryse and other Haitian children will be explored, but before one can provide a stage for *kids on the frontline of Haiti's fault line,* it must be clear who is providing this stage. Within anthropological research, the anthropologists themselves are key instruments in their study. This section highlights the relevant personal background and role of myself as the researcher in this post-earthquake environment.

Two weeks prior to the start of my fieldwork, the earthquake struck. I was flabbergasted when I saw the news. Twenty-five years ago, Dutch parents adopted me from Haiti at the age of almost two years. It was to be the first time I would return to my country of birth. I did not have the chance to experience pre-earthquake Haiti, and never will. After this horrible news, my phone was on 24 hours a day, calling friends and contacts in the country to see if they were still alive. As a trained journalist, I decided to go to Haiti regardless of the disaster to see if it was still possible to conduct field research there.[11] On January 27th, 2010 I left for Haiti along with my Haitian boyfriend, who was studying in Belgium. Arriving in Haiti was quite an undertaking. The airport was still closed at that time, so we flew to the Dominican Republic, and shared a minivan taxi with ten other young people from Haitian descent who were heading to Haiti. They, along with my boyfriend, were also searching for surviving family members. Along the way, I asked myself if this was the right thing to do, as I was not coming to help as a doctor, an aid worker, or looking for lost family members. What exactly was I thinking a student in Cultural Anthropology could offer in the aftermath of the earthquake? Was it selfish of me to go anyway?

A gray, dusty and dirty air forced itself upon us as we entered Port-au-Prince. The streets had been partially swept 'clean', making it possible for the minivan to drive through. The area, however, was still surrounded with collapsed houses, schools and churches. Some streets were more devastated than others. A once standing office building had pieces of concrete and furniture hanging from it. We saw dead bodies

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[11] I received a B.A. in Journalism in 2007.

and wounded children on the streets, under collapsed buildings. The infrastructure was destroyed, resulting in no running water or electricity. These images were similar to what I watched on television, but the reality was much more intense. During the first two weeks, I slept on the dirty streets alongside friends and others, who were to me, unknown. After my boyfriend left the country, I stayed with his family. We stayed in front of their house, still living and sleeping on the streets as their house was too damaged. For months I stayed in front of their house, which was separated from other houses and the street by a wall. Within these meagre square meters of space, thirteen others and myself shared this space as our collective living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Aftershocks still struck on a regular basis, something I often felt while lying in bed.[12]

Conducting research with children in a post-disaster environment was a very difficult experience for me as a researcher and as a human being. To keep a certain distance in order to be as objective as possible, I have chosen not to sleep in camp Delmas while doing research there. In the case of Belladere city, and alongside the border, I also did not stay in the same house of the children I was researching. In this way, I tried to maintain a boundary between my own, private life and my field research; yet these boundaries often blurred.

1.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONTEXT

In the previous subchapter I detailed my role as a researcher and individual living in a disaster environment and how those circumstances influenced my study. This section will elaborate on the challenging post-earthquake environment by explaining which methodological approaches I applied and how I did so.

DISASTER ENVIRONMENT

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[12] These experiences were first published in the Dutch magazine IS, on March 2010.

During my fieldwork, I crossed three main methodological difficulties relating to a disaster environment. The first one, *time*, is a crucial element in understanding reactions to disasters and must be considered in research design and interpretation. Entering the field two weeks after the earthquake, first as a journalist, I was able to obtain early data on the emergency adjustments, and interactions of children in the immediate aftermath (cf. Stalling 2002). Being there in the immediate aftermath had both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage was that I, as a person of Haitian descent and speaking Haitian Creole, did not stand out as a foreigner, because I lived with, and visibly resembled other Haitians. The disadvantage was the challenging post-earthquake environment, in which I lacked *time* to develop a theoretical framework prior to entering the field. Therefore *exploratory research* was necessary: I first obtained post-earthquake field data, which was later analysed with existing pre-earthquake literature. Doing so, I was able to get information that would not otherwise have been available to those that are better prepared theoretically. This had led to a greater influence of children's participation in this research, since I was, not boxed in completely by tight theoretical approaches.

The second post-earthquake environment difficulty was the lack of infrastructure and official statistics. Following the earthquake, statistics were non-existent, either because this data was not (yet) collected or because what did exist was highly inadequate (cf. Stallings 2002: 337). Together with four young high school volunteers, I conducted surveys among the post-earthquake relocated children in each research location in order to understand to what extend the social networks of these children have changed.[13]

The third difficulty of working in a disaster environment was Haiti as an underdeveloped country. As Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world and I was in this country for the first time as an adult, it was impossible for me to analytically separate the disaster situation from normal conditions of poverty and deprivation. According to Robert Stallings (2002), researching a disaster in an underdeveloped country such as Haiti is complex, especially since many people have learnt to cope with harsh situations, on a day-to-day basis (Stallings 2002: 336).

COMBINED APPROACHES

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[13] All surveys can be viewed on Page 83-84

One of the solutions for dealing with the above-described difficulties was to combine different kinds of research methods, *triangulation*, in order to enhance credibility and verifiability of the data and findings (Stallings 2002: 205). The main research method was *participant observation*, in which I participated in the lives of post-earthquake relocated Haitian children and their communities, while observing day-to-day behaviours. At the first location, camp Delmas, I visited on a daily basis, attended school classes in the camp, and 'hung out' with residents, including children as well as adults inside and outside the camp. The second location, Belladere city, was more difficult to 'hang out' in, as the main location for these children was inside their homes. Although I visited the children on a regular basis in their homes, I was always a visitor. Sometimes I took the children for a walk in order to talk with them alone, or I helped them with homework at their school; yet it was still difficult to get insider information. The third location, along the Haitian-Dominican border, was difficult too, as the children did not have a fixed house or place of work where they regularly stayed. In order to work around this difficulty, I made sure that I was at the Dominican side of the border before the Haitian market opened in order to 'hang out' with the children at the market.

Besides the main research method, I have used a combined approach; one that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative approaches such as life stories, in-depth interviews and informal conversations, were obtained among the relocated children and their families, and/or from the people around them. This was done in order to gather data for constructing children's perspective on post-earthquake social life and to be able to document their experiences. Also, semi-structured interviews were obtained with professionals (such as child protection officers of several relief agencies), Haitian social workers, and the mayors of Belladere city and Delmas to understand the Haitian professional perspectives on the situation of post-disaster relocated children.

As stated earlier, quantitative surveys were conducted on each research location for

obtaining quantitative data. At camp Delmas a survey was held among 113 post-earthquake relocated children in the age of 11 to 13-years-old in order to understand to what extend their family household composition has changed since the 2010 earthquake. The selection of the participated children was chosen because they attended informal school classes at the camp, which was accessible to conduct a survey. At the second and third location, together with four high school students/volunteers, I conducted surveys among the post-earthquake relocated children at each research location in order to understand how the social networks of these children have changed. Initially 472 refugee children were divided over twenty schools. This includes all of the refugee children who were registered to attend primary and secondary school in Belladere city. During the survey I realized that many teenagers (16-20 yearsold) and young adults (21-26 yearsold) were attending primary and secondary schools. The very young children (4-8 yearolds) did not always understand my questions. As this research focused on children in the age range of 10 to 15 –years old, I selected and separated the survey results for this age group, in total 177 participants.

PHOTOS

Following a number of other social researchers, I utilized photography as a way to let children participate in this child-centred-research (White, Bushin, Carpena-Méndez and Laoire 2010; Wright, Darko, Standen and Patel 2010; Stalling 2002; Harper 1998; Blinn and Harrist 1991). "Giving children cameras to use themselves meanshanding over the power of the content and direction of a research project, encouraging a relationship of trust between researcher and participant" (Barker and Weller 2003; Einarsdottir 2005 in Wright, Darko, Standen and Patel 2010). Therefore, I have used *participant photography* as a visual research method in camp Delmas and Belladere city (Collier 1967). This method was not utilized at my third research site along the border, because I had not built a more substantial relationship with the children at that site. Through the use of photos, I was able to obtain the children's perspectives. The children were provided with the opportunity to discuss and visually represent their lives and their experiences. To achieve this, disposable cameras were given to four children, two of them at each research site. I asked the four children to take photos of

their family, friends and anyone else who had been a source of support or were people they enjoyed being with. In addition, I asked them to take pictures of special locations they enjoyed frequenting. The children used the cameras over the course of two weeks. Upon developing the children's photos, I engaged the children in *photo-elicitation interviews,* whereby I used the photographs to stimulate discussion and to gather information about the child's background (Collier 1967). The data gathered from this research method provided insights and glimpses into the everyday lives of those post-earthquake relocated children taking part. This was especially valuable at the second location, Belladere city, where for example, I discovered through photo elicitation interviews that adult men were missing in these children's lives. From this information, I was able to start a conversation with the children about their 'missing' adult men (read: father, uncle, grandfather, etc.). A small selection of the photos taken by the children who participated are included in this thesis, while the remaining photo data will appear in textual form. I obtained permission from the relevant children prior to including their photographs in this document.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The final section of this chapter will consequently outline my theoretical framework, as constructed by the personal habitat of the researcher in which the analyses and study has taken place. This research became a post- versus pre-disaster study as I just arrived after the 2010 earthquake and therefore was in the position to collect field data from the post-earthquake situation and, upon returning from field research, compared this data with existing literature of pre-earthquake Haiti. My guiding research questions were: How did the 2010 earthquake impact the social networks of relocated children in Haiti? How did the existing (pre-earthquake) social networks of these children impact the formation of the social networks in post-earthquake conditions? Any attempt to address these questions must start with laying the groundwork for its answer through a brief but thorough discussion of the literature on disaster anthropology, accompanied by an overview of the significant approaches and concepts used in the exploration of these research questions.

In 1956, anthropologist and historian Anthony F.C. Wallace analyzed the personal and community responses to the tornado that devastated the US city of Worcester, Massachusetts on June 9, 1953. In the course of his research, Wallace interviewed survivors and rescuers in order to develop a multistage model in the delineation process of reaction and recovery from the effects of this catastrophe. Wallace (1956) posited a disaster as;

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A type of behavioral event characterized by a series of
time stages and spatial dimensions, each associated with
different activities and roles embedded both in the pre-
disaster system and the conditions imposed by the event
itself (1956: 12).
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His model consists of seven stages: 1) the *Steady* stage or how the city was before the impact; 2) the *Warning* stage when the inhabitants of the city learned of the impending impact; 3) the *Impact* stage, when the tornado strikes; 4) the *Isolation* stage, when the city is essentially alone in helping itself; 5) the *Rescue* stage; 6) the *Rehabilitation* stage, or the attempt to restore conditions to the initial steady state; and finally, 7) the *Irreversible* change stage, when the damaged city achieves a new stability. Today, this study on Worcester is recognized as the first systematic anthropological analysis of the effects of disaster on a human community (Hoffman and Oliver-Smith 1999: 24). His approach focused mainly on the impact and development of the city.

The best-known disaster anthropologist, however, is Anthony Oliver-Smith (e.g. 1986), who studied the earthquake that struck the north central coastal and Andean region of Peru on May 31, 1970. His research location was at Yungay where over 95 percent of its inhabitants were killed. In this context, Wallace's approach was difficult to follow as there were so few people left to even know what those forms were. According to Oliver-Smith, the lesson of this Peruvian town is that the root causes of vulnerability of this city, which were exposed during the event, came about over the course of 400 years; he was able to trace this vulnerability back to the Spanish conquest of the region, tying it to demographics, settlement locations, and ways of living (Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon and Davis 2005: 95; Kelman 2007: 4). Oliver-Smith

argued that the processes by which these conditions were created involves "vulnerability" and that vulnerability leads to disasters much more than normal environmental events. Prior to the earthquake, Oliver-Smith had completed fieldwork in the same area of Peru and thus was already familiar with Yungay and its people when he returned in 1970 following the earthquake. Upon his return, he focused on earthquake survivors and how they rebuilt their lives in a refugee camp not far from their original homes. His book *The Martyred City - Deaths and Rebirth in the Andes* consisted of ten years of research and is both a study and story of human survival; the story conveys a sense of what life was like for those who worked to reconstruct their community, while the study documents and analyzes the socio-cultural processes that people use to adapt to overwhelming forces of destruction and change (Oliver-Smith 1986). According to him, the story of Yungay's residents and their struggle to survive and rebuild their lives and their community is important. "It tells us not only about this specific group of people, but also about ourselves as a species and our capacity to deal with the overwhelming circumstances of catastrophe and tragic loss" (Oliver-Smith 1986: ix).

Recently, several volumes appeared wherein a number of anthropologists from different backgrounds, using different frameworks, described, combined and compared different approaches to studying disasters. This trend started with the volume, *The Angry Earth,* in which Anthony Oliver-Smith and Susanna M. Hoffman (1999) edited and collected work that covered both technological and natural disasters, including examples of societies from nearly every continent. In 2002, the authors Oliver-Smith and Hoffman updated their volume in *Catastrophe & Culture.* This volume explored the potential that disasters hold for anthropological research, with close attention to the concomitant responsibility of exploring potentials of anthropology for the field of disaster (2002:17). Both volumes have shown the utility of anthropological perspectives in revealing a variety of dimensions of disaster. One disaster easily differs from another, due to the society pattern of vulnerability, and the conditions and behaviour of individuals and organisations coping with each individual destructive agent (Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 2002: 3). The latest volume on disaster anthropology (at the time of writing) is *Anthropology & Climate Change - From Encounters to Actions* edited by Susan A. Crate and Mark Nuttall (2009). In this text,

climate change is seen as causing slow-onset phenomena, including droughts, the melting of ice caps and the rise of sea level. All of which have the potential to cause large-scale natural disasters, in a similar way fast-onset phenomena such as earthquakes, storms, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis do. Climate change is further characterized as contributing to the relocation of humans in an attempt to adjust to change and to cope with its implications (2009: 12).

The above-mentioned volumes have contributed to theory development of disaster anthropology. The conclusions drawn from these inquiries can be used and applied to study the effects different kinds of disasters. An example of one of these conclusions that impact the study of disasters, by Oliver-Smith and Hoffman (2002):

> Disasters unmask the nature of a society's social structure, including the ties and resilience of kinship and other alliances. They instigate unity and the cohesion of social units as well as conflict along the lines of segmentary opposition (2002: 7).

Thus, generally speaking, disasters reveal the social organisation of a community and shed light on the underlying social structures. However, I suggest that the anthropology of disaster need more in-depth ethnographic research one of a single disaster in one country, one that studies human beings in the affected society in order not to lose or blur the strengths of anthropology in general; namely taking the lead of the founding fathers of disaster anthropology, Anthony F.C Wallace (1956) and Anthony Oliver-Smith (1986) to study a single catastrophe, focusing on a specific group in order to hear and learn from their stories. This study aims to frame the stories of children's experiences during post-earthquake relocation from their own perspectives and elaborates on the definition of disaster given by Wallace (1956). He defined disasters by attending to the behavioural events of pre-disaster systems and the conditions imposed by the event itself rather than studying the physical agent of the disaster event. Even though my research on post-earthquake conditions in Haiti was unable to analyze the disaster from the vantage point of the multistage model proposed by Wallace. Following Oliver-Smith (1986), this thesis is both a study and a story. The stories were derived from a series of interviews and interactions compiled

as life histories, and pieced together as an introduction to each chapter (with the exception of the concluding chapter). These brief introductions offer the reader a glance into the life of a single child. The study analyzes each child's story with the main research questions in mind. That is, through the lens of three significant concepts, including migration, social organization and children.

Disasters force people to migrate either temporarily or permanently. Migration was therefore one of the most visible impacts of Haiti's earthquake, whereas many spontaneous refugee camps were erected in and around the capital. Following Oliver-Smith's (2009) concept of migration as an adaptation strategy for environmental change, I investigate to what extend children had influence on their post-earthquake migration conditions. Combined with the migration theory of Castels and Miller (2009), who stated that migration instigates the creation of new communities, I research how post-earthquake relocated children adapt to their new post-earthquake communities-in-the-making. These communities-in-the-making included camp Delmas, and the border towns of Belladere city and Elías Piña. Migration, I argue, is more than a movement from one place to another. Due to forced migration, children become separated from their families. Due to this separation, children lose their entire social networks, which include their parents, relatives, and the security of their grandparents, neighbours, teachers and elders. In other words, patterns of social organization (Bonnerjea 1994) or ties between people that create social networks and communities, whether based on kinship or fictive kin relations, are severed due to forced migration. As I demonstrate in the following chapters, children use specific coping strategies in post-earthquake Haiti and attempt to construct new social networks.

After disasters, children are undoubtedly the most photographed social group, while simultaneously they tend to be the least listened to members of society (Hart 1992). Children are often attended to within the framework of women's experiences and hardships, universally constructed as *women AND children.* It is this contextualization, which prevents the narratives of children from being heard as coming from competent social agents, from survivors rather than victims. Kovats-Bernat (2006: 3) argues that children's cultural identity and agency are veiled to the

extent that they are depoliticized and dehumanized to what Eric Wolf (1982) calls *People Without History*. To understand how the post-earthquake situation affected children and youth from their own perspective, it is not sufficient to observe them, study them, talk with their parents and teachers, have their best interests in mind, or empathize with them as a result of having been a child at one time. Rather, it is necessary to communicate directly with them, including through photos, in an atmosphere of trust that provides them with the confidence to participate and voice their opinions and needs (White, Bushin, Carpena-Méndez and Laoire 2010; Wright, Darko, Standen and Patel 2010; Blinn and Harrist 1991). Following this, Theis (2001: 100-101) stated that in order to study children from their perspectives, we have to see the world through their eyes, see children as actively involved in creating and developing their own environment, making their own decisions, and having their own ideas and interests. Although social research from a child's perspective is not novel, it has been neglected in the field of disaster research. Marten (2000) has done literature study on children in disasters as 'an anthropological problem' and discovered that "a large body of literature on children in natural hazard disasters was found to exist, but was firmly grounded and enclosed in the domains of psychology, psychiatry, trauma and social work" (Marten 2000: 7). Marten claims that no body of research could be found on the place of children in an emerging discourse on the new field of disaster anthropology. According to Marten, the literature on disasters, which typically excluded children, is "always related to media, gendered, conflict and psychological approaches to disaster" (Marten 2000: 74).

The theoretical framework as described above will be used to try to close this theoretical and empirical gap. I specifically aim to include children's participation in disaster response immediately following Haiti's earthquake in 2010. As stated in the section of *methodological context*, this study was conducted as *exploratory research,* and thus I have used a more or less grounded theory method for gathering, analysing, and grounding research data. With this, I have contributed to and shed light of new perspectives on the debate of social anthropological disaster research through presentation and analysis of the narratives of children.

CHAPTER 2: Left Behind

2.1 EARTHQUAKE STORY OF THE 13-YEAR-OLD HAITIAN BOY OBERT

I just came home from school together with my three sisters (12, 14, 15 years old). The route from school to our home is only a 30-minute walk. We do this walk every day. My youngest sister and I were arguing about what we shall watch on television. Before we arrived at home my two oldest sisters went to the market. My youngest sister and I started to run to our television. She is always faster than me, but I'm stronger. My mother called my youngest sister from the kitchen to help her preparing the food. Now, I had the television all by my self. Then, I heard a strange background noise, *goudou goudou*. The floor moved as well. I knew something bad was going on. As quickly as I could, I ran outside of our house. I saw our house collapsed behind me. *Mwen pè, mwen pè anpil!* (I was scared, very scared!) I didn't know what to do. On the streets a lot of people were screaming. Other buildings collapsed too. I went back in my house and I saw my mother and youngest sister lying dead next to each other. My mother was trying to protect my little sister. I saw her arms around her. My other two sisters were dead as well. I found them in the kitchen too. Their groceries were spread all over the floor. In the bedroom I found my father dead. He was trying to escape, but he got stuck. I cried a lot. I cannot even remember when I cried before. I ran away as fast as I could. On the streets I followed some people heading to an open sports field. '*Isit la gen sekirite*' (It is safe here), people told me. At least there were no buildings there that could fall on my head. People slept on the streets or on the sports field, so I did the same. I was so tired that I slept there for almost 2 days. I didn't even feel hungry or think about food at all.

When I woke up I went back to my house. I was looking for some clothes and stuff. But the house was empty! They stole everything; the prepared food my mother and youngest sister made earlier, cell phones, clothes, even the television! This is not good. *Mes Bondye konnen* (But God only knows). After that I didn't do anything. I just sat there (in front of the house). I wanted to stay at my house, but there was nobody

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alive. The neighbours were gone too. And it smelled very very
very bad. It started to rain. The rain made my only clothes
totally wet. Slowly I walked back to the sports field. There
I found a relatively clean spot of street to sleep on.
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INTRODUCTION

This chapter - *Left Behind* - is both a story and study on the children who have been left behind, without families, since the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The story of this chapter is from Obert, a 13-years-old Haitian boy, who has been left behind after the deaths of his parents and sisters during the earthquake. Obert has told us his experiences on the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and how this disaster interrupted his young life through the loss of his house and entire family. The term "disaster" is, as stated in the previous chapter, defined by Wallace (1956) as, "A type of behavioural event characterized by a series of time stages and spatial dimensions, each associated with different activities and roles embedded both in the pre-disaster system and the conditions imposed by the event itself" (1956: 12). Elaborating on this, the emphasis of this chapter is the spatial dimension of post-disaster circumstances, how an ordinary sports field becomes a makeshift camp, called camp Delmas[14]. Within camp Delmas, the pre-disaster systems (adults, gender and gangs) influence the coping strategies of the children left behind in the wake of the earthquake.

This chapter explores the main argument that in times of disaster, people attempt to re-establish social networks that existed prior to the disaster. The children left behind tried to rebuild a sense of continuity with what they have lost. This argument will be expounded as followed; subchapter 2.2 - *Internally Displaced* - will first provide the social context of Obert's story who became internally displaced due to the earthquake. Given this social context I will proceed to analyze what it means for children, to have lost their homes and entire families during a disaster. The following subchapter 2.3 - *Tied to Ties* - will shed light on how it was possible for Obert and other left behind children to recreate their social networks. In this section, the importance of Haitian kinship ties will come to the forefront. That these ties are not strictly defined in terms of 'blood' helps left behind children to form new kinship ties as a coping mechanism.

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[14] This is a pseudonym

In the last subchapter 2.4 - *Community in the Making* - the 13-year old Obert and his best friend Christophe, a 14-year old boy also living inside camp Delmas show how they struggled to re-establish their social networks after the earthquake, while their coping mechanisms are tempered by the power structures (such as adults, gender and gangs) which existed prior to the disaster but continue to affect the community formed within camp Delmas after the disaster.

2.2 INTERNALLY DISPLACED

The best-known disaster anthropologist, Oliver-Smith (2006) has shown that, over the past twenty years, scholars from the field of development-induced displacement, refugee studies and disaster research (Hansen and Oliver-Smith 1982, Cernea 1996, Turton 2003, Oliver-Smith 2010) have discovered that displaced people share many similar challenges. We can therefore place the story of Obert in a broader context. Although the places and people are geographically and culturally different, the socio-political environments and causes of dislocation could be similar, as they emerge within a number of common concerns and processes. Oliver-Smith (2006) has compared refugees, earthquake survivors and other displaced persons and argues that their uprooting, relocation, coping with continued stress, and need to adapt to new or radically changed environments are similar.

Prior to the earthquake, the sports field that became camp Delmas had been a government owned sports centre since 1980. The surface area is around 1700 square meters and thousands survivors from the neighbourhood came on January 12th 2010, the day of the earthquake. Many more people went there than could be accommodated given the space. Most of them arrived with nothing more than the clothes that they were wearing and the items they could carry.[15] Some brought blankets and placed them on the ground to sleep on, while others returned to their destroyed houses the next day. Despite this, people kept returning to the sports field, afraid to stay in their houses. They could not protect their belongings from being stolen when they were in the sports field, so they took all they could carry with them in this perpetual migration and eventually installed themselves on the field. The blankets on the sports field were

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[15] Descriptions from the first days of the camp were obtained from in-depth interviews with earthquake survivors and the director of the sports field.

tied to poles to cover themselves against the rain. The director of the former sports centre, Judith Metellus, estimated that there were around 10.000 earthquake victims living at the sports field immediately following the earthquake; the sports centre turned into a spontaneous camp for internally displaced Haitians. It took about three to four weeks before the first humanitarian organizations visited this camp. Until that time, survivors were forced to take care of themselves, and each other. Metellus proudly explained how they helped each other during the first days and weeks;

> "Spontaneously, we established a committee in the camp. They were just random people who were willing to ensure the safety of the camp as security guards. Nothing was professional or paid, nor did they officially have any more rights than others, but everyone was eager to help each other. Due to the earthquake there were many wounded people arriving here [in the camp] as well. These wounded people had no idea where they could go to receive medical assistance as most hospitals were destroyed too. A nurse together with a medical student and a doctor, who were also victims of this earthquake and stayed in this camp, all came forward with their expertise and an unofficial medical team was formed as well."

The random individuals who established the camp committee as described by Metellus, however represented a group of 'dangerous big boys' for Obert. Looking back at the photo Obert took of these 'dangerous boys' playing basketball, he appeared scared. This photo is clearly taken from a safe distance, as these young men are not recognisable.

Photo 1: 'Dangerous big boys' playing basketball at the sports field in camp Delmas, photographed by Obert at a safe distance.

Obert reacted to the photo by stating:

> "These are the *gason* (big boys). They are very dangerous! They take everything they want. There is only one basketball field and we want to play too, but that is not possible. We are *ti gason* (small boys). *Blan* (foreigners) have given us a basketball to play with, but the *gason* took it from us. Now they play with it!"

Although Obert described a relatively non-dangerous situation when expressing how dangerous those "big boys" were, Gordon, Farberow and Maida (1999: 3) argue that children in (post-) disaster situations have an increased awareness of potential danger to themselves and to others considered significant in their lives. Before the 2010 earthquake, these 'dangerous big boys' were members of a local gang in the neighbourhood. Since the earthquake, they lived as other earthquake survivors had, in camp Delmas. Often gangs present themselves as camp managers in order to intimidate the inhabitants out of their scant resources. In doing so, gangs tried to re-establish the pre-disaster system; a neighbourhood in which they had control.

Karen Harper (1992) investigated rural Appalachian children who moved to urban cities within the United States and stated that, although migrating adults experience cultural confusion as a reaction to disruption in their traditional methods of discovering and experiencing meaning, migrating children also experience disruption in their ways of finding meaning in the world around them. Children are therefore more dependent on their social networks than adults, as they experience the world not only through their own perceptions, but also through those of family members close to them (Harper 1992: 2). Gordon, Farberow and Maida (1999), examined the effects of major disaster on the mental health and emotional functioning of children. Agreeing with Harper, they state that a child's identity develops through bonding with significant persons in the social field, at home, at work and in the community (Gordon, Farberow and Maida 1999: 3). Obert had lost both his home and his entire family as a result of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Therefore, this young boy was forced to face the chaos of conflict and displacement on his own. Combined with his loss and grief, as well as the immediate responsibility of survival, this new-found orphan-hood made Obert's situation extremely difficult. According to several international aid organizations, children who have lost their social network are one of the most vulnerable groups as they are at high risk of abuse, exploitation, forced labour, abduction, or recruitment into armed forces.[16]

Obert, and other children in makeshift camps, are perhaps more vulnerable since they have lost their family, but these children are more than just vulnerable victims as they are often defined to be in literature, by aid organisations and international media. Marisa O Ensor (2008) commented that many studies on children in disasters, especially those from mental health or psychological perspectives, have focused primarily on "victims" who have been negatively affected and have displayed problematic reactions to the disaster. According to O'Ensor humanitarian agencies are responsible for perpetuating these stereotypes of neediness and dependency in the face of catastrophe. O'Ensor (2008: 5) argued that the important findings in ethnographic research which show that children's capacities, and their knowledge of environmental issues and indigenous coping mechanisms given by their parents, can be essential

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[16] The several organizations include; UNICEF Haiti, Save the Children USA, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Haiti, International Rescue Committee (IRC) Haiti, and Plan International.

assets for families in the aftermath of disasters, are ignored. Demonstrating this point, Obert showed that he was more than just a victim as he, among others, followed people to a sports field, that later became camp Delmas. The following subchapters will exemplify this factor even more as Obert and Christophe themselves show their capacities and strategies of survival and social reconstruction.

Camp Delmas was one of the 900 makeshift camps in Port-au-Prince and one out of 1.300 camps in Haiti. The United Nations estimated that there were 1.5 million Haitians displaced as a result of the 2010 earthquake. But how can we theoretically understand the presence of the inhabitants of these camps? Some have referred to disaster victims as Internally Displaced People (Stephens and Reide 2006). The term "Internally Displaced Persons" refers to persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (Rai 2005: 8). Castels and Miller (2009) also added that this term refers to specific ethnic groups within a society I also partly use this label, as it is the case that the Haitian earthquake survivors are displaced from their homes, and the ones who live in Port-au-Prince's makeshift camps are without a doubt internally displaced. However, they are not "Internally Displaced People" as they were not a specific ethnic group. I agree with the first definition, but not with the added condition. In the media, Haiti's refugee camps are referred to as "tent cities," drawing on connotations that include strangers temporarily living next to one another in conditions similar to holiday camping sites. Within international migration, specialists often speak about new communities where diaspora groups gather together within an already existing society (Castels and Miller 2009, Eriksen 2007: 91-106). As makeshift camps are not a holiday camping site, nor yet fully developed communities, I interpret "tent cities" as internally displaced communities-in-the-making that have arisen as a result of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, forcing residents to migrate and become internally displaced.

During six months of fieldwork, I saw how refugee camps in general, and especially in the case of camp Delmas, began with people from in and around the neighbourhood

forced to live together and slowly transformed into a community-in-the-making. Before the humanitarian aid organizations came, a camp committee installed themselves as in charge of camp Delmas, claiming to be responsible for the administration and security. Residences of this camp started to sell their products, from food, clothes, telephone re-charging facilities to charcoal and matches. Highly educated residents used their expertise to provide some medical assistance. A few weeks later, some international NGOs[17] helped this community-in-the-making by opening an informal school, offering professional medical care through a mobile clinic and installing water tanks. Within this internally displaced community-in-the-making children, especially those left behind like Obert, had roles as individual actors. The social context on the earthquake story of Obert who has been internally displaced, outlined in this subchapter, shows that children without families have a greater dependence on the consistency and predictability of their environment and the people around them, than other children. The following subchapter 2.3 - *Tied to Ties* - will shed light on the changing social networks of Obert that will help to re-establish kinship ties as a coping mechanism.

2.3 TIED TO TIES

In the previous subchapter, I demonstrated how the 2010 earthquake not only forced Obert to relocate to camp Delmas, but also caused him to lose his family. With this separation, he lost his entire social network, which normally includes a community and family household (Harper 1992). Haitian children, as Haitians in general, rely on their communities for day-to-day survival. They borrow money from neighbours, share food, watch one each other's children, and sell things they pick up in the central markets. The 2010 earthquake destroyed existing community networks of mutual help and systems of rights and responsibilities (cf. Bonnerjea 1994).

Lucy Bonnerjea (1994) has analysed aid organisation programs aimed at tracing families after disasters. These programs attempt to find families and assess if the separated children can be reunited with them. In her paper Bonnerjea (1994)

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[17] Zamni Lasante opened a mobile clinic; the American organizations Operation Blessing together with KT-Foundation organized an alternative schooling program; UNICEF provided the school materials; and the National Directorate of Water Supply and Sanitation (DINEPA), the Haitian government's water and sanitation authority, placed water tanks.

suggested that cultural coping mechanisms within communities need to explicitly be a part of the patterns of social organisations of all disaster interventions, including family tracing programs. Bonnerjea stated that relationships, based as they are on cultural rights and responsibilities, are the mainstay of a community's patterns of social organisation. Following this, I have conducted a survey amongst 113 post-earthquake relocated children, those with and without families, living in camp Delmas. The results of this survey revealed the extent of which the household composition for these children (age between 11 and 13 years old) changed since the 2010 earthquake. The questionnaire was conducted during an informal school class in the makeshift camp at the beginning of March 2010. Questions such as, with whom did you live before and after the earthquake, were asked.[18] Maryse – the 11-year-old girl introduced in the beginning of this thesis – represents one case study in response to this survey question, as she lost her father during the earthquake and now lives with her aunt and her aunt's baby son. Maryse experienced a major change in her family's household composition, and she is not the only one. The results of this survey showed that from the 113 displaced children who participated, 60 percent experienced changes in their family household since the earthquake. Pre-disaster literature demonstrated that it was not unusual for children to grow up in households where their biological parents were physically absent (Murray and Smucker 2004, Sommerfelt 2006, PADF 2009). My post-disaster survey confirmed this finding, as 21 percent out of the 113 displaced children did not live with their biological parents. After the earthquake, this number decreased to 15 percent. According to the results, before the earthquake two of the 113 surveyed children lived alone and three declared to live with non-family relatives, in a church, as adopted family members and with friends. Chapter three will elaborate on this and focus more on the pre-disaster situation of relocated children. After the earthquake, all of the participating children claimed to be living with their "families" again. Elaborating on the main argument of this chapter, in times of disaster people attempt to re-establish social s that existed prior to the disaster, after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, children became more dependent on family ties as more children returned to their families. The survey results are summarized in Table 1.

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[18] The complete questionnaire can be viewed as an enclosure on Page 77 of this document.

Living with whom	Before the earthquake	After the earthquake
Mother	79 (70%)	92 (81%)
Father	55 (48%)	57 (50%)
Aunt and/or uncle	10 (9%)	12 (11%)
Cousin	2 (2%)	0
Siblings	5 (5%)	4 (4%)
Grandparents	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
Non family members	3 (3%)	0
Alone	2 (2%)	0
Not with one of their parents	24 (21%)	17 (15%)
	N = 113	**N = 113**

Table 1. Changed household composition of displaced children in camp Delmas, Port-au-Prince, on March 2010.

In camp Delmas, Obert redefined and rebuilt his social networks. This story provides insight in how he managed to find a new mother:

> I woke up because something was softly scratching at my feet. It tickled. First I saw a street dog running away. I thought it was the dog. So I closed my eyes again. But I felt the tickling again. When I opened my eyes again, there was a woman sitting next to me. She offered me a small packet of water (very common in Haiti in order to drink cheap clean drinking water). The woman asked me where my family was. I told her that I don't have any family anymore. I cried. I wanted to hide it. My father always told me, *gason pa kriye* (boys don't cry). But I could not hide it. The woman caressed me on my head (while telling the story, he demonstrated the movement). The woman told me that she would take care of me as her own son. I am so happy! It feels like I have a mother again!

The results of post-earthquake survey showed that following the earthquake there were no children living alone or without their family. Obert, who also participated in this survey, said that in his post-earthquake situation he lived with his mother, even though his biological mother died during the 2010 earthquake. Obert called the woman, who promised him she would care for him as her own son, his (new) mother. This corresponds to Bonnerjea's conclusion that the longer the time lag between separation and finding a lost family member, the more a child settles into his or her

new living situation. Children in this type of situation form new relationships, some even find substitute parental figures; this process has the potential to bring about intense bonding with peers who, in many ways, become a new family (Bonnerjea 1994). In Haiti, kin and family relationships are often identified in contrast to "strangers," and therefore categories differ significantly from one another and categories of kinship vary significantly. For instance, Obert and Christophe created kinship-like relationships through very close friendships. Moreover, Haitian kinship ties are not strictly defined in terms of "blood", which differs with most Western point of view on family ties. Instead, kinship ties are not only *given*, but are also *created* by sharing food, residence, or protection and guardianship of different kinds (Bastien 1961: 491-492 in Sommerfelt 2006: 24).

Photo 2: Christophe is making food and shares this with his newly created family friends, photo made by Obert.

Haitian family structures are thus complex, but it is crucial for studying and understanding that family ties are not emphasised in terms of blood, but that people form new kinship ties as a coping mechanism. During the field research, I also saw examples of girls left behind who were "cared for" by non-relative households in the

refugee camp.[19] Remarkably, I have not observed any young girls living alone in camp Delmas; non-relatives households in this camp accommodated the left behind girls. Participant observation and in-depth interviews helped to understand this matter. In general, when a Haitian child calls someone his or her mother, this does not necessarily mean that she is the biological or legal guardian. Thus, as for all of these displaced children who participated in this survey I have used the *emic* terms the children used for describing the persons with whom they live and have lived in order to include children's perspectives in disaster responses.

Unaccompanied children were however, neglected by the official registration agency IOM, who is responsible for the registration of all displaced Haitians located in camps and settlements, since the 2010 earthquake.[20] Through this mandate, only the adult head of each household was registered and they could report other biological or non-relative members of the household. Through this registration protocol, unaccompanied minors needed to associate themselves with an adult in order to be registered. Although Obert had a (new) mother by his own standards, his name was not to be found in this registration, as his new mother did not claim the 13-years-old Haitian boy as her son, nor as a non-relative child living with her. This put Obert at higher risk of exploitation. In total, 24 children left behind living in camp Delmas, were not officially registered. This organizational protocol, perhaps unintentionally, let children wondering around undocumented. The material consequence was that these children did not have official access to distributed care such as, food and non-food items provided by international aid organisations and the Haitian government.

The childrens undocumented position, the forced movement to the streets and the makeshift camps theoretically made these children 'street children'. According to J. Christopher Kovats-Bernats (2006), an anthropologist who conducted ethnographic research on the cultural lives of street children in Port-au-Prince, a home versus street differentiation contains hidden assumptions about kinship, childhood, and domestic

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[19] I have put "cared for" in quotation marks, because this is the explanation of the camp committee and camp director. Nevertheless, this study did not focus on how girls left behind were living within the post-earthquake non-relative households, thus it is not clear if those girls experienced this as "being cared for" as well.

[20] The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the head of the camp management cluster in Haiti, and ensures that these displaced Haitians have both assistance and protection, while finding durable solutions. The cluster system is the humanitarian response capacities of the UN agencies, NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and other key humanitarian actors. Since the 2010 earthquake, the cluster system is the defect government system of Haiti.

life (2006: 15). In camp Delmas, Obert and other children left behind used their newly created kinships as coping mechanisms for this situation. It is through these coping mechanisms that the dichotomy between the home and the streets is made apparent. It is therefore necessary to study children left behind on a long-term basis, recognizing that they did not necessarily stay alone during the immediate aftermath of the 2010 earthquake.

This section shows that the fact that Haitian kinship ties are not strictly defined in terms of 'blood', enabled Obert and other children who were left behind to form new kinship ties as a coping mechanism to re-establish their social networks. In the last subchapter 2.4 - *Community in the Making* -, the 13-year old Obert and his best friend Christophe, a 14-year old boy also living inside camp Delmas, will show us how they use their newly created families, based on kinship and/or reciprocity as their coping mechanism. But also how these coping mechanisms are tempered by the power structures (such as adults, gender and gangs) in camp Delmas, which is a resurrection of the power structures that existed before the disaster. This exemplifies that existent social networks prior to the disaster continue to affect community development after the disaster.

2.4 COMMUNITY IN THE MAKING

In the previous subchapter I have shown the changing social ties of internally displaced children within camp Delmas. Rebuilding a new social network is a significant coping strategy these children employ in order to survive in the aftermath of Haiti's earthquake. It is through a social organisation that a community-in-the-making becomes a newly developed community.

Annelies Heijmans (2004) has analysed the practices and meaning of community-based risk reduction approaches, identifying their potential and limitations in areas affected by both natural disaster and conflict in Afghanistan and Indonesia. Heijmans stated that when hazards strike, local people are always ready to cope and do not significantly rely on support and assistance from outsiders to a given community, such

as governments (2004:119). In this perspective, Heijmans concluded that local people view disasters as part of normal life and develop coping strategies to adjust to a fast-changing environment (2004:115). Although, there is no universal response to disaster, communities that are located in apparently similar conditions have learnt to adapt to their disaster-risk situations as part of their traditions and culture (Blolong 1996:15; Mula 1999:138 in Heijmans 2004: 119). Elaborating on Heijmans' conclusion, I argue that the coping strategies of Obert and other children left behind are mediated through and adapted to their changing social networks. For Obert, and other children left behind, their disaster situation became part of their daily struggle living in the camp.

As stated earlier, Haitian kinship is partly created through social networks. Many of these ties also entail work, as is demonstrated through the arrangement of a small-unpaid job for Obert by his new mother. In this sense, social relationships have many aspects and serve multiple functions (e.g. Sommerfelt 2006: 24). Obert's new mother gave him an unpaid job at the mobile clinic of Zamni Lasante (Partners in Health), which was hosted in a large, dark-green military tent in the middle of camp Delmas. His mother works there as an administrative nurse and was in need of assistance. Like many of the over 10,000 people living in the makeshift camp, this 41-years-old Haitian nurse, had lost her house during the earthquake. Joining her in the camp was her husband, a policeman, and their two teenage children. The main reason they moved to camp Delmas after the earthquake was to help as a nurse. Together with a doctor and Bertrand, the Haitian-American medical student, she immediately began treating the injured arriving at this settlement. Her new home, a four-person tent was located next to the mobile clinic entrance. Obert and his best friend Christophe were put to work accomplishing all kinds of small tasks for the clinic, including fetching water as there was no running water available, preparing the waiting area, and delivering voice messages between the doctors and staff. During this field research, Obert was very happy with his job as he was able to go places where other children were typically denied access. As he stated: "*Li fè m vini pi enpòtan*" (It makes me important). 14-years-old Christophe also lost his family during the earthquake. Before this, Christophe lived with his parents and 17-years-old sister. Both of Christophe's parents died, but his sister survived and lives with her boyfriend in another makeshift

camp not far from camp Delmas. Christophe came a few days after the earthquake to the camp and immediately met Obert. They became best friends. Christophe often went to his former and partly destroyed house to take a bath or to pray, but he lived with Obert in the camp. They received a brand new tent for their hard work for the mobile clinic. This tent was placed next to the medical tent in the middle of the newly developed community, which made them, again, very important.

Photo 3: The new tent of Obert and Christophe, photo made by Obert.

As a result of household income losses, many children were often drafted into informal labour markets earlier than they or their families ordinarily would have chosen. Obert and Christophe were working, but they seem to enjoy it as their job gave them an "*enpòtan*" (important, as they describe it) position in this newly developed community. This differs from the Western liberal view that children should not work at all, but be cared for. This view depicts any other kind of childhood as a childhood 'lost' or 'stolen' (Bourdillon 2006: 1202). Michael Bourdillon (2006), professor at the University of Zimbabwe, examined the discourse on abolishing child labor and whether this could work in the children's interests. He started the discussion with the dichotomy between adulthood and childhood inadequate to analyse the lives of children, and questioned where to draw the line between the two states, and how individuals are to pass from one state to another (2006: 1205). "The magic age is

fifteen (or fourteen in some countries, or sixteen according to the ideal of the ILO).[21] Below this age, work is a problem and abuse; above this age, work is a right and unemployment is the problem." This age range is based on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1989. Within these universal rights, the social constructions of childhood in different societies and in diverse cultural settings are being ignored (Theis 2001: 100). Agreeing with Manfred Liebel (2004 in Bourdillon 2006: 1206) who argued that children from the south teach us a different perspective on children's work from the one that arises in Europe, I argue that the work provided for the 13-year-old Obert and his 14-year-old friend Christophe contributed to the establishment of relationships in the camp, and gave them growing independence.

Before they earned their own brand new tent, Obert and Christophe also used their position at the mobile clinic to obtain a comfortable sleeping place inside the huge military tent. The clinic was only open in the mornings, during the work week, while the rest of the time the tent was protected with surrounding barbed wire. Yet the children, who worked there, knew very well when, and more important, how to enter. After the cleaners left, the children climbed over the weakest spot of the barded wire and made themselves at home by sleeping on the iron waiting benches, rather than sleep on the dirty streets without a tent. In the mornings they made sure to leave the clinic tent before 06h00 when the first medical staff would arrive. In this example, Obert and Christophe demonstrate how they used their work to cope with a better sleeping environment, although some Western scholars merely treat working children as vulnerable victims. As Heijmans states, coping strategies are the result of a process of experiments and innovation through which people build up the skills, knowledge and self-confidence necessary to shape and respond to their environment (2004:125). As affected communities know best how to cope in a post-disaster environment, Heijmans argues that we need to give these affected communities a voice and to recognize their perception of risk as well as their active role in exploring strategies that ensure livelihood security in the long term (2004:125).

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[21] ILO = the United Nations agency for International Labour Organisation, which is responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards.

Photo 4: The researcher with two of the boys.

These local strategies are influenced when someone from outside, like an anthropologist, enters the community. When Obert and Christophe saw this photo they described me as their beautiful sister. I, as a researcher, was given a family name by the children as well, making me part of their newly created family. Thus, I played a role in their coping strategies and newly developed community as well. Obert, Christophe, and Maryse used my unique position as an outsider/insider to strengthen their own position in the newly developed community. In relation to other children in the camp, they were trying to get away with things other children would not be able to get away with. For example, during a street game, Maryse thought she was allowed to cheat in order to win the game, as she said: *"Talitha ap gade, konsa mwen dwe genyen kounye an"* (Talitha is watching so I have to win now). Not only were Obert, Christophe and Maryse trying to get away with things other children would not be able to get away with, but thought they were better than other people in general because of their connection with me. One example of this came during a local dance contest, organized by the camp committee. Christophe participated in this contest and wanted me to see the show. The contest was held on the empty basketball field, the only place in the camp, which was not full of tents and other constructed shelters. When I arrived at the camp, Christophe took my hand and forced us through the long queue by pushing children and adults roughly out of the way. At the entrance there were gang members demanding an entrance fee for the contest. Christophe, however, felt strengthened with my presence and became angry. He yelled; *"Mwen travay pou klinik la. Mwen la avèk Talitha. Konsa, nou ta dwe vini la."* (I work for the clinic. I am with Talitha. So we need to be here). In the end we did not pay and I sat in the front row watching Christophe win the contest.

My presence in the camp not only influenced Obert, Christophe, and Maryse, but to a certain extent, this is true for most of the inhabitants at camp Delmas. Most people in this camp knew I was around and why I was there. This usually meant people knew I was doing: 'something with the kids for an international study.' A lot of people kept me posted on everything that happened in the camp, mainly consisting of gossip about their neighbours. Besides chatting with people, I was given a role in the camp, as people saw me as a way to attract international aid organisations to their camp. While doing research I was concurrently speaking with relief agencies and indeed mentioned the detailed location of my field research locations. In return, I was protected in and around the camp by gang members, as they were responsible for their camp and therefore also for me. The area where the camp was located is a generally dangerous area (even before the earthquake), and therefore someone always walked me home at the end of the day. During tense situations, such as during aid distributions, they protected me by making sure I was the first to be safe by seeking out for me. During these moments, I always brought Obert, Christophe, and Maryse to safety with me. In doing so, this greatly enhanced their security during tense situations when I was there and looked out for them, and indicates again that their connection to me was part of their coping strategies for survival. Unintentionally, I became one of the channels through which they found indirect and direct protection.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Establishing new relationships with people who can protect them is a significant coping strategy that left behind children employ in order to survive in the aftermath of Haiti's earthquake. In general, children in (post-) disaster situations have an increased awareness of potential danger posed to them and to others. It is necessary for children who have lost their families to rebuild their social network. The emphasis of chapter two was put on the spatial dimension of post-disaster circumstances, and it showed how camp Delmas slowly became a community-in-the-making. Within this newly developed community, the pre-disaster systems (adults, gender and gangs) influenced the coping strategies of the children left behind. Nevertheless, these children were still able to find opportunities for survival in unexpected realms of social interaction;

through work and liaising with key figures such as substitute family members, including me.

I am aware of the ongoing anthropological debate concerning the influence of anthropologists on their research situation. The main argument goes that anthropologists should limit their influence on the research situation, yet my presence in camp Delmas did have a notable impact on the agency of Obert, Christophe, and Maryse, and on the actual community-making process. Because of the extremely difficult post-disaster situation in which this research took place, I was both a researcher and a person living through difficult circumstances as well. This has some important methodological implications for the study. By this, I am referring to my relationship to the boys left behind, as Maryse lived with her aunt in the camp. Once I was accepted into camp Delmas, and was allowed to focus on the kids, I mostly saw boys left behind. It was only later in the research process that I understood that my observations were due to the local social networks that has its own kind of facility for the "care" of girls due to the widespread knowledge of the vulnerability of girls. Therefore, girls left behind were being "taken care of" by other non-relative households in the camp. The nurse, for example, had taken in two girls (10- and 12-years-old), but left Obert and Christophe outside her tent, because it is uncommon in the Haitian society to take in un-related boys.

By the end of this field research, I wanted to facilitate assistance for Obert and Christophe and went to several relief agencies in order to ask for their assistance. IOM and IRC both visited the camp looking for vulnerable children who needed immediate help. During their visit, the relief agencies identified the two previously mentioned girls living with the nurse, as *restavèk* girls. According to the relief organizations, these girls conducted heavy unpaid domestic labor and were regularly beaten. The following chapter (especially subchapter 3.3) will elaborate more on the *restavèk* phenomenon. The 10-years-old girl accepted the help of the family reunification programs offered by the agencies, while the other 12-year-old girl wanted to stay with the nurse. My relationship with the nurse drastically changed because of this revelation. Although I do not want to condemn her, and would like to be an objective researcher, I had unconsciously already judged her. Obert, however, still had

unlimited respect and admiration for his new mother. Therefore, I have tried to reflect his positive perspective on her throughout this document. Yet, I mention this detail in order to give a full understanding of the situation as it unfolded.

In the end, Obert and Christophe were not identified as vulnerable and needy by the relief agencies. This shows that aid organizations have difficulties to both find and identify the entire spectrum of vulnerable and needy children due to the fact that they tend to focus on specific categories that are known to be vulnerable. Whereas this can be explained by fact that girls tend to be more vulnerable, it nonetheless holds the inherent danger of overlooking other needy and vulnerable children. In this case it reveals a post-disaster situation wherein the vulnerable situation of boys is easily underestimated.

The experiences of Obert and other boys left behind reveal the two main arguments of this chapter. First, Obert and other boys left behind struggled to re-establish their social networks after the earthquake in order to develop a sense of continuity of what they have lost. Second, in their attempts to rebuild social structures the boys left behind efforts were tempered by pre-disaster social structures. In an interesting paradox it has become clear that the continuity of pre-disaster structures inhibits left behind boys' struggle to ensure continuity in their lives.

Continuity will be an important component in the following chapter as well. Chapter three will elaborate even more on the pre- versus post-earthquake situation of relocated children, and argues that the 2010 earthquake did not cause a split or change, but was rather a continuation of pre-disaster systems in which Haitian children are relocated.

3.1 EARTHQUAKE STORY OF THE 15-YEARS-OLD GIRL LOVELIE.

I used to live with my brother (13) and sister (17) at *matant* (my aunt)'s house in Port-au-Prince, because *manman m* (my mother) is very sick. *Manman m* could not take care of us and asked her sister if we could stay with her. The sister of *manman m*, *matant*, is young and does not have any children of her own. In Port-au-Prince *matant* lived with her brother, my uncle, and her mother, my grandmother. *Matant* and my uncle worked at the market selling products. On Saturdays I helped her at the market. My brother, sister, and I, we all went to good schools and had a lot of friends. I liked Port-au-Prince a lot. Of course my sister and I worked in the house, but that's normal. What kind of work we did? We fetched the water, wiped the floor, cooked diner, did the laundry and the dishes, and so forth. We were responsible for *tout nèt* (the whole household). Yes, we worked very hard, but so did *matant* and uncle at the market.

On the day of the earthquake, my grandmother sat in front of our house. I was unfolding bed linen outside of the house. My brother was playing soccer and my sister was fetching water just around the corner. Then *goudou goudou* came. The ground was shaking. I was terrified! I held my grandmother and grabbed a tree to hold on to. My sister and brother ran to my grandmother and me. We all held hands and did not let go of the tree. Later in the evening *matant* and uncle came back from the market. Then everybody was back together again. Fortunately nobody got injured or even worse, died! We spent that evening in church to be safe. A lot of people were at the church and we saw many of our friends and neighbours there too. The next morning we went back to our house. There were huge cracks in the walls. Cups and plates lay broken on the

floor as well as our Maria painting and other things. My sister and I started cleaning all that mess. But my grandmother screamed that she could not stay here anymore and wanted to leave Port-au-Prince. My uncle and brother brought my grandmother to the bus station and she went to one of her other daughters at the countryside. When my uncle got back, he and *matant* told us that we, my sister, brother, and I, had to leave too. So we took three different buses to get to Belladere and went back to our sick mother. We all were a bit nervous, because we had not seen *manman m* for a very long time. I believe it was a few years ago. In the bus I thought: Would she still recognise us?!
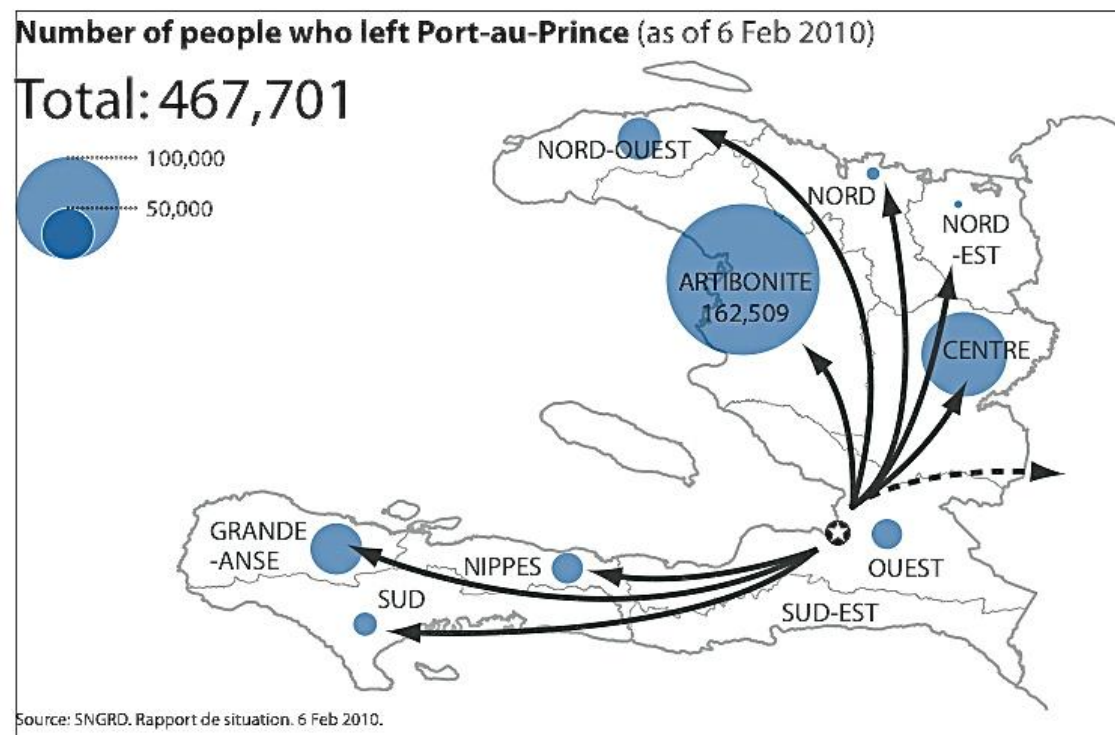
INTRODUCTION

This chapter (three – *Returning 'Home'*) starts with the earthquake story of a 15-years-old Haitian girl, named Lovelie. Due to the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Lovelie and her siblings had to migrate. The analysis of Lovelie's migration is based on Oliver-Smith's (2009) concept of migration, in which migratory movement is an adaptation strategy to environmental change. Lovelie and her siblings migrated back to their biological mother in Belladere city, a rural town situated along Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic. Lovelie's story is one of many stories of Haitian children who migrated after the earthquake, not to makeshift settlements where most of the internally displaced Haitians were located in Port-au-Prince, but outside the stricken area, to the countryside. This chapter will explore how these post-earthquake relocated children dealt with their changing social networks. This chapter differs from the previous chapter – *Left Behind* - in that the children analysed here used to live with extended family members in the Port-au-Prince, a relocation process that began long before the 2010 earthquake. Many of the children in this specific situation returned to their homes in the Haitian countryside following the earthquake; homes wherein often at least one of their biological parents was still living. Through this analysis, I elaborate on the disaster concept of Wallace (1956) who argued that a

disaster is, "a type of behavioural event characterized by a series of time stages and spatial dimensions, each associated with different activities and roles embedded both in the pre-disaster system and the conditions imposed by the event itself" (1956: 12). I emphasize on the pre-disaster system of child relocations, in particular, the *restavèk* system.

This chapter argues that disasters have a tendency to lay social structures bare and highlight their inner workings. The structure of chapter three is as follows: After Lovelie's earthquake story (3.1) – I trace her relocation to Belladere city in '*Moving to Belladere,*' subchapter 3.2. I show how Lovelie's post-earthquake migration was possible through her social networks, and how this in general was inextricably linked to earlier rural-urban migration movements. Subchapter 3.3 – *Refugee or* Restavèk – compares the differences and similarities of the Haitian child relocation system, referred to as *restavèk*, with the post-earthquake relocation of Haitian children. Subchapter 3.4 – *Home in the making* – looks at how Lovelie, and other post-earthquake relocated children, recreated their own place in a 'new' community of Belladere. Forced to change homes, these children still tried to maintain the same activities and roles embedded in both the pre-disaster system of Haiti, and the conditions imposed by the 2010 earthquake itself. The last subchapter 3.5 – *Crossing Borders* – describes another form of child relocation. It follows Stephan, a 13-years-old Haitian boy, who worked in the neighbouring border town of Elías Piña in the Dominican Republic. In this subchapter, I follow Godziak's (2008:917) argumentation that a situation wherein post-earthquake Haitian children are crossing national borders can easily be identified to child labour. This will become clear when both the place of departure as well as place of destination is explored.

3.2 MOVING TO BELLADERE

According to the United Nations (OCHA) displacement and population figures, Lovelie is one of the 467,701 displaced Haitians who left Port-au-Prince for the countryside in February 2010.[22]

Source: SNGRD. Rapport de situation. 6 Feb 2010.

The damage, risk of aftershocks, and deaths in Port-au-Prince and its surrounding area had far-reaching implications beyond reconstruction of the city. Displaced Haitians were not only in camps in the directly affected areas. Large numbers sought refuge with relatives and friends in the countryside or choose to return to hometowns municipalities in other regions of the country. The centre department, where Belladere city is located, received almost 100,000 refugees from Port-au-Prince.[23]

Before the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, extreme poverty in the countryside caused migratory movements to Port-au-Prince. Since two decades, over 13,000 peasants

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[22] Map source: Système National de Gestion Des Risques et des Désastres (SNGRD). Rapport de situation. 6 Feb 2010, and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), collected at the website: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/LPAA-83CC4Y?OpenDocument, last visited at November 30th, 2010.
[23] Source: ochaonline.un.org/Haiti.

migrated to the capital every year (World Bank in Kovats-Bernat 2006: 28). This internal rural-urban migratory movement began after the United Stated occupation (1915-1934) of Haiti, which led to the decentralisation of Haiti's politics and economy. During this occupation, all political and economic attention was directed towards the capital. The rest of the country became inconsequential, a clear indication that Haiti had become "the Republic of Port-au-Prince" (Trouillot 1990: 104). This prioritization of the capital resulted in the neglect of the rural areas and an accompanying stigmatization of the rural culture. The collapse of the rural sector thus encouraged internal rural-to-urban movement, but it also sparked international migration. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians left the country, seeking work in the Dominican Republic and neighbouring Caribbean countries, as well as in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. Despite this international movement, most migrants ended up in Port-au-Prince, searching for jobs that were not there (Beckett 2010).

Up and down the steep ravines that line the roads from Port-au-Prince to the wealthy suburb of Petion-ville that climbs the mountains on the outskirts of the city, new shantytowns made of planks of wood and weak cement blocked homes, where people from the countryside began to situate themselves. From a distance, no life could be seen because the houses were built tightly against one another with roofs that block sight lines. Many rural migrants took up residence in these slums with few services such as lack of water, sanitation and electricity (Oliver-Smith 2010). This rapid population growth caused by rural-to-urban migration led to a crisis of urban overpopulation in Port-au-Prince (Kovats-Bernat 2006: 27). In the meantime, this migration spread poverty more extensively from rural to urban areas (O'Hare and Rivas 2007: 308). This underdevelopment has increased the vulnerability to natural hazards (Gamburd and McGilvray 2010: 9). A result of this migration pattern, poverty in Haiti moved to the suburbs, also known as 'urbanisation of poverty' (Raval Lion in O'Hare and Rivas 2007: 323). Even before the migration flows, there were barely secondary schools in the countryside of Haiti; this further diminished the already small prospects of rural Haitian children. Consequently, each year large groups of children were sent to the cities to attend school (Smith 2001: 13). These children usually live with relatives in Port-au-Prince. The situation of Lovelie, who used to live with her aunt in Port-au-Prince, is thus a very common pre-earthquake situation for

Haitian children. Lovelie's post-earthquake movement was mobilized through existing social networks, and was inextricably bound up with early patterns of rural-urban migration. Therefore, Haitian child relocation was a system that existed prior to the 2010 disaster.

Philip Marfleet, a scholar in refugee studies, investigated Iraqi migrants in European cities. Marfleet (2006) made the connection between forced migration in the age of globalization with mass displacement as an outcome of conflicts and contradictions in the global system and refugee policies in Western cities. In his work, Marfleet (2006) argued that migrants in cities are the "hidden and forgotten predicaments of the urban refugees" and explained the phenomenon of invisible city refugees, or those who are scattered throughout the city and therefore not identifiable (2006: 224). This is in clear contrast with refugees who live in camps or settlements specific to displaced persons. The fact that they stay in one place makes it easier for researchers and governments to identify them. I apply Marfleet's concept of invisible city refugees to the Haitian context, in which earthquake refugees who did not flee to makeshift camps, but to other towns and villages outside the direct stricken areas can be termed as invisible refugees. The earthquake refugees in Belladere city, for example, are not in visible camps, but most of them stay in their relatives' or friends' homes. Due to the invisibility of these refugees living behind closed doors, the exact number of earthquake refugees in Belladere city is unknown.

This phenomenon, when relatives take in other relatives during times of an emergency, can be found as well in some of the literature on social organisation in Haiti. Anthropologist Jennie Smith (2001: 73) has studied rural social organisation of Haitian peasantry in the mountains of Haiti's south-western Grand' Anse region and used the Haitian saying: *'yonn ede lòt'* (one helping another), in order to emphasize that kinship ties and obligations are strongly valued in Haitian culture (e.g. Murray and Smucker 2004: 25). Smith compared this Haitian saying with Bourdieu's (1990, cited in Smith 2001: 75) concept of 'habitus,' an embodied understanding of how one must dispose oneself vis-à-vis others. In this way, reciprocity has become naturalized behavior, and explains why the aunt of Lovelie helped her sister by taking in her children.

In the first week of April 2010, I settled down in Belladere city, a small rural border town. As an outsider it was challenging for me to get in contact with these 'invisible refugee children'. Prior to the earthquake, Belladere city had a population of 10.718 inhabitants, 5.262 of which were below the age of 18-years-old.[24] According to Belladere's mayor Emile Lucner, the city increased by almost 50 percent, with approximately 5.500 extra inhabitants as a result of the earthquake. Due to their aforementioned invisibility, the exact numbers remain unknown.[25] I began this portion of my field research by conducting a survey among refugee children from Port-au-Prince in order to understand to what extend family composition of relocated refugee children had changed in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. This survey took place at 20 primary and secondary schools in Belladere city and was implemented with the help of four young Haitian research volunteers. At the same time this survey was conducted, the schools in Port-au-Prince officially opened again for the first time since the earthquake. This meant that some schoolchildren had already left Belladere city to return to the capital. Through this survey, I hoped to gain information on the changing social networks of relocated children. In this chapter, I will elaborate to a certain degree on the outcomes of this survey.[26]

		Girls	Boys

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[24] Source: Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique (IHSI) / Direction des Statistiques Démographiques et Sociales (DSDS) – Mars 2009.

[25] My first visit to Belladere was in March 2010 in order to decide in which of the four border towns I will do my second part of field research.

[26] The survey corresponding to table 2, 3, 4 and 5 can be viewed as an enclosure on Page 78 of this document.

Table 2: Pre-earthquake in Port-au-Prince

Table 3: Post-earthquake in Belladere

		Girls	Boys
In Port-au-Prince	Mother	28	32
	Father	9	9
	Aunt	39	22
	Uncle	8	4
	Siblings	6	9
	Grandparents	1	2
	Non-family	3	2
	Alone	0	3
N = 177			

In Belladere	Mother	53	38
	Father	8	11
	Aunt	14	10
	Uncle	1	3
	Siblings	5	1
	Grandparents	7	9
	Cousin	3	9
	Non-family	2	2
	Alone	1	0
N = 177			

Table 2: Number of children living with which relatives in Port-au-Prince prior to the earthquake.

Table 3: Number of post-earthquake relocated children living with which relatives in Belladere city.

The results of this survey, in which 177 children participated, have shown that before the earthquake 21 per cent (37) of the girls who participated, lived with at least one of her biological parents in the capital. For the boys who participated the result is roughly the same, 23 per cent (32). In total, more than half, or 60 per cent (105), of the children who participated did not live with at least one of their biological parents in Port-au-Prince before the earthquake. These results confirm, together with the pre-disaster literature (Murray and Smucker 2004, Sommerfelt 2006, PADF 2009), that Lovelie's series of relocations were not unique and, as stated previously, her story was clearly one that fell squarely within the pre-disaster system of Haiti as a whole. The earthquake, however, changed the family composition of relocated children to a certain extent.

After the earthquake, 34 per cent (61) of the girls were living with at least one of their biological parents, most of them with their mothers (30 per cent [53]). This shows that the number of girls living with at least one of their biological parents after the earthquake had almost doubled. While for the boys, remarkably, the number, 27 per cent (49), had not increased nearly as much as it did for the girls. The results of this survey revealed a significant gender difference in the family composition changes among relocated refugee children in Belladere city. As stated earlier, this could again be explained by the fact that Haitian patterns of social organisation have their own

kind of facility for the care of girls due to the widespread knowledge of the vulnerability of girls in general. In the previous chapter (two – *Left Behind*) my research also revealed that the girls left behind were taken care of by other non-relatives in the camp, instead of living alone as some of the boys did. As this research did not focus on left behind girls in camp Delmas, other reasons for taking in females in 'homes' need further investigation. However, I still argue that boys are not taken in homes, and therefore the vulnerability of boys could be underestimated. Naturally, this does not mean that the post-earthquake relocated girls, who are now living with at least one of their biological parents or other relatives, are not vulnerable anymore. It merely indicates that the vulnerabilities of boys in light of the conditions they faced tended to be overlooked more easily. As I argue in the following subchapter, the vulnerability of post-earthquake relocated girls who were re-re-located back to their biological parents in rural areas is, to at least some extent, the same in relation to their biological parents.

3.3 REFUGEE OR *RESTAVÈK*

Through the story of Lovelie, the previous subchapter – *Moving to Belladere* – demonstrated that there was a large migration of earthquake refugees to the countryside and that this migration was inextricably tied with earlier rural-urban migration flows. Most earthquake refugees sought shelter with relatives and friends in villages or towns where they originally migrated from. Haitian children have a history of relocation and due to the earthquake, many of these relocations were reversed. The results of the survey of 177 refugee children from Port-au-Prince validate the history of large-scale relocation of Haitian children following the earthquake. This subchapter – *Refugee or* Restavèk – compares the differences and similarities of Haitian child relocation systems before (*restavèk*) and after (refugee) the earthquake.

Lovelie spent seven years, between 2003 and 2010 living with her aunt. Together with Lovelie, I visited her aunt in Port-au-Prince in order to understand the aunt's motivation for taking care of Lovelie and her siblings.

> “In Haiti family is very important. If you have money or
> food, you always share this with your family. The reason

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that my niece (Lovelie) was living with me was because
her mother, my sister, was sick. It is my duty to take
care of her children if she is not able to do that
anymore. I had a job and thus some money to send her
children to school. Our life was not perfect, but at
least we managed to survive. When Lovelie, and her
siblings lived with me, I took responsibility for them as
they were my own children."
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This point of view, taking care of the children of your sister if she is not able to do so, also known as the Haitian saying '*yonn ede lot*' can be found in pre-earthquake literature (Smith 2001: 73). In this subchapter a comparison is made between the pre-disaster system of child relocation, in specific the *restavèk* system and post-earthquake child relocations. The concept *restavèk* is compounded from the French words *rester* (stay) *avec* (with), which basically means "living with others." Most of what has been written on *restavèk* is in the form of organizational reports produced by local and international NGOs (GARR 2001; Tejea et al., OIM 2002; Ferguson 2003; and IHRLC 2002). In 2004, anthropologists Gerard Murray and Glenn Smucker were the first independent scholars to have completed quantitative and qualitative research on '*The Use of Haitian Children; A Study of Trafficking Children'* along the Haitian-Dominican border. Their main focus was on the mobilization of Haitian child labour and patterns in the recruitment of Haitian children both in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Their study showed that 22 per cent of all households in Haiti include children living apart from their biological parents. An important finding here is that a significant percentage of children living outside the home *cannot* be classified as *restavèk* children as not all children are living apart are *restavèk* children, which was contrary to earlier reports (Murray & Smucker 2004: 95). According to their research, the problem of *restavèk* children is intimately linked to poverty on the part of both sending and receiving households. They discovered a class dynamic in which there was a shift away from placing peasant children with bourgeois families to urban poor families (Murray & Smucker 2004: 24). Two years later, Tone Sommerfelt (2006) conducted a study on the situation of domesticity and children in Haiti. In this study child domestic labour is defined in terms of parent-child separation, a high workload assigned to the child, and a lack of or delay in regular schooling (Sommerfelt 2006: 18). Using these criteria, Sommerfelt argued that child domestic labour is inherently

connected with various forms of fosterage arrangements, such as *restavèk* (2006: 23). According to Sommerfelt, the main reason for taking in a *restavèk* child is for use as a free domestic servant. Other local classifications of different types of child relocations are *fè la desant* (temporary lodging) or *pansyonè* (boarder). From a child's perspective, all relocation systems have the same purpose: the potential for a better future by attending school in the capital. The sending and receiving households give meaning to the agreement according to how the child's stay and upkeep is 'compensated', i.e. through the child's work or through parents' payments to the new caretakers (Sommerfelt 2006:24). In this way, young children have little choice but to adapt to the circumstances they are faced with, and thus their agency is tempered by family structures. However, when children are offered conditions, which they see as fair and/or fine, they could use their agency to form relationships with new caretakers that may develop into close bonds.

As was revealed above (subchapter 3.1), Lovelie and her sister managed the entire domestic sphere of her aunt's house. The 15-years-old reacted surprised nevertheless when I posed questions relating to domestic work at her aunt's house. Lovelie did not quite understand why I needed to know exactly what kind of work she did at her aunt's house; according to her, all the children did the same work. Other post-earthquake relocated girls that I spoke with, and who used to live with extended families in the capital, had the same reaction as Lovelie. In a way, asking about the reasons why many children work for relatives is to assume that it is somehow abnormal. It is not for a researcher to decide what is and what is not normal. Most of these girls, and only a few boys, were responsible for *tout nèt* (everything that needed to be done). In this way, I agree with Sommerfelt's (2006: 91) argumentation that child domesticity is an important component of household composition, and as such, in social organization. Domestic work can be seen as the only possibility for girls, with the exception of prostitution, to earn money or deliver a contribution of value to the household. This is why domestic work is often not seen as 'real' work, but as an extension of a woman or girl's 'natural' role in the household (Anderson 2000 in O'Connell Davidson 2005: 53). The Haitian Labour Code of 1984 set the minimum age for children to engage in domestic work tasks at 12 years (Article 341) and 15 years for other sectors (industrial, agricultural, and commercial) (Sommerfelt and

Pederson 2009: 429). Children under the age of twelve years are therefore prohibited from being placed with a family for the purpose of engaging in domestic work. This statute further specifies that children older than twelve years who work in domestic service are entitled to decent lodging, clothing, sufficient and healthy nutrition, and must be enrolled in school or professional training (Joanis 1996: 12; Ngom 1999: 23 in Sommerfelt 2006:10). This Haitian law, however, did not prevent Lovelie from doing domestic work at her aunt's house from the age of eight onward.

The most recent study on *restavèk* aimed to better quantify the use of children as unpaid domestic servants and related violence (PADF 2009). This study elaborated on the class dynamic originally revealed by Murray and Smucker (2004) and showed that the impoverished and violent Port-au-Prince neighbourhood of Cité Soleil had the highest percentage (44 percent) of *restavèk* children (PADF 2009:8). Another important new finding from this study was that a significant minority of households with *restavèk* children (11%) had also sent their own biological children into *restavèk* placement with relatives elsewhere (PADF 2009: 11). PADF's definition of *restavèk* is: "extremely poor children who are sent to other homes to work as unpaid domestic servants—are prone to beatings, sexual assaults and other abuses by host families" (PADF 2009: 8). Comparing the different definitions of *restavèk* children, I identified an evolution in approaches to Haitian children within the literature and research. At first, *restavèk* children were seen as children living with others, mostly with relatives, in order to have access to education. Sommerfelt (2006) added that child domestic work was an inherent condition, and PADF (2009) later superadded that these children were necessarily prone to sexual and other abuses by host families. The sexual and other abuses inherent to the *restavèk* system, has made this system infamous outside of Haiti. International media and aid organisations often report stories of horrible abuses relating to this child relocation system.

As Hoffman and Oliver-Smith stated: "disaster unmasks the nature of a society's social structure, including the ties and resilience of kinship and other alliances" (2002:7). Lovelie's earthquake story reveals how, at first glance, strong family ties between her mother and her aunt were weakened by the necessary emergency response that followed the 2010 earthquake, as her mother stated:

> "*Potoprens Kraze* (Port-au-Prince is broken). Families don't help each other anymore. When your family can they will absolutely help you! My sister already helped me a lot by taking care of my children. But this earthquake, [silence]. *Potoprens Kraze*. My sister has lost everything. She can't help me anymore. I don't blame her. She lost her job and now lives in a refugee camp. She has to survive too."

The social processes of disasters often overlook social-cultural practices and kinship patterns (Hoffman and Oliver-Smith, 1999). It is thus through kinship ties that most child relocation arrangements were made and thus serve to camouflage a treatment that differs little from *restavèk* servant children. Defining *restavèk* children as the previous literature stated, thus demonizes other Haitian child relocation systems. The vast majority of *restavèk* children are related their host family's head of household. Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) concluded that family ties serve as a transmission belt for child placement (PADF 2009: 11). I suggest that elaboration on the fact that family ties do not necessarily protect children is not enough; rather we must investigate the mistreatment and heavy domestic workloads in Haitian household more generally, instead of merely focusing on the *restavèk* system. My field research exposed that the post-disaster situation of girls who were relocated to Port-au-Prince prior to the earthquake only to return following the earthquake, are not necessarily in a safer home environment than that which they left in Port-au-Prince. Lovelie, and other post-earthquake relocated girls, described a continuity between the heavy domestic workload and corporal punishment (in most cases, beaten with a belt) that took place in the households of extended family and that which took place once they returned to their biological homes.[27] Thus, biological homes are not necessary safe as often are assumed.

At this point, it is necessary to note potential researcher bias. The topic of *restavèk* is very sensitive and the term itself is well known by most, if not all, Haitian people. The term and reality of this system is often described as offensive. Domestic work and

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[27] I have used the term corporal punishment instead of abuses, because the children described this as punishments and not as abuses.

physical abuse is often carried out indoors, which means that all the information I have collected concerning this topic stem from interviews, both with relocated children and later with their parents and extended families where they had lived in Port-au-Prince. Thus, I was not witness to the domestic chores or physical abuse that was described to me. However, during this study I lived with a Haitian host family with nine children; some of those children were biological while others were not. During the four months I lived in this household, I observed regular physical abuse towards all nine of the children. When I discussed this with several Haitian friends, I was told that they all experienced similar abuses at a young age. All the girls within my Haitian host family engaged in heavy domestic labor on a daily basis. As suggested previously, this highlights the need to extend the notions of heavy domestic work and corporal punishment that is often narrowly identified with the *restavèk* system. The point needs to be made that this dynamic is not merely limited to *restavèk* children, but also occurs in various other types of family composition. Although, this could be seen as adding to the perpetuation of Haitians as violent and irresponsible parents, unfortunately these kinds of generalizations are sometimes, but not always, rooted in reality.

3.4 HOME IN THE MAKING

The previous subchapter described the pre- versus post-earthquake relocations of Haitian girls. I showed how the post-earthquake relocations are inextricably tied to pre-disaster relocations. The vast majority of these relocations were transmitted through family ties. This subchapter will investigate how post-earthquake relocated girls, returned at 'home' attempted to make themselves at home.

As stated before, the 2010 earthquake has almost doubled the amount of inhabitants of Belladere city. However, when I first arrived there, I did not notice the overwhelming flow of refugees. In a typical overcrowded small local bus, I departed from Port-au-Prince on my way to Belladere city. The rocky road we travelled on led us through streams and rivers. As a result of heavy rainfall it became impossible to drive any further. We waited until the rain stopped and the water level decreases; after two hours we continued our journey. The bus stopped right at the centre of the town.

There was a small brick plaza with an open bar and benches that were occupied by noisy and drinking young men. Sweaty and with much effort, I tried to get off the bus and look around. Horses and donkeys charm the streets. I tried to find a way through the many market vendors that were spread throughout the street with their clothes full of food, an umbrella protecting them against the sun and rain. Children carry heavy buckets of water on their heads. Men were busy repairing the motorcycles that served as the cities taxi system. The smell of gas was awful! I tried not to breathe through my nose. Belladere city is a typical poor rural Haitian town with no shops, banks or supermarkets to be found. These typical rural Haitian conditions are a product of the current global system and in dialectical relationship with those areas we consider 'modern'. Therefore it could be seen as going back in time at least 50 years. The limited facilities have driven many people to the capital, but since the earthquake, many had returned. As an outsider I could not identify these 'invisible earthquake refugees,' that had moved in with relatives and friends in Belladere city.

In order to understand how these invisible earthquake refugees lived in Belladere city, I will outline one example of living conditions. A tiny small bedroom fits exactly one double bed. Five adults shared this bed. The other small room used to be the bathroom and the kitchen, but was turned into another bedroom. Beside another double bed, a ripped cardboard mat with some sheets on the ground was turned into a self-made bed for the children. Following the earthquake, grandfather Isidor hosted seven extra family members in his house in Belladere city. One of them was the 10-year-old Randjit. The young boy lost both his parents as a result of the earthquake and came to Belladere city with his aunt and sisters right after the earthquake to live with his grandfather in the countryside. With seven new family members, this household had a total of seventeen people living in this small house made out of poles and planks as walls, covered with a plastic ceiling. This description gives us a glimpse on how some post-earthquake Haitians physically live as 'invisible refugees.'

In general, people at the countryside are referred to as *peyizan yo* (the plural form of *peyizan*), a Creole term for small farmers who produce for their own use and for the market (Smith 2001). Most *peyizan yo* in Haiti own small pieces of land. They grow vegetables, fruits, sugarcane, rice and corn. Despite this subsistence farming, the food

produced is barely enough for the peasants themselves, as they are known for the country's poorest citizens (Smiths 2001: 2). After the earthquake, the food that Isidor's family normally ate with eleven people then had to be shared amongst seventeen family members. Grandfather Isidor responded: *'Nou pa manje, nou goute'* (we don't eat anymore, we just taste the food).

Karen Olwig (2007) conducted an ethnographic analysis of the cultural meaning of migration and home within three Caribbean families. She stated that the Caribbean Diaspora is wrongly assumed to be part of a culturally homogeneous homeland, whereas family ties are the heart of why migration processes are transnational. Family ties make most migration possible, which is also the case for Lovelie and her siblings. Within the family ties, children play an important role in maintaining these ties. Janet Carsten described the role of children in kinships and argued that children both divide and unite houses and the kin relations associated with them (1991, cited in Olwig 2007: 171). Children move between houses – either on temporary visits or through more permanent fostering arrangements – and in this process serve as important mediators of exchange relations between houses that may blur the boundaries between discrete households and reunite kin separated by different houses (Olwig 2007: 171). This phenomenon can be seen Lovelie's family situation. Her aunt and mother both find it normal that the children live with their mother again after the earthquake, because the aunt was not able to help any longer. They both indicated that Lovelie and her siblings strengthened their family relationship.

Because of the 2010 earthquake, Lovelie and her siblings were forced to move back in with their biological mother. Moving, as most post-earthquake relocated children did, made the home-making process more difficult. Also, the forced mobility experienced by these children could intertwine spaces and identities (Hannerz 2002:218). Therefore, the concept of home is debatable, as the home can be both a physical and social environment. Ulf Hannerz (2002) described this as a complicated concept, tied to feelings of comfort, security and belonging. A sense of home, can be developed through the relationship with "significant others", but because there is a difference between people who move forced or voluntary, they can have different meanings of "home". (Hannerz 2002: 219). Through pre- and post-earthquake conditions,

Lovelie's physical home is multiple and shifting as well. Despite the fact that most of the post-earthquake relocated children have returned to at least one of their biological parents, Belladere's mayor Lucner claimes it is still possible that these significant others are absent.

> "In Belladere city, children often live with vague relatives. Even parents can be vague as the children used to live with extended family members, such as aunts and grandmothers. Therefore these parents are not used to having children living at homes."

Therefore, living with at least one biological parent, does not necessary mean these relocated children are at 'home'. Most relocated children, who are now living with their biological parents, indicated to me that they would like to return to Port-au-Prince as soon as possible. However most of them were, at the time of fieldwork, still living in Belladere. Lovelie's invisibility as a returnee refugee child is exacerbated by the fact that her life mainly takes place in and around the 'home'. Following the participant photography methodology, the photos that Lovelie made of the places, people and activities she saw as important to her life, were mainly taken in and around the house. From the fifteen photos she took, she selected two photos, one that made her feel the happiest and one that made her feel sad.

Photo: Lovelie is making dinner, photo taken by her sister.

Her sister took this picture when Lovelie was cooking. She liked making dinner for the family, an activity she engaged in on an everyday basis. She usually cooked rice with vegetables from the garden. When I gave her this photo, I asked her if she was able to buy food. It was then that Lovelie told me about her little job. She and her siblings occasionally worked on a farm in the mornings, where they each earned 1000 gourds (at the moment of writing similar to approximately 25 US dollar) per week. Her brother found a flyer on the streets that offered this work. Although she was very happy with this side job, she is stressed the fact that there was not enough work to earn money every week. After a disaster, the external support systems are not available anymore, such as availability of employment and regular income, a gap that can create huge family tensions (Raphael 1986: 140). One of the coping strategies associated with this tension is to rebuild family resources as fast as possible. As the mother of Lovelie was still sick, the children took up the income-generating responsibility together. Wage labour was thus a shared coping strategy, by which Lovelie and her siblings were able to gain some money and survive. Through this, coping facilitated strong social bonds, and was enhanced by the experience of having faced the stress of disaster together (cf. Raphael 1986: 147). Accompanied by her siblings, Lovelie was able to cope with her changed life and adapt to her new situation

through work and attending school. Other post-earthquake relocated children, who came to Belladere city without peers or their siblings, indicated that they found it very difficult to adapt to their new situation. My fieldwork reveales that children who did not have siblings or peers, with whom they could share their experiences, were less able to cope with their post-earthquake relocation.

Photo: school uniform, taken by Lovelie.

The photo of her former school uniform brought up mixed feelings. This school uniform reminded her of good moments with her friends in Port-au-Prince, as she described it. Lovelie had not worn this uniform for a while. Fortunately, she was attending school in Belladere as well. Her sister provided this opportunity, as she went to school and asked the school director if she and her siblings could attend free classes. In the end, the school principal agreed to this plan. The school had accepted 150 earthquake refugees to attend classes for free. Since the schools opened again in Port-au-Prince (around the beginning of April 2010) over 50 students/schoolchildren left Belladere city to return to Port-au-Prince. In total, there were 20 schools in Belladere city, most of them are private, and no local policy as dictated by the Haitian government of accepting refugee children. The schools themselves keep records of how many refugee children were admitted for free. According to their own records, the 20 schools accepted 567 refugee children for free. Since the reopening of school in

Port-au-Prince over 165 refugee children left this system. Despite this trend, Lovelie remained at the school in Belladere. She could not wear her school uniform from Port-au-Prince to attend this school. At the moment I spoke with her about it, she had no money for a new uniform, and thus Lovelie had to go to school in her own cloths. In this way, all earthquake refugee children were immediately identifiable by their clothes, an identification marker of which Lovelie was not proud. She indicated the desire to hide the fact that she returned from Port-au-Prince, as her missing uniform continued to identify her as a refugee.[28]

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[28] See also the opening photo of chapter three.

3.5 CROSSING BORDERS

THE STORY OF STEPHAN, A 13-YEAR-OLD HAITIAN BOY:

Before the earthquake, I lived with my grandmother and three sisters in Port-au-Prince. We don't have a mother. She died years ago. I forget how many years. I don't know *papa'm* (my father). My grandmother told me, my father left us when I was a baby. I don't know, I don't care about *papa'm* anymore! *Douz janvye* (January 12th, the day of the earthquake) *goudou goudou* came. My grandmother told me I must leave the house to work in *Sengdomeng.* There is no money anymore for me. My grandmother put me on the bus to Belladere. My sisters stay with my grandmother in Port-au Prince. I was all-alone in Belladere. There was nothing to do here (in Belladere). Fortunately, I meet David (11-years-old Haitian boy) and he wanted to go to cross the border too. But he was afraid to cross the border alone. Me too, I was afraid too. But on January 18th David and I arrive in Elías Piña (the border town in the Dominican Republic next to Belladere). You know, with no bag, you can easily cross the border. Thus, David and I crossed the border on Monday (a market day when Haitians can cross the border temporarily in order to attend the Haitian market.) with nothing. In Elías Piña we meet many other Haitian children looking for jobs. Now we work and sleep all together here (he points to the corner of street where I have met him and David several times). I have never returned to Haiti since.[29]

This subchapter investigates the characteristics of the Haitian – Dominican border and

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[29] The last time I spoke with Stephan was in May 2010.

how the border has impacted the post-earthquake relocations of children to Belladere. Relocation to the Dominican Republic can be seen as the third form of post-earthquake child relocation, alongside relocation to internally displaced refugee camps and relocation to outside the direct stricken earthquake area, such as Belladere city. This form of relocation represents the border crossing. Although migration across the Haitian border is not new, as a result of the 2010 earthquake, the desire for a better future grew tremendously. This desire corresponds with the statements made in chapter two and three, namely that the 2010 earthquake in Haiti did not cause a split or change, but rather represented a continuation of pre-existing systems of child relocation. Based on the work of Oliver-Smith (2009), this subchapter defines migration and relocation as one of the few coping strategies available to Haitian children.

Upon completing quantitative research on young Haitian labour migrants in the age 15 to 24 years-old along the Haitian border before the 2010 earthquake, Henriette Lunde (2010) stated that a crucial part of the narrative of youth migration until recently had been given little attention. That is, the risk young people face by *not* migrating: "Policies which have ignoring the living conditions on the departure side of the migration path, have been based on the general normative assumption that the best place for a child to be their parental home, not taking to into account that not all parental households are able or willing to protect their children from danger" (Kielland 2008, cited in Lunde 2010: 11). This study elaborates on Lunde's point of view, rather than focusing on the young migrants as victims per se. I attempt to go beyond the simplified presentation of good/bad, victim/perpetrator by including children's participation, and both the situation by departure as well as on the destination of the migration path. In this, children are recognized as social actors, capable of making rational decisions and interacting with their environment. Therefore, vulnerability is not understood as an inherent attribute of children, but as a structural position in which children might find themselves (de Berry 2004 in Lunde 2010: 12).

The story of Stephan's post earthquake relocation across the Haitian border tells of his departure as well as his destination situation. However, border crossing is not a new

phenomenon. As Garcia-Acosta (2002: 49) stated, disasters are self-revelatory: they expose histories that led to their own making. This also applies to border crossing to the Dominican Republic. Belladere city is one of the four border towns open to crossing the Haitian-Dominican border. Prior to the earthquake, border towns in general were attractive to Haitians as many had the desire to migrate to the Dominic Republic in in search of work, higher education opportunities and/or to receive medical care in Dominican hospitals. Crossing this border is not as simple for Haitians as it might be imagined. All Haitians need a visa to enter the neighbouring country. To get a visa Haitians require a passport, which can be very expensive. Moreover, the requirements for obtaining a visa are difficult. As a result, many Haitians try to cross the border illegally. Belladere's mayor Lucner emphasized the strategic location of this border town, whereby he confirmed of the existence of many economic activities along both sides of the border. The survey I conducted among post-earthquake relocated refugee children to Belladere, and from Port-au-Prince in the age of 10 to 15 years old in order to understand how often these children have crossed the border after the 2010 earthquake, endorses this point. The results show that 54 per cent (91), over half of the 177 post-earthquake relocated children crossed the Belladere (Haitian) – Elías Piña (Dominican) border at least once. Most of them crossed the border with a relative, some alone, and others with non-family members, such as friends. The results of this survey also showed that most of the children who crossed the border at least once, did so to visit the market 29,9 per cent (53), and to a lesser degree to visit the hospital 10,2 per cent (18), to see family 5,6 per cent (10), or to search for work 5,1 per cent (9).

Table 4: Border crossings				
		Value	Count	Percent
N	Valid	177		
	Missing	0		
Values	1	Once	62	35%
	2	Every week	33	19%
	3	Never	82	46%

Table 4: How often did the post-earthquake relocated children cross the Hatian border?

Table 5: Activities in Elías Piña, DR				
Activity		Value	Count	Percent
N	Valid	91		
	Missing	86		
Values	1	Market	53	29,9%
	2	Family	10	5,6%
	3	Hospital	18	10,2%
	4	Work	9	5,1%
	5	Play	0	,0%

Table 5: What was the main reason the post-earthquake relocated children have passed the Dominican border temporary after the earthquake.

As this survey (see table number 4 and 5) made clear, for the basic needs, people in Belladere economically and materially depend on Elías Piña, the Dominican village just across the border. Twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays, Haitians are temporarily allowed to cross into the Dominican Republic to go to the Haitian market there. The Haitian-Dominican border is very disordered. Large trucks queue from the border far down the road into the Dominican Republic and Haiti. There is no clear process for the inspections of transported goods. Haitian market women with their daughters or nieces stream through the border with goods on their heads. Crossing the border, for black Haitians, is often accompanied by racial harassment from Dominican authorities. As a black Haitian-born young female researcher, I personally experienced these racial and sexual harassments while crossing the border legally on market days. Stephan, and other Haitian children I spoke with on the Dominican side of the border, all talked about humiliating treatment by Dominican authorities while crossing the border. Recent literature frequently remarks that crossing borders is essentially tied up with new forms of fear, whereby migrants are treated as criminals and aliens (Löfgren 2002, Hess and Shandy 2008, Lunde 2010). Despite this dishonouring treatment, Stephan and his friends were still very motivated to migrate to the Dominican Republic hoping to earn some money. Therefore, I endorse Godziak's statement that children crossing borders is inherent to child labour, as the

need to work is so high that it motivates the children to continue to face the dangers of the border crossing together, or alone (2008:917).

Arriving at the central square of Elías Piña I walked towards the market. At this market, I encountered working Haitian children every Monday for almost two months. The results reveal that an average of 40 girls and about 60 boys were visibly working at the Haitian market in Elías Piña every week.[30] I have noticed that girls usually work together with the same female relatives and mainly sell products such as prepared and unprepared food, clothes, etc., while boys were often in small groups, offering their labor to both Dominican and Haitian market vendors. Many carried loads in order to earn money. Looking around the market, my eyes followed a boy of approximately 12-years-old. This boy had a lot of bruises all over his sweaty body; he wore torn clothes, and had no shoes. After he lifted the heavy bags of rice from one place to another, the young boy immediately sought more orders. Within five minutes this boy helped another Dominican market vendor load his products into a truck. The name of this young boy is Stephan, the 13-years-old whose story I told at the beginning of this section. Due to the fact that Stephan found a new order within 5 minutes, I noticed that there was a lot of work for boys like him. Yet there are also quite a lot of boys searching for work, so the competition is often tough. Stephan remarked that he earned between 100 and 150 Haitian Gourdes a day from this heavy work, an amount, which is similar to USD 2,5 to 3,78 a day.[31] Based on my frequent counts, I estimated that roughly half of the approximately 100 working Haitian children in Elías Piña were not directly a result of the 2010 earthquake. These children confirmed that they were already present at the Haitian market before the earthquake. This indicates that the 2010 earthquake only reinforced an already present history of Haitian children working in Elías Piña, rather than creating a new phenomenon.

It can be argued that the historical 'love-hate' relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti was exacerbated by the 2010 earthquake. At that point more than ever, Haitians wanted to cross the border. Following the 2010 earthquake, Haitian children often had very limited options, and therefore it was likely that many would make risky choices, such as border crossing. Compared the departure location of the

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[30] These are observations.
[31] The exchange rate 1 Haitian Gourde = 0.02521 US Dollars as on 11/22/2010.

what the children called *Kraze Pòtoprens* (destroyed Port-au-Prince), Stephan and his friends were relatively satisfied in Elías Piña, as they all found daily jobs and were able to earn money. Some could even send some money back to their families. Despite new fears, the drive to control their situation, shape their fate, struggle for survival and rebuild their lives remained the strongest incentive for them since they continued to cross the border and tried to take care of themselves. Crossing together and forming kinship relations with others like them did serve to protect them, or at least give a certain degree of security, in facing the fear of border crossing. Thus, children's understandings of their situation, and subsequent goals often conflicted with the goals of service providers and law enforcement officers (Godziak 2008: 912; Lunde 2010: 12).

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

This chapter included two research locations, Belladere city and Elías Piña, along the Haitian-Dominican border. Starting in Belladere city, this chapter followed Lovelie, a 15-years-old girl who immediately returned to her biological mother after the 2010 earthquake. Lovelie's post-earthquake migration, which is an adaptation strategy to environmental change, was made possible through her social networks, and was inextricably linked to earlier rural-urban migration movements. Within these relocations children had little choice but to adapt to the circumstances they were forced to face, and their own agency was tempered by existent family structures. However, when children are offered conditions they see as fair and/or fine, they could use their agency to form relationships with new caretakers that may develop into close bonds.

In line with the findings of the chapter two, this chapter also discovered a significant gender difference as the number of girls who live with at least one of their biological parents after the earthquake doubled, while for the boys this number remained the same. Moving between houses, as most post-earthquake relocated children did, made the home-making process difficult. However, Lovelie, and other post-earthquake relocated girls, described continuity between the heavy domestic workload and

corporal punishment (in most cases, beaten with a belt) that took place in the households of extended family and that took place once they returned to their biological homes. This reveals that biological homes are not necessary safer, as is often assumed, nor do biological homes necessary mean that these relocated children are at 'home'.

A continuation of pre-disaster systems in which Haitian children are relocated continued as well as the third form of post-earthquake child relocation; crossing borders. The last section of this chapter investigated the characteristics of the Haitian – Dominican border and how the border *positively* impacted post-earthquake relocations – by providing work options, as well *negatively* impacted post-earthquake relocation of children from Belladere – as work is inherent to child labor. Although migration across the Haitian border is not new, as a result of the 2010 earthquake the desire for a better future grew tremendously. This indicates that the 2010 earthquake only reinforced an already present history of Haitian children working in Elías Piña, rather than creating an entirely new phenomenon.

I am aware of my limitation as a Haitian born and non-Spanish speaking researcher, and how that has influenced this investigation along the Haitian-Dominican border. However, I am convinced that this research does reveal important aspects of the stories of Haitian children working along the Dominican border.

Concluding Chapter

This thesis told the stories of post-earthquake relocated children in Haiti while analyzing social patterns. The stories of Maryse (11-years-old), Obert (13-years-old), David (14-years-old), Lovelie (15-years-old), Stephan (13-years-old) and Christophe (11-years-old) presented the first-hand experiences of these children following the 2010 earthquake. These children demonstrated how, when and with whom they relocated. This included three different post-earthquake destinations: camp Delmas, one of the 1,300 makeshift camps in Port-au-Prince; Belladere city, a rural town outside the stricken area of Port-au-Prince and its surrounding environs; and Elías Piña, a Dominican town along the border. The stories of these children provide an insider perspective on how they shaped and negotiated their social networks in the immediate post-disaster environment. This study has done this by analyzing their stories within the context of two main research questions: How did the 2010 earthquake impact the social organization of children's lives in Haiti? How did the existing (pre-earthquake) social infrastructure impact the formation of the social networks in post-earthquake?

Following Wallace's definition of a disaster, this thesis explored the 2010 earthquake in Haiti as a social process, rather than the physical agent alone (1956: 12). The perspective of children was highlighted because young voices after a disaster are not often heard and studied. The literature on disasters, which did include children, was always related to media, gender, conflict and psychological approaches to disaster, while children are a significant group of a society. I have therefore emphasized the need to recognize children as social actors, capable of making rational decisions and interacting with their environment. Their invisibility within the social landscape of a disaster made them more vulnerable; this differs from adults, as children are more dependent on their social networks for social and material support. However, this does not mean that their vulnerability must be understood as an inherent aspect of being a child, but rather as a structural position in which children might find themselves under certain circumstances (de Berry 2004 in Lunde 2010: 12). In doing so, this thesis attempted to fill a gap in the literature on disaster anthropology by including children's participation in responses to Haiti's earthquake in 2010. The main research questions have been examined according to the theoretical approaches of disaster anthropology, by which I endorse the following three points of views: (1) disasters

reveal the nature of a society's social structure, including the ties and resilience of kinship and other alliances (Hoffman 2002: 7). Hereby, it is important to note that disasters not only reveal social structures, but can also conceal them; (2) Following Anthony Oliver-Smith (2009), migration, temporary or permanent movement from one place to another, can be seen as an adapting strategy to environmental change; and finally, (3) following Garcia-Acosta, disasters are self-revelatory; that is, they expose history that leads to their own making (2002: 49).

The above outlined theoretical approaches were combined with field research carried out in a refugee camp, in the rural border town Belladere and along the Haitian-Dominican border. This research led to the following conclusions: (1) Following the endorsement of Susanna Hoffman (2002), disasters have a tendency to lay social structures bare and highlight their inner workings. The case of camp Delmas demonstrated that children aimed to re-establish a sense of continuity with what they had lost. While the case of Belladere city showed how migration, as an adaption strategy, was organized around their social networks. Children from one family member migrated to the households of other family members, a practice that was seen to reverse itself as a result of the earthquake as many children returned to live with at least one of their biological parents. This migration through social networks is inextricably tied to earlier rural-urban migration flows, demonstrating how the 2010 earthquake was self-revelatory; (2) As was argued above, disasters uncover patterns of social organization, however, this does not necessarily mean that those patterns of social organization had changed as a result of the 2010 earthquake. In Haiti, I discovered that the patterns of social organization existing in post-earthquake Haiti strongly resembled those that existed prior to the disaster. Children who have lost their parents, seek replacements for those lost. In addition, the children who have been relocated to live with extended family, were often returned to their biological families when the extended family could not care for them anymore after the disaster. (3) Field data revealed that Haitian patterns of social organization have their own kind of facility for the care of left behind girls, due to the widespread knowledge of the vulnerability of girls. Many families in the camp stepped up to take in the girls if they had no living relatives to turn to. Also, as the survey showed that girls aged 10 to 15-years old were twice as likely (see tables 2 and 3 on Page 47), to return to at least one

of their biological parents (most often their mother) compared with boys of the same age. This conclusion is contrary to the expectations of researchers and aid organizations. It indicates that there could be an underestimation of the vulnerability of boys. However, the reasons why families did take in non-relative girls, and how these girls experienced their life within these non-relative families need further investigation.

Chapter Two

In addition to the major conclusions outlined above, there are also sub-conclusions, which either support or enlarge on the main conclusions presented in each case/chapter. Chapter two – *Left Behind* – concluded that in times of disaster, post-earthquake relocated children attempted to re-establish social networks that existed prior to the disaster. This conclusion is important in light of the Haitian definition of kinship ties; that is, they are not strictly defined in terms of "blood". Children were able to rebuild their social networks as a result of this conception of kinship ties; they helped left behind children to form new ties as a coping mechanism. Within their search to find and recreate new social networks, field data exposed that children without families were more dependent on the consistency and predictability of their environment and the people around them than other children (cf. Gordon 1999:110). These left behind children could not independently register themselves with official aid organizations. As a result, children were forced to associate themselves with adults, which created a situation of dependency for the boys. This point elaborates on the main argument that disasters have a tendency to lay social structures bare and highlight their inner workings. It also contributes to the conclusion that disasters are self revelatory. While the children left behind in camp Delmas were able to rebuild social networks, their coping mechanisms were tempered by the pre-disaster systems of power that continued to affect the community formed within camp Delmas after the disaster. In this camp, pre-existing gang members named themselves as camp managers in order to control the social organization of the camp.

Chapter Three

Chapter three – *Returning 'Home'* – followed the main argument, namely that the 2010 earthquake in Haiti did not cause a split or change, but was rather a continuation

of pre-disaster systems in which Haitian children are relocated. In the Haitian social structure of child relocations, children both divide and unite households and the kin relations associated with them (cf. Olwig). Thus, the role of children in kinship processes should not be underestimated. Within their changing environment, the receiving community, the receiving parent(s), and the children themselves are responsible for the home-making process of the post-earthquake relocated child. Coping with dislocation and relocation requires techniques and adaptation. This was easier for children with peers, such as Lovelie – who experienced the earthquake and relocation alongside her siblings, than for children who did not have peers or siblings with which to commiserate. They had to create or rebuild social networks without their peers. Field data also exposed that most biological parents maintain pre-earthquake child relocation forms of the *restavèk* system in particular ways. The notions of heavy domestic labor and corporal punishment associated with the *restavèk* system are not limited to those children only, but occur in various types of family composition. This finding underscores the main conclusion that the need to build a new social network does not necessarily include social change.

The last subchapter 3.5 – *Crossing borders* – showed the third form of post-earthquake child relocation: Relocation to Elias Pinas, a neighbouring border town in the Dominican Republic. This subchapter concluded by arguing that border crossing for post-earthquake relocations of children from Belladere had both a *positive* dimension – as it provided work options - as well as a *negative* dimension – as work is inherent to child labor. In this, there has been an underestimation of survival strategies and coping mechanisms employed by Haitian children working along the Haitian-Dominican border.

Maryse (11-years-old), Obert (13-years-old), David (14-years-old), Lovelie (15-years-old), Stephan (13-years-old) and Christophe (11-years-old) are the Kids on the Frontline of Haiti's Fault line, as they voiced their earthquake experiences. Their stories did not end with the finalization of this thesis. I struggled with writing in present or past tense, as much of the situation has not changed since I left. In the end I have written in the past tense, because this research took place from January until June 2010. However, these children and their strategies, fears and hopes are constantly evolving. And new difficulties (read: tropical storms, cholera outbreak,

elections) emerge daily. One can never really finish a book, Oliver-Smith (2010) writes. This is especially true for this research and thesis that immediately took off upon the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and which during the writing process, one year later, is still as actual as it was than.

Disaster debate

The added value of anthropology within disaster research is widely acknowledged. Susanne M. Hoffman (2010: 3-4) explained in what ways the different fields of anthropology have contributed to this specific debate, namely medical, political, gender, environmental, psychological and sociocultural. Oliver-Smith (2010) stated that: "in disasters, there are always multiple voices that wish to be heard, all articulating specific realms of experiences and knowledge" (2010: 14). These multiple voices show us that a disaster is socially constructed and experienced differently by different groups. In this, anthropologists can mediate and represent local and expert knowledge. This stands in contrast to relief workers and journalists, who often move around the globe from disaster to disaster. Within the tradition of long-term fieldwork, anthropologists are often at one place for longer periods, and gain thorough understanding of the community and its social structure (Gamburd and McGilvray 2010: 9).

However, within the enumeration of Hoffman's different fields of anthropology that have contributed to the disaster research, the anthropology of children was not mentioned. Even within Oliver-Smith's multiple voices that wish to be heard, children's voices were left aside once more. My study aims to fill this theoretical and empirical gap in which children are often not heard or studied within the anthropology of disaster. In the gender response to disasters, women are seen as both victims and local organisers (Henrici 2010: 5). This gender approach should be applied to children as well, as they are also victims who aim to re-organize their social structures through using their local and specific knowledge.

As stated multiple times, disasters reveal the nature of a society's social structure. It is therefore important to study a society from different local perspectives, besides the regional, national and global perspectives, as they know best what they need in times when a disaster strikes. This need for local knowledge is recognised by international

NGOs, who are focusing on emergency relief worldwide, and do not always have the required local knowledge of a specific society. During my fieldwork, different international NGOs have asked for a collaboration in which I would conduct research on local aspects that they have come across in practice. One of these aspects were: why children who have been left behind in the wake of the 2010 earthquake, not always wanted to return to their parents, and/or why their parents not always wanted their children to return. In order to answers these questions, the understanding of the pre-disaster situations of Haitian children is necessary. As shown in this thesis, post-disaster relocations of Haitian children are often tied to pre-disaster relocations.

In my point of view, anthropologists should provide a stage through which local and specific knowledge can be made available. Therefore, in this thesis, the kids on the frontline of Haiti's fault line are the ones to present these theoretical, empirical and methodological questions. In this way, they are able to give us their perspectives on the matter, and show for themselves how they cope with their new situation. These children's perspectives are important in order to understand the broader context of which they are part. With the knowledge and lessons learned from their perspectives, we are able to help children in disaster situations more effectively in the future.

To conclude, the photo on the front of this document, followed by other photo-pages, seems to be an appealing picture to beautify this thesis, as happens in many cases. "After disasters, children are undoubtedly the most photographed social group, while simultaneously they tend to be the least listened to members of society" (Hart 1992). However, in this case, it is the other way around. This thesis places itself in the service of the children on the photos in order to let them share their own stories, experiences and perspectives on the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Their stories do not need to be beautified; they just need a stage to be heard.

On behalf of these and other children from Haiti, *mesi anpil*!

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APPENDIX 1 - WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

Besides the 300 participated children including Maryse (11-years-old), Obert (13-years-old), David (14-years-old), Lovelie (15-years-old), Stephan (13 -years-old) and Christophe (11-years-old), the list of those who have contributed to this research and the writing process is quite long. Some of them prefer to remain anonymous, so in order to keep their anonymity as much as possible I just mention their family names, without their function or how they have helped me.

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School Mixte la Renaissance, Belladere
School Mixte le Phare, Belladere
School Mixte les Papillons, Belladere
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APPENDIX 2 – SURVEY CAMP DELMAS

Survey corresponding to Table 1: Changed household composition of displaced children in camp Delmas, Port-au-Prince, on March 2010.

Survey (translated in English, original held in Haitian Creole)

	Mother	Father	Aunt/Uncle	Cousin	Siblings	Grandmother	Non-family	Alone
With whom did you live before the earthquake?								
With whom do you live now?								

	In Delmas	Outside Delmas
In which neighbourhood did you live before the earthquake?		
In which neighbourhood do you live now?		

	Tent	House	Streets
Where did you live before the earthquake			
Where do you live now?			

APPENDIX 3 – SURVEY BELLADERE CITY AND ELÍAS PIÑA

This survey for children in Belladere city corresponds to Table 2, 3, 4 and 5. The questions are translated in English, and original conducted in Haitian Creole.

1. Where did you live before the earthquake?

Belladere city	Port-au-Prince	Other

2. With whom did you live in Port-au-Prince?

Mama/papa	Aunt/uncle	Siblings	Grandparent	Non family	Alone

3. Are there people dead because of the earthquake?

Mama/papa	Aunt/uncle	Siblings	Grandparent	Friends	No

4. How did you come to Belladere?

With a private car	Public transport

5. With whom did you come to Belladere?

Mama/papa	Aunt/uncle	Siblings	Grandparent	Non family	Alone

6. Are there people still living in your house in Port-au-Prince?

Mama/papa	Aunt/uncle	Siblings	Grandparent	Non family	No

7. When did you arrive in Belladere?

Right after	A week after	A month	Just arrived	Don't know

8. Where do you live now?

Belladere city	Port-au-Prince	Elías Piña	Other

9. With whom do you live in Belladere city?

Mama/papa	Aunt/uncle	Siblings	Grandparent	Cousin	Non family	Alone

10. Did you meet the people where you live with in Belladere before?

Yes	No

11. First time you visit Belladere?

Yes	No

12. Did you go back to Port-au-Prince since you are in Belladere?

Yes, once	Yes, many times	No, but I want to	No

13. How often do you cross the border?

Once	Every market day	Never

14. With whom do you cross the border?

Mama/papa	Aunt/uncle	Siblings	Grandparent	Cousin	Non family	Alone

15. What do you do in Dominican Republic?

Visit market	Go to family	Hospital	To work	Play	Other