

Archiving Black diasporic activism: How the shared praxis of Haitian activists at
La Maison d'Haïti built a community

By
Désirée Roachat

Department of Integrated Studies in Education
Faculty of Education
McGill University, Montreal

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	5
Résumé	6
Acknowledgements	8
Abbreviations	11
Figures.....	13
Chapter 1. Introduction	14
Story of a Story: Diasporic Activism, Community Education and Knowledge	14
La Maison d’Haïti and its Archive.....	16
Research Questions, Objectives and Findings	19
The Community at the Heart of this Dissertation	21
Scope and Structure of the Dissertation.....	25
Chapter 2. Theoretical Underpinnings and Framework.....	30
Historical Underpinnings: 1492, Colonialism and ‘Modernity’	31
Section 1. Black Diasporic Communities	32
Historical Context: Racialization, Racism, Slavery and Capitalism.....	32
Literature Review: Black Diasporic Communities and Geographies	35
Theoretical Premises: Practices, Relations, Processes and Dyaspora with a y.....	38
Section 2. Knowledge as a Socio-Historical Process.....	41
Historical Context: Disciplining Knowledge.....	41
Literature Review: Social Learning, Activism and the Social Nature of Knowledge	42
Theoretical Premises: Theorizing, Praxis and Informal Learning	45
Section 3. Archives and Archiving	46
Historical Context: The Imperial and Colonial Roots of Archives.....	46
Literature Review: Rethinking Archives	48
Theoretical Premises: Silences, Societal Provenance and Community of Records.....	51
Chapter 3. The Black Radical Tradition as Societal Provenance	56
An Unthinkable Revolution	60
International and Black Diasporic Solidarity against the U.S. Occupation.....	63
The Birth of a Dyaspora.....	70
The Growth of Quebec’s Black Communities.....	74
Diasporic and Exile Politics: The 1960s.....	79
Projet Maison d’Haïti: From Student Activism to Community Activities	87

Institutionalization of a Community Centre	96
Programs Evolve.....	101
Youth Programs: Fostering Identity Through Haitian Culture.	101
Women’s Program: From a Discussion Circle to a Centre.....	103
Literacy Work: From Teaching to Advocating.....	106
Advocacy and Collaborations: Anti-racist, Black, Haitian and Immigrant Coalitions.....	107
1986 & 1991: From Hope to Consternation	110
Conclusion	112
Chapter 4. Community Archiving as Ethnography: A Collaborative and Community-based Methodology	116
Ethnographic Research: Weaving Archiving, Data Collection, Analysis, and Writing	116
From Ethnography of the Archive to Community Archiving as Ethnography.....	117
Oral History: Making Meaning Through Conversations	119
Collaborative and Community-Based Research Methodologies	120
Community Based Research: Archiving a Community of Records	121
Reflecting on Practice: Collaborative Knowledge Production	122
Ethics and Validity.....	123
Creating a Living Archive of the Diaspora: The Pre-history of the Archive.....	124
Community Archiving as Ethnography: A Fluid Process of Data Collection and Analysis ..	128
2015: Framing the Projects	128
Spring 2016: Moving, Ethics, and Collective Labour	129
Summer and Fall 2016: Community archives and Memories	133
Winter 2017: Inventorying, Writing, and Analyzing.....	136
2018: Interviews, Transcriptions, Writing and the Photo Collection	139
2019 & 2020: Analyzing, Interpreting and Writing.....	145
Conclusion: Strengths and Shortcomings	149
Chapter 5. Configuration of the Archive.....	152
A Haitian Living Cultural Archive	152
Moving to a Rhythm Connected to Haitian Life	152
Historical, Political and Cultural Transmission	154
A Transnational Archive.....	158
Intersecting Migration Processes	158
Exile and Transnational Politics	161
An Archive of Resistance	164
Resisting State Violence	164
Workers’ Struggles	169
Anti-racist Activism.....	170
Resisting Through Knowledge Production.....	173
Resisting Erasures and Forgetting.	177

A Haitian Women Activists' Archive.....	179
Women in Community Work, Community Work for Women.....	179
Fostering Collaborations across Political Differences.....	182
Black Women's Writing.....	185
The Archive of a Black Diasporic Community.....	187
A Complex Collective Process: Practices and Power.....	188
Negotiating Divergences and Similarities: Community Identities and Politics.....	193
Lived Conditions of a Dyaspora.....	198
Forging and Sustaining Relationships.....	202
Diasporic Community Homemaking.....	209
Conclusion.....	212
Chapter 6. Building a Diasporic Community of Activists: Evolution of a Shared Praxis .	214
Section 1. Learning and Politicization.....	217
Learning from People.....	218
Learning from Reading.....	221
Learning from Lived Experiences.....	222
Learning by Doing: Experiential Learning.....	229
Learning Politics.....	233
Section 2. La Maison d'Haïti as a University: The Role of Community Education.....	234
Education as Activism.....	236
Education for Activists.....	240
Section 3. Convictions and Actions: Articulation of a Shared Praxis.....	249
Coherence.....	252
A Quest for Justice.....	255
Strength of the Collective, Collective Strength.....	260
Sharing.....	264
Conclusion.....	267
Chapter 7. Components of a Black Diasporic Activist Tradition (and of its Future)	269
The Functions of Nodes.....	270
Components of a Black Diasporic Activist Tradition.....	271
Constitutive Components.....	271
Evolutive Component.....	272
The Black Diasporic Node.....	273
A Point of Intersections: Paths & Constellations.....	274
A Point of Juncture: People, Groups, Knowledges and Labour Coming Together.....	275
A Point of Rupture: Diasporic Décalages and Silences of the Archive.....	277
A point of Regrowth: Shared Memories of Violence, Belonging and Healing.....	280
A Point of Growth: Rooting and Branching.....	283
The Earthquake.....	289
Chapter 8. Conclusion	297

Findings	297
Contributions and implications	300
Historical	300
Theoretical	301
Methodological	301
Building New and Renewed Communities of Praxis	305
Activating Archives	307
Stories for Freedom.....	308
References	310
Appendix A : Interview List	366
Appendix B : La Maison d’Haïti Timeline	367
Appendix C : Oral History Consent Form	369
Appendix D : Collective Interview Consent Form.....	371
Appendix E : Oral History Interview Guide	373
Appendix F : Collective Interview Guide	379
Appendix G : Project Summary	380
Appendix H : Letter for Participants.....	382
Appendix I : Excerpt Annual Report, La Maison d’Haïti (2015-2016)	384
Appendix J : Excerpt Annual Report, La Maison d’Haïti (2016-2017).....	386
Appendix K : Organizational Chart, La Maison d’Haïti, Circa 1979	388

Abstract

This thesis investigates components of Black communities' diasporic activism through a community archives project at La Maison d'Haïti, a Montreal community-based organization founded by Haitian student activists in the early 1970s. The study examines how community archiving and the archive itself can bring insights into different forms, practices and politics of transnational activism. Drawing on analysis of oral history interviews, of institutional documents, and of the archiving process, it explores how a group of long-standing activists involved in the organization understand their motivation to act and the role that learning and community education played in this context. It also explores critical components that sustained their activism over time, connecting this practice to a broader history of Black diasporic activism. The archive is understood as a community of records, encompassing the tangible and intangible records created by community members, with a unique socio-historical and political origin, its societal provenance. The methodology developed draws on elements of ethnographic, collaborative and community-based research methodologies, as well as archiving theories and practices. By locating the archive's origin as part of a complex Black radical tradition, the study illustrates that at La Maison d'Haïti and historically, Black diasporic activism relied on five interrelated components, namely: constellations, connections, circulation and a praxis shared by the community of activists, which together help yield Black diasporic nodes. Black diasporic nodes, the organizations created by Black diasporic communities such as La Maison d'Haïti, act as points of intersections, juncture, rupture, growth and regrowth allowing, in return, for the articulation of the other components. The study also shows that the shared praxis developed by the group was shaped by activists' personal learning paths, community education, and the interrelation between their convictions and actions. Over time, this shared praxis built a

community around the organization. Finally, the study demonstrates that organizing a community archive as a community of records with its specific societal provenance provides a rigorous collaborative research methodology in the form of *community archiving as ethnography*. Archiving Black diasporic activism through this methodology is a way to simultaneously preserve and generate collective knowledge that belong to, and further, the Black radical tradition.

Key words: Black diasporic activism, Haitian activism, transnational activism, community archives, community education, informal learning, community of records, La Maison d'Haïti.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine les composantes de l'activisme diasporique des communautés noires à travers un projet d'archive communautaire à La Maison d'Haïti, une organisation montréalaise fondée par des étudiants activistes haïtiens au début des années 1970. L'étude examine comment l'archivage communautaire et les archives elles-mêmes apportent un éclairage sur différentes formes, pratiques et politiques d'activisme transnational. Par l'analyse d'entretiens d'histoire orale, de documents institutionnels et du processus d'archivage, l'étude explore la manière dont un groupe de militants impliqués dans l'organisation sur de longues périodes, expriment leur motivation à agir et le rôle que l'apprentissage et l'éducation communautaire ont joué dans ce contexte. L'étude explore également les éléments fondamentaux qui ont soutenu leur militantisme. Les archives sont abordées comme une communauté de documents (englobant les documents tangibles et intangibles créés par les membres de la communauté) ayant une origine socio-historique et politique unique, sa provenance sociétale. La méthodologie s'appuie sur des éléments de méthodologies ethnographique, collaborative et communautaire, ainsi que sur des

théories et pratiques d'archivage. En situant l'origine des archives dans une complexe tradition radicale noire, l'étude illustre qu'historiquement et à La Maison d'Haïti, l'activisme diasporique des communautés noires s'est appuyé sur quatre composantes interdépendantes, à savoir les constellations, les connexions, la circulation et une praxis commune, qui ensemble contribuent à produire une cinquième composante sous la forme de nœuds diasporiques noirs. Ces nœuds sont les organisations créées par les communautés diasporiques noires et servent de points d'intersection, de jonction, de rupture, de régénération et de croissance, permettant en retour, l'articulation des autres composantes. L'étude montre également que la praxis commune développée par le groupe a été façonnée par les parcours d'apprentissage personnels des militants, l'éducation communautaire et l'interrelation entre leurs convictions et leurs actions. Au fil du temps, cette praxis a construit une communauté autour de La Maison d'Haïti. Finalement, l'étude démontre qu'en se basant sur l'organisation d'une archive communautaire en tant que communauté de documents ayant une provenance sociétale spécifique *l'archivage communautaire comme ethnographie* est une méthodologie de recherche collaborative rigoureuse. L'archivage de l'activisme des communautés diasporiques noires à travers cette méthodologie devient un moyen de simultanément préserver et générer un savoir collectif qui appartient à la tradition radicale noire et qui la fait progresser.

Mots-clés : Activisme diasporique noir, activisme haïtien, activisme transnational, archives communautaires, éducation communautaire, apprentissage informel, La Maison d'Haïti.

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Abbreviations

AHC: Association des haïtiens du Canada
AMHE: Associations des médecins haïtiens à l'étranger
ANC: African National Congress
AQOCI: Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale
BCCM: Black Community Communication Media
BCCQ: Black Community Council of Quebec
BCHM: Bureau de la communauté des Haïtiens de Montréal
BSC: Black Studies Center
CAAD: Comité d'action anti-déportation
CAFHAM: Centre d'animation pour femmes haïtiennes de Montréal
CEGEP: Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel
CCC: Caribbean Conference Committee
CCH: Clinique Communautaire Haïtienne
CHAP: Comité haïtien d'action patriotique
CHOIS : Centre haïtien d'orientation et d'information scolaire
CIDIHCA: Centre International d'Information et de Documentation Haïtienne, Caribéenne et Afro-Canadienne
Comintern: Communist International
CREP: Centre de ressources éducatives et pédagogiques
CWCM: Coloured Women's Club of Montreal
Ligue: Ligue féminine d'action sociale.
ITUCNW: International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers
MQCR : Mouvement québécois pour combattre le racisme
NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCC: Negro Community Centre
NGPT: Nou Gen Peyi Tou
PCH: Parti Communiste Haïtien
PEP: Parti d'entente populaire
PIL: Programme d'initiatives locales

PUCH: Parti Unifié des Communistes Haïtiens
PUDA: Parti Union des Démocrates Haïtiens
PPLN: Parti Populaire de Libération National
RAFA: Rasanbleman Fanm Ayisien
RGPAQ: Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec
RIIAHQ: Ralliement des infirmières et infirmières auxiliaires haïtiennes
ROCAHD: Regroupement des Organismes Canado- Haïtiens pour le Développement
TPZM: Ti pye zoranj monte
UNAM: Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico
UNEH: Union nationale des étudiants haïtiens
UNIA: Universal Negro Improvement Association
UNMES: Union Nationale des Membres de l'Enseignement Secondaire
UQAM: Université du Québec à Montréal
UUC: Union United Church
VSN: Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale
YMCA: Young Men's Christian Association

Figures

Figure 1.1 Book cover *L'expérience Ti pye zoranj monte: contes, légendes, poèmes et chansons pour enfants d'Haïti et d'ailleurs* (1984).

Figure 3.1 Poster, New year's community celebration (c. 1975)

Figure 3.2 Pamphlet cover, RAFA summer program (1975)

Figure 3.3 Pamphlet cover, La Maison d'Haïti program description (October 1975)

Figure 3.4 Newsletter cover (Nov. 1975)

Figure 3.5 Flyer, La Maison d'Haïti & CCH activities (1976)

Figure 3.6 Flyer, TPZM & NGPT. (c. 1976-77)

Figure 5.1 Flyer Carrefour des jeunes Haïtiens (c. 1985)

Figure 5.2 Poster, Information session CCH

Figure 5.3 Poster, Picnic 1977

Figure 5.4 Poster, Picnic 1987

Figure 5.5 Poster, Discussion activity on Haitians and the labour market (1979)

Figure 5.6 Newsletter cover (Oct. 1988)

Figure 5.7 Cover, Pedagogical manual *Vwazen Vwazin* (1982)

Figure 5.8 Activity poster, RAFA (1975)

Figure 5.9 Booklet cover, *Femmes Haïtiennes* (1976)

Figure 5.10 Booklet cover, *Fanm Poto Mitan* (1982)

Figure 5.11 Photo La Maison d'Haïti (c. 1980)

Figure 5.12 Pamphlet cover, 15-year celebration document (1987)

Figure 7.1 Photo La Maison d'Haïti, 2021

Figure 8.1 Components of Black diasporic activism

Figure 8.2 Evolution of shared praxis and of community

Figure 8.3 Integrative and collaborative approach to cultivate Black communities of records

Chapter 1. Introduction

We all need histories that no history book can tell, but they are not in the classroom – not the history classrooms, anyway. They are in the lessons we learn at home, in poetry and childhood games, in what is left of history when we close the history books with their verifiable facts. (Trouillot, 1995, p. 71)

Story of a Story: Diasporic Activism, Community Education and Knowledge

When I was a child, Tezin and Roxane's story fascinated me. Roxane, a young woman, falls in love with Tezin, a fish. When she goes to fetch water for her family in the dirty river next to her village, she sings for Tezin to come to her. He then swims up from the bottom of the riverbed to bring her clean water. One day, Roxane's father discovers that his daughter has fallen in love with a beautiful fish. Enraged, he kills Tezin. Roxane, inconsolable, cries her heart out, until the torrent of her tears drags her under the riverbed to reunite her with her lover.

Tezin is a Haitian folktale that I, like other Haitian children, grew up with. Though Roxane sometimes had a different name depending on who was telling the story, it was part of the tales that fed my imagination as a child born on Haitian land, from a Haitian mother and a Swiss father. That story followed me from Haiti, to Switzerland and to Canada, as part of my migrant child's imaginary. During my late childhood in Quebec City, I read it over and over again from a book of Haitian stories given to me by my mother, *L'expérience Ti pye zoranj monte: contes, légendes, poèmes et chansons pour enfants d'Haïti et d'ailleurs* [The Ti Pye Zoranj Monte experience: tales, legends, poems and songs for children from Haiti and elsewhere] (Villefranche, Ricot, & Kovak, 1984). I remember the cover illustration: surrounded by a yellow border, a drawing of Roxane and Tezin kissing in the water adorns the book I opened whenever I wanted to read familiar stories while in this new land we were living on.

I came to Montreal as a teenager and quickly got involved in different community organizations. Thanks to the guidance and generosity of older community organizers, I discovered the city and part of its history through community work. I learned about its Caribbean and Black communities, their long legacy of mobilization and about the province's vibrant community sector. I also learned the 'craft' of community organizing (Stall & Stoecker, 1998) by observing and doing what others had been doing for decades. It was not, however, until the year of my twenty-ninth birthday that I stepped into La Maison d'Haïti, a community-based organization located in the North-East borough of Saint-Michel in Montreal. On the first day I went, the place nonetheless felt familiar. I had heard of the centre many times before from family members, other Haitians, and other community workers. But the sense of familiarity didn't come just from that. Unbeknownst to me, La Maison d'Haïti had actually been part of my life for years through the stories it had told me.

After starting to inventory the organization's archives in 2013, I stumbled upon a book with an image of a fish kissing a young woman, surrounded by a yellow border. Only then did I



Figure 1.1 Book cover *L'expérience Ti pye zoranj monte*

realize that the book from which I had read Roxanne and Tezin's story many, many, times had been written and published by La Maison d'Haïti, for children like me, of the Haitian *dyaspora*, spelt with a y in Haitian creole to denote the dispersal of hundreds of thousands of Haitians out of their motherland. The book was

created from the youth program of the same name, *Ti pye zoranj monte* [TPZM], itself named after a Haitian folktale and meaning ‘the small orange tree grows.’ The program was organized by Haitian women so that their children, and those of others, would remember and learn Haitian culture and history while growing up in Quebec. Their work to preserve and pass on Haitian culture was part of the mothers’ activism, which also entailed community, political and advocacy work and emerged from their personal politics. The book they wrote, a unique educational tool, recounts Haitian songs and folktales that were told on Saturday afternoons when animators and children would meet. It is made from photos and drawings and presents arts and crafts activities and plays that were done during the weekly encounters. It builds from the collective knowledge women created together – including by learning from each other – and then transmitted to their children. It is an archival record of the mothers’ work and illustrates perfectly the connections between diasporic community activism; learning and education in a community context; and the production, transmission and preservation of activist knowledge, the main subjects of this dissertation.

La Maison d’Haïti¹ and its Archive

La Maison d’Haïti was founded in 1972 by Haitian students who sought to provide services and resources to the growing numbers of Haitians arriving in Quebec, fleeing dictator François Duvalier’s increasingly brutal regime (Céliné et al., 2016; La Maison d’Haïti, 2020). The students were soon joined by exiles who had been involved in political opposition in Haiti and others who had made Montreal their new home (see Mills, 2016; Sanders, 2013, 2016; Saint-Victor, 2017). Together, they provided support to, and organized activities for, their fellow

¹ Over the years the organization’s name has been written in various ways: La Maison d’Haïti, La Maison d’Haïti Inc., Maison d’Haïti. In the dissertation, I chose to keep La Maison d’Haïti but in the reference lists I kept the name as it was written on the original document referenced.

Haitian community members while continuing their resistance against the dictatorship from abroad. These activities catered to the needs of newly arrived migrants, workers, families, children and women, and aimed to create a space for people to rebuild community outside of Haiti. To do this, the activists collaborated with a variety of groups, Haitian and beyond. Their work linked La Maison d'Haïti to a diasporic network of Haitian groups and to various political movements in and outside of Québec. It was also situated within a long history of Black diasporic activism across the Atlantic. Central to this activism are also the formal, informal and non-formal education and learning that happen in the course of community work and activism (see Choudry, 2009, 2015; Foley, 1999; Gouin, 2009; Kruzynski, 2004).

Through their activities and mission, community-based organizations produce an array of documents (Choudry & Rochat, 2021; Choudry & Vally, 2018; Leclair, 2008). In over four decades, members of La Maison d'Haïti have produced invaluable documents that recount the work and history of the institution and that hold the knowledge produced through this work and history. Embedded in the documents and the memories of members are stories of how people mobilized in the face of adversity, navigated day-to-day life, maintained connections with Haiti, challenged power relations, and (re)built community in the context of migration. These stories provide insights into the practices and politics of diasporic activism.

Community groups rarely take the time to preserve their archives and to record the stories of their activists because of very real front-line pressures to act immediately (or “yesterday”) ... [the groups'] limited financial and human resources make it such that simply doing all the day-to-day work of the organisations is often impossible, and the past, although recognised as essential to current organising, is relegated to boxes in the basement. (Kruzynski, 2004, p. 15)

Organizing and preserving those documents is therefore, necessary so as not to lose histories of activism and to make them accessible.

The last decades have seen increasing calls to question and address the power of archives and archiving (see Harris, 1997; Mbembe, 2002; Smith, 2015; Stoler, 2009; Trouillot, 1995). To preserve material that was not always perceived to have archival value and to retain control over it, various groups have created alternative archiving spaces and methods through community-based archives (see Bastian & Alexander, 2009; Bastian & Flinn, 2020; Caswell, 2014a; Caswell, Cifor, & Ramirez, 2016; Cifor, Caswell, Migoni, & Geraci, 2018; Evans, McKemmish, Daniels, & McCarthy, 2015; Flinn, 2007, 2011; Flinn & Stevens, 2009; Pell, 2015; Stevens, Flinn, & Shepherd, 2010). In her dissertation on Black serial publications, historian and archivist Dorothy Williams (2006) pointed to the need for preservation of documents and publications produced by Black communities and groups in Quebec because of their absence in official archival repositories in the province. She also stressed the need for preservation efforts by Black institutions themselves. William's dissertation remains one of the only in-depth studies on the archives of Quebec's Black communities.

When this project started, boxes and folders of old documents could be found in various office shelves throughout La Maison d'Haïti. In the 1987-1988 annual activity report, there had already been mention of the need to better organize and preserve the centre's archives and documentation (La Maison d'Haïti, 1988) but as Anna Kruzynski's quote above describes, no one had ever had the time to do it. With a group of volunteers, we started to sort through the institution's archives in summer 2013. When I started working on my PhD research, the archiving project underway offered a tremendous possibility to develop an innovative investigative process, anchored in a concrete and useful community project. I proposed to

conduct an in-depth ethnography on the activism that brought about the archive, by connecting archival and research labour.

Research Questions, Objectives and Findings

This research project stems from my desire to both learn from *and* preserve histories of Caribbean and Black activism. It aims to bring nuance to our understanding of what constitutes Black diasporic activism and diasporic activism in general, in their complexity and plurality. To that end, the project investigates the activism of a group of past and present members of La Maison d’Haïti, highlighting the role that learning and education played in this context.

As part of my own continuous community work, I anchored my research methodology in an ongoing community archives project to help preserve the institution’s historical legacy. I built from ethnographic, archival, collaborative and community-based approaches to research, and from community archiving practices (see Flinn, 2007, 2011; Moore, 2016; Pell, 2015) to explore archiving as a form of collaborative research; what I call *community archiving as ethnography*. Archival processing broadly involves appraising, arranging, inventorying, documenting, preserving and storing archival documents for future access. Integral to the methodology and with the help of volunteers, we processed over 40 years of documents and photos. I also conducted oral history interviews with nine activists from the organization, to contextualize the archive, and eventually add to it. The research thus also helped build La Maison d’Haïti’s archives. The overarching research question is:

How can a collaborative community archives project give insights into diasporic activism over time of a group of long-term activists in a Haitian community-based organization in Montreal?

The sub-questions are:

- 1.1 What is the role of learning and education in this context?
- 1.2 How do members of the group express their impetus to action?
- 1.3 What are some of the critical components that sustain Black diasporic activism?
- 1.4 How can the process of organizing a community archives be a collaborative research methodology?

The objectives of the research are to:

1. Identify key aspects of diasporic activist practices and politics of members of a Haitian community organization in Montreal.
2. Explore the role of learning and education in the context of diasporic activism.
3. Assess the relevance of a community archives project as a collective reflection process on practices in a Haitian community-based organization.
4. Assess the potential of a community archives project as a collaborative and community-based research methodology.

Because the dissertation is as much about processes of knowledge production and transmission in activism as it is about a methodology to preserve and investigate these processes, the lines between methods, analysis and results are often blurred. The dissertation also constantly moves between different scales by weaving people's personal experiences and their actions to the broader historical context *through* the process of community archiving as ethnography. By zooming in and out from the intimate, to the collective, to the historical it shows how the political is both personal and social, and vice versa. By exploring how community archiving can make us better understand these intimate, collective and historical experiences of activism, it reflects on the intricate relation between processes of knowledge production (both those that

relate to activism and to the research methodology) and the knowledge produced (both the knowledge documented in the archives and the actual content of the dissertation).

Insights that emerged from this inquiry are fourfold. First, that Black diasporic activism relies on four interrelated components, namely constellations, connections, circulation and a praxis shared by the community of activists, which together help yield a fifth component in the shape of Black diasporic nodes. These can be traced through La Maison d'Haïti's work and prior histories of Black diasporic activism, belonging to a wider Black radical tradition. Second, that activism ultimately forged and sustained this particular Black diasporic community. Third, that learning and community education shaped the shared praxis developed over time by the group of activists. Fourth, that archiving Black diasporic activism through the methodology of community archiving as ethnography can itself become part of the tradition of Black diasporic activism, relying on the same components that have historically sustained it. Engaging in community archiving as ethnography within the spaces of Black diasporic nodes can become a way to collectively preserve and generate knowledge that belong to, and further, the Black radical tradition.

The Community at the Heart of this Dissertation

My relationship to La Maison d'Haïti's (hi)story and its archives is as a community educator and worker, as a member of the Haitian diasporic community in Quebec, and as someone who benefited from its educational work as a child – albeit at a distance, through the pedagogical material it produced. Lately, I have also been a volunteer, a doctoral researcher, a collaborator with the teenage girls' program and more recently, a youth program evaluator and consultant. In 2016, I also briefly sat on the board of two new organizations founded by La Maison d'Haïti (Le Centre des Arts de la Maison d'Haïti and the Café Lakay).

In addition to being deeply intertwined with my ongoing community work, this dissertation is also an intimate inquiry, since I am connected to the people who shared their stories with me, by friendship, kinship, professional and communal ties. The project brings me back to where I started, and where I still stand: learning from community organizers. Although their stories will be presented in more detail within chapters three and six, I will briefly introduce the nine people I interviewed (See Appendix A), and their involvement at La Maison d'Haïti. While most people were involved in almost all activities in some way or another, here, I highlight the activities and period they were the *most* involved in. The people I focus on in this dissertation are only a few of the many who have been involved at La Maison d'Haïti, understanding that the community around La Maison d'Haïti was made up of various sub-communities over time, as is the broader Haitian community itself. While we tend to imagine that community organizing involves hundreds of people, in reality, most of the labour often relies on much smaller numbers (Stall & Stoecker, 1998). This focus allows me to better understand the articulation of personal and collective experiences, and their mutual influence. In addition, though power and conflicts also fashion communities, the dissertation does emphasize how community building occurred, both through formal and informal strategies. The dissertation reflects the particular experiences of those interviewed during a specific period in the centre's history and recognizes that they might be different than that of others, at other moments.

Adeline Magloire Chancy was an organizer and educator at La Maison d'Haïti during the 1970s and 1980s. A high school teacher in Haiti and then in Montreal, her work was crucial to the development of the organization's women's and literacy program. She also advocated for the recognition of Creole and for immigrant adult literacy. In Quebec she worked for the Comité d'implantation du plan d'accès à l'égalité à l'intention des communautés culturelles, a committee

tasked with implementing an action plan for equality for cultural communities in the province in the early 1980s. In Haiti, she served as the Secretary of State for literacy from 1996 to 1997, and Minister for the feminine condition and women's rights from 2004 to 2006.

Céradiou Toussaint became involved at La Maison d'Haïti soon after his arrival in Montreal in the early 1970s. He was part of the leisure activity committee until the late 1990s and helped with day-to-day activities. In Haiti, he was involved in political organizing and worked for the Service National d'Éradication de la Malaria, a national organization fighting malaria. He is rumored to be the only member who has never missed an annual general assembly of the La Maison d'Haïti. In Montreal he also worked for numerous years in a daycare.

Marjorie Villefranche got involved in the organization in the early 1970s, especially with children and then women's and literacy activities. She was the program director from the mid-1980s until 2011 when she became executive director. She studied art history at Université de Montréal and produced several movies and pedagogical material. She has also been involved in multiple groups, collectives and campaigns for the rights of women, migrants and refugees, and racialized communities.

Suzie Boisrond was a teacher in Haiti and then in Montreal. She started at La Maison d'Haïti through the youth programs, where she sent her children in the mid-1970s. Over the years, Suzie worked in many schools, especially with youth with learning challenges. In the 1980s, she helped develop and taught in a program for illiterate Haitian youth arriving to Montreal at the Centre de ressources éducatives et pédagogiques [CREP], for which she partnered with La Maison d'Haïti and received several recognition awards. In the 1990s, she became a facilitator in the organization's family program to enhance parental skills, where she worked until 2017.

Mireille Métellus worked as a special education teacher in Montreal after her studies at Université du Québec à Montréal. She got involved at La Maison d'Haïti as a youth in the early 1970s. She first gave dance classes and coordinated one of the youth programs in the early 1980s. She got involved again full-time in the organization in the late 2010s and continues to work with newcomers and with the educational support programs. She is also an established comedian and has acted in multiple movies and plays throughout her artistic career.

Alix Jean studied sociology at Concordia University, was a community organizer in Montreal and Miami, and worked at Radio Haïti Inter in Haiti, amongst other things. He got involved at La Maison d'Haïti as a youth and later proposed and helped organize the first summer camps in 1981. After serving on the board and working for an employment program during the early 1990s, he took charge of the summer camp again, and afterschool programs in the early 2000s, which he still coordinates. Alix is also a photographer and extensively documented Montreal's Black community life for years.

Elizabeth Philibert got involved at La Maison d'Haïti in the early 1980s, where she worked there as an animator for the women's program. She then went on to work for justice organizations including the Commission des Droits de la Personne, the provincial human rights commission, where she spent over 20 years. She remains involved in various women's committees including some with current and past members of La Maison d'Haïti.

Jacquelin Télémaque studied in political science at Université du Québec à Montréal, before starting a career as a journalist. He wrote for multiple international news agencies, including La Presse, Radio Canada, and Prensa Latina. His work at La Maison d'Haïti started in the mid-1970s, at first for the radio show in which he was involved for about eight years. He also

served as the coordinator of the organization during the late 1970s and was part of other activist groups.

Marie-Andrée Baptiste was a certified teacher in Haiti and worked in rural schools for a decade, before working for the Bureau national de statistiques, the national statistics office. She got involved at La Maison d'Haïti in 1980 and taught sewing classes there for over a decade. In the 1990s she started to teach literacy classes, and organized leisure activities for the adult students of the literacy programs. She still teaches the French classes for newcomers.

To do justice to people's own words and thoughts, and value the multilingual aspect of this project, all the participant quotes are presented in the original language spoken. I provide a translation for each. For ease of read, I present quotations that are 20 words and less inside the text and those that are 20 words and more in block quotations with the translation to the right. In Chapter six, longer excerpts of a collective discussion are also presented and formatted that way. These excerpts should be read as more than quotations: they guided my analytical process and framed my theoretical findings, hence the presentation of substantial passages.

Scope and Structure of the Dissertation

Stuart Hall posited that

Constituting an archive represents a significant moment, on which we need to reflect with care. It occurs at that moment when a relatively random collection of works ... is at the point of becoming something more ordered and considered: an object of reflection and debate. ... In the idea of a 'living archive of the diaspora' all three terms need to be considered for the hidden implications they carry. (2001, p. 89)

This dissertation is precisely about the constitution of a living archive of the diaspora, where all three terms are examined. It explores the *lived* experiences and realities of a group of activists

and the *life* of a community-based organization over time. It arranges, maps out and describes a community *archive*. It asks what the archive can tell us about a *diasporic* community and its activist practice, and the role of learning and education in this context.

How we evaluate the success of social movements – of which community organizations are a part of – is often based on if those movements achieved what they aimed for instead than on the merits of the visions, politics and desire that drove the movements in the first place (Kelley, 2002, p. ix). What interests me in this study is not so much the success, shortcomings or impact of people's work. It is, as Robin Kelley writes, the knowledge that is found "in the poetics of struggle and lived experience, in the utterances of ordinary folk, in the cultural products of social movements, in the reflections of activists" (2002, p. 10). It is the vision that activists strove for and the ways they attempted to realize that vision through their actions. To understand what the 'documents' (textual, photographic and oral) of La Maison d'Haïti's archive tell us about this, we need to understand the archive as a whole. To understand the archive as whole, we have to understand where and what it emerged from as well as the process through which it was archived. David Scott observes that "to fully understand a statement (a document, say, a narrative) it is not sufficient to attend to the level of the statement alone; it is necessary to be acquainted with the archive in which the statement is located" (2008, p. vii). Archiving and the archive are thus not only core to the methodology but also to the analysis and findings as can be read through the progression and overlap of the chapters.

For each archive they process, archivists have to prepare a finding aid: the reference tool to describe groups of archival records. Usually, finding aids contain descriptive and reference information about the archival records; background information about the origin and custody of the archive and about its creator(s); and the scope and content of the records and their

arrangement. While in the archival discipline describing was historically perceived as an objective act, in reality, archival description

is always story telling - intertwining facts with narratives, observation with interpretation.

... In this process, there is analysis, listing, reproduction, and so on, but its primary medium is narrative. ... In archival description archivists tell stories about stories; they tell stories with stories. ... Every narrative construction of the past is by definition creative, a work of the imagination. (Duff & Harris, 2002, p. 276)

Similarly, this dissertation recounts the various stories of this archive: from its emergence, to the community it documents, to its content and its archiving.

Chapter two presents the theoretical foundations that underpin this research. It connects certain processes and ideas stemming from Western European colonialism in the Americas starting in the 15th century and knowledge that questions these ideas and processes, to the theory, methods and subjects of the research. Historical context is brought in conversation with literature review and the chosen theoretical frame that guided the research and archiving project, particularly as it relates to conceptualizing Black diasporic communities; apprehending knowledge, learning and activism as socio-historical collective processes; and accounting for, and countering, the power in and of archives. This historicization links the theoretical framework to the historical background of La Maison d'Haïti, which is the subject of Chapter three.

Chapter three provides the historical, social and political context from which the organization – thus the archive – originated. As Marjorie Villefranche advised, to understand the archive, one must become acquainted with the history of the organization, make connections, as well as understand “comment est-ce qu’on en est arrivé à faire ça ... d’où [on] était venu ... où est-ce qu’on a articulé toute notre action” [how we were able to do what we did ... where we

came from... and where we articulated all our actions]. The dissertation is not a history of La Maison d'Haïti per se. However, contextualizing the archive is fundamental to the analysis process (Stanley, 2016) and allows me to trace its societal provenance, a key concept I will explain in Chapter two, locating the emergence of the institution at the crossroads of multiple historical movements. Appendix B presents a brief timeline summarizing key events detailed in the chapter.

Preserving archives “is a highly political work of memory” (Moore & Pell, 2010, p. 255). Chapter four describes how that work of memory unfolded through the evolving methodology of community archiving as ethnography. Because part of my research questions is about methodology, I meticulously detail the chronology of the archival and research activities, highlighting how they overlapped and constantly fed each other. I also show how the methodological activities of data identification, collection, and analysis were mutually constitutive.

Chapter five describes the archive through what I frame as its natural configuration. Archivists usually describe the scope and content of an archive by describing its archival records and regrouping them intellectually (meaning they don't re-organize them physically but only on paper) through an arrangement scheme. Archival records are grouped according to the function or activity through which they were created. Instead of attempting to present the archive through an arrangement scheme, I read the archive as a “discursive formation” of its own (Hall, 2001), and map out different facets of the archive based on the records. Together, these facets provide an overview of the configuration of the archive as whole.

Chapter six explores the group of activists' craft as a *shared praxis*, a term that will be explained in Chapter two. Community organizing involves “the ‘craft’ of building an enduring

network of people, who identify with common ideals and who can act on the basis of those ideals” (Stall & Stoecker, 1998, p. 730). The connection between people’s ideals and actions are partly what shapes the shared praxis. Chapter six will illustrate how this praxis developed from people’s personal learning experiences, through community education, to articulate people’s convictions and social actions.

Chapter seven reflects on the interrelation between the various components of Black diasporic activism, the specific functions of Black diasporic nodes and community archiving as ethnography. It shows that as a Black diasporic node, La Maison d’Haïti was a point of intersection, of juncture, of rupture, of regrowth and of growth. These functions emerged from, and facilitated, the other components. The chapter demonstrates how, in addition to preserving the knowledge produced and transmitted through Black diasporic activism, community archiving as ethnography is a way to *produce* collective knowledge *about* activist knowledge by relying on the different components that sustain Black diasporic activism in the first place.

Finally, Chapter eight, concludes with a summary of the findings, the contributions they offer and their practical implications. The chapter also reflects on the potential of community archiving for future activism.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Underpinnings and Framework

“Une théorisation dont seraient absents l’acteur, son monde-vie et son histoire serait une théorisation sans corps, un squelette conceptuel.” (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016, p. 145)

[Theorization from which the actor, *her* lifeworld and *her* story would be absent would be a theorization without a body, a conceptual skeleton.]

(personal translation, italics emphasis and feminization of pronoun)

Theoretical knowledge emerges from lived experiences (Choudry, 2015; Austin, 2009) and theorization is an evolving process that often starts prior to research (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). Theories bring together various elements ranging from ontological and epistemological postures; theoretical, methodological and conceptual dispositions and tools; and ethical positions (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). This chapter presents my theoretical framework as well as certain aspects of world politics and history which influenced it. A fuller discussion of colonialism – historical and ongoing – is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nonetheless, to lay the ground for the theoretical framework, each section first draws connections between processes of Western European colonization and the political project of ‘modernization’ in/of the Americas which are relevant to the subjects discussed. After the short historical contextualization, each section reviews pertinent literature and presents the theoretical ‘tools’ I used for this investigation. The framework itself revolves around three main components: racialization and conceptualizing the plural realities of Black diasporic communities; apprehending the socio-historical and collective nature of knowledge and/in activism; and accounting for the multiple relations between archives and power.

Historical Underpinnings: 1492, Colonialism and ‘Modernity’

Since about 8000 years ago, the Caribbean archipelago was populated by communities that varied linguistically, culturally and politically (Hofman, Hung, Malatesta, Jean, Sonnemann, & Hoogland, 2018). Ayiti Bohio Quiskeya (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) was inhabited by groups from the Caribs, Taïnos and Arawak Indigenous peoples, though there might have been groups from other peoples on the island as there is increasing proof that the region was more diverse than initially thought (see Valmé, 2012; Wilson, 1993). Those at the heart of this dissertation, including myself, were all born on the same land where Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492 by accident, while on his way to Asia to expand the trade market for Spain. In the Caribbean, monarchies – and later nation-states – of France, England, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Denmark all benefited from colonial ventures inspired and funded by their ambition to expand their material wealth (Clayton, 1996). Columbus’ landing on the shores of Ayiti Bohio Quiskeya propelled what many, again including myself, understand as the ongoing colonial era (Simpson, 2007; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Colonization of the Americas rested on a complex, violent and genocidal system of appropriation, exploitation, control and administration. What Haitian scholar Michel Rolph Trouillot (2003) called the geography of management, aimed at reorganizing and controlling resources, nature, humans and space for economic and political reasons, fuelling the development of world capitalism’s material conditions and organizational features. This geography of management worked hand in hand with what he called a geography of imagination which served to elaborate, justify and sustain institutions and means aimed at controlling resources, nature, humans and space. This geography of imagination was partly fueled by the ‘modernization’ project Western Europe had for the rest of the world, anchored in ideas such as universality, rationalism and scientific objectivity (see Haiven & Khasnabish,

2010; Mignolo, 2000, 2009; Quijano, 2000, 2007a; Trouillot, 2002, 2003). Some of the economic, political, social, and geographical power relations, political institutions and measures of that era unfortunately still remain influential today, as do some of the ideas which emerged then. Scholars such as Quijano (2000), Mignolo (2000) and Maldones-Torres (2007) speak of coloniality to refer to ongoing patterns and dynamics of power that started through colonialism but are still influential. These “long-standing patterns ... [still] define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243).

Section 1. Black Diasporic Communities

Historical Context: Racialization, Racism, Slavery and Capitalism

Slavery and racialization processes both have histories that precede the Atlantic slave trade. According to Cedric Robinson (2000), racialism, the validation and regulation of social organization based on “the ‘racial’ components of its elements,” is part of ideas that have ordered Western European civilizations over time, while certainly not unique to them (p. 2). For Trouillot (1994) various forms of ethnocentrism within that context led peoples to being ‘othered’ on different basis. These ideas partly framed the political and economic organization of Western European societies over time, for instance of slavery in ancient Greece or of the feudal system later, justifying the exploitation of certain populations as enslaved and workers. But ideas of ‘racial’ differences took on a new meaning, especially as they pertained to the racialization of populations of the African continent on phenotypical basis, when they coalesced with the need for labour to sustain exploitation in the colonies, especially in the American colonies (see Robinson, 2000, 2019; Hall, 1996; Mintz, 2010; Trouillot, 1982, 1994; Williams, 1944/2014). Slavery as well as the processes of racialization it relied on, became integral components of the

emerging global capitalist market, laying the ground for the ongoing racialized and racist global structure of labour (Quijano, 2000, 2007b). The rise of racial classifications based on physical criteria gathered pace during the second part of the 17th century, at the height of colonial expansion and the Atlantic slave trade. For instance, it is no coincidence that François Bernier's work *Nouvelle Division de la Terre*, one of the first French written attempts at human 'scientific' classification based on physical criteria was published in 1684, only a year before the *Code Noir* which "inscribed racial prejudice against Africans in French law" (Stuurman, 2000, p. 14) and regulated racist relations of exploitation in the colonies and metropole. This also paved the way for the emergence of scientific racism during the 18th and 19th centuries, part of the rise of the 'modern sciences' (see Robinson, 2000; Trouillot, 2003). Racialization and capitalism thus have an inextricable relation which was prior too but was also transformed with the onset of the Atlantic slave trade through the forced integration and exploitation of Black labour into the international capitalist system, leading Robinson (2019) to speak of racial capitalism to refer to how this system *is structured* and *structures* a racialized order and division of labour (see Al-Bulushi, 2020; Melamed, 2015; Quan & Willoughby-Herard, 2013; Ralph & Singhal, 2019).

The challenges of using qualifiers/descriptors such as Black is that while racialization and racism have real material history and consequences, the concept of race is an intellectual construct which had very specific political, social and economic purposes and particular historical roots. Racialization also encompasses the ways that attributes used to signify racial differences and assert power go beyond phenotypic traits and include other factors such as ethnicity, language, culture, nation etc. (Garner, 2017; Rattansi, 2005). While there is certainly a worldwide racialized, colored, gendered, classed and cultural perceived hierarchy where Blackness is undervalued but over-exploited, these orders also translate and play out differently

within each nation-state (see Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990; Kelley, 2000; Patterson & Kelley, 2000; Trouillot, 1994). For instance, Haiti has identified and asserted itself as a Black nation since its independence. As will be detailed in the next chapter, the war that led to independence from France was waged simultaneously against slavery, colonialism as well as a White supremacist system (see Trouillot, 1994; West & Martin, 2009b). Therefore, the concept of ‘race’ as used to structure countries like South Africa or the United States for instance does not apply in Haiti. Nonetheless, as Trouillot explains (1994, p. 149) inside the country, social dynamics, relations and structures are partly marked by the “social evaluations of phenotypes,” certainly influenced by the worldwide hierarchy while uniquely local as well. However, “Haitian color categories refer not only to skin color and other somatic features, but to a large range of sociocultural attributes that do not have a somatic referent.” These attributes, which are gendered as well, relate to various characteristics such as social origin, kinship or marriage ties, level of education etc., and can vary over time and space, illustrating that color also never simply “replicate socioeconomic classes, or even income groups” (p. 155).

Another challenge in using the term Black is that it sometimes risks bracketing out the knowledge and experiences of Black communities as external or parallel to wider historical and political processes. But Black political thoughts – meaning the critical analytical tools and theories drawn from the particular experiences and perspectives of Black communities – always speak about global dynamics of racialized relations and political processes of exclusion, and thus, about politics in general (Hanchard, 2010). I use the term Black knowing that its history and use are directly related to the articulation of slavery, racialism, racialization, racism and the rise of global capitalism (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). I also know that the experiences and knowledges of Black communities are intrinsic to other historical and political movements,

having shaped them and been shaped by them, beyond experiences and processes of racialization and that for some, Blackness is a political project in response to the capitalist system that created Blacks in the first place (Andrews, 2018). Such was the case in Haiti, where Blackness was intrinsically connected to questions of freedom, rights and citizenship, even inscribed in its first constitutions (see Gaffield, 2007; Getachew, 2016).

Nonetheless, the term allows me to speak to the historical and contemporary lived realities of various groups of peoples who, though racialized within and by the current capitalist system, are certainly not solely defined by their racialized experiences. In some cases, people might not even identify themselves as Black. Still, the term provides me a theoretical and analytical tool that allows me to account for shared racialized experiences and to locate myself, my life experiences, my politics and this project within a wider historical and political Black tradition.

Literature Review: Black Diasporic Communities and Geographies

Communities, articulations and negotiations. Communities can be self-defined or ascribed a shared identity on different bases, such as geographical, national, religious, sexual orientation, shared interests, and shared experiences (Flinn, 2007; Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Ketelaar, McKemmish, & Gilliland-Swetland, 2005; Waterton & Smith, 2006). For instance, broader communities, such as those defined through nation-states, always encompass a variety of communities who do not necessarily define themselves in relation to this political unit. Their boundaries and identities might be very different than that attached to the space framed by formal political borders, used to delineate national populations. Benedict Anderson observed communities should therefore be understood “by the style in which they are imagined” (1991, p. 6), no matter what their scale is. However it is defined, community is

something that is (re)constructed through ongoing experiences, engagements and relations, and not all these need be consensual. ... [It is] an incomplete process through which people construct and create identities, and bond themselves to others, whether geographically, virtually or imaginatively. (Waterton & Smith, 2006, p. 8)

Communities are built and defined through various processes, including through struggles and are always shaped by “thick seams of power that structure any given collection of people” (p. 8).

The term diaspora is defined as the scattering, migration or movement from a group of people outside what can be considered their ancestral or established homeland (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Brent Edwards (2001) notes that the term “Black diaspora” started to be used after the Second World War because of scholarly interests in Pan-African and in Black internationalist movements; movements to which I return to in the following chapter. Nowadays, the term partly designates the communities formed by the forced and voluntary movements of Black populations across the Atlantic, and the transnational geographies throughout which those communities are spread and fashioned, what is conceptualized as the Black Atlantic (see Gilroy, 1993). The term also refers to the ways these communities are constructed, articulated and negotiated through a mixture of shared and different experiences – including racialized experiences – identities, practices and relations. As for all groups of people, Black diasporic communities and identities are always (re)constituted and (re)produced in particular historical, political and social contexts and

... any sense of a collective identity among Black peoples in the New World, Europe, and Africa is contingent and constantly shifting. Neither the fact of Blackness nor shared experiences under racism nor the historical process of their dispersal makes for community or even a common identity. (Patterson & Kelley, 2000, p. 19)

The experience of ‘diaspora’ is also not applicable to the formation of all Black communities outside of the African continent (Campt, 2002). In addition, Black transnational political identities sometimes find their genesis and meaning through connections with other international movements such as Communism, Socialism, Feminism, artistic movements, religions, etc. (Kelley, 2000). Ultimately, Black diasporic communities are fluid in their constitution, through space and time and they can also be the locus of transgressive politics that merge the formal and informal realm, the cultural and the political, extending beyond borders and transforming through transnational movements (see Iton, 2008).

Geographies, movements and conditions. The idea of a Black Atlantic, most likely first used by Robert Farris Thompson (1983) and popularized through Paul Gilroy’s work *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) partly denotes the continuous back and forth movements across the Atlantic “of Black people-not only as commodities [during the slave trade] but engaged in various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy, and citizenship” (p. 16). These movements and struggles are intrinsic to the history and development of the region at large (Gilroy, 1993; Kelley, 2000; Patterson & Kelley, 2000) and to the development of capitalism (Robinson, 2000). The Black Atlantic is a “webbed network” (Gilroy, 1993, p. 29) that connects the local sites where communities are, between each other, and to a more global sphere. This network relies in part on what David Featherstone calls translocal circuits and connections, through which Black intellectuals and activists move, leading to “politicized forms of Blackness as constituted through contested, uneven, and differentiated translocal connections” (2013b, p. 1408). Translocal refers here to the different “forms of connectivity” that are created through encounters that often contest established national territories (Featherstone, 2013b, p. 1408). Gilroy also points out that the Black Atlantic is partly shaped by an aspiration to surpass

the boundaries of nation states and the limitations of ethnic and national specificities but that this aspiration has always been impacted by the constraints affecting Black peoples and movements, entrenched in national cultures, politics and states (1993). Geopolitical spaces and territories are constructed and impacted by local and global processes which directly influences diasporic movements and communities (Dahlman, 2004; Laguerre, 2006). As is the case with other diasporas, globalization processes –such as colonialism or neoliberalization– also impact the formation of the Black diaspora (Campt & Thomas, 2008), as well as the political and economic roles of diasporic communities, for example in the Caribbean (see Trotz & Mullings, 2013; Laguerre, 2006). Because these processes and “their effects are not everywhere localized, gendered, and racialized in the same way” (Brown, 1998, p. 317) this leads to power differentials inside and between communities on multiple levels (see Campt, 2002, 2009; Campt & Thomas, 2008; Patterson & Kelley, 2000; Laguerre, 1998, Trotz & Mulling, 2013). For instance, with regards to diasporic Caribbean communities, their migration patterns (Conway, 2007), transnational connections and movements (see Trotz, 2006, 2011), transnational family networks (see Chamberlain, 2003), political engagement with countries of origins (see Laguerre, 1998; Lindskoog, 2013), economic conditions and roles (see Allahar, 2011) and so on vary greatly, depending on a mix of political, historical and economic factors.

While there are other axes of Black transnational movements – one could refer to the ‘Black Indian Ocean’ and ‘Black Mediterranean’ (Kelley, 2000) – my work focuses on a particular Black Atlantic geography.

Theoretical Premises: Practices, Relations, Processes and Dyaspora with a y

Brent Edwards (2009), building from Stuart Hall’s work, argues that the Black diaspora needs to be conceptualised as a practice that relies on a set of relations where social, political,

cultural and historical communities are constantly (re)imagined through intricate and interwoven geographies. This is partly based on the premise that 1) diasporic exchanges – whether they be physical, or through literature, arts, etc. – are constitutive of a diasporic community; and 2) that these exchanges entail a process through which things are lost and gained, what Edwards calls a *décalage* (2009). This *décalage* also relates to the continuities/discontinuities, creations/losses, junctions/disjunctions which are integral to the Black diaspora in its plurality (Kelley, 2000). Those practices can involve formal and informal transnational political practices (Laguerre, 1998), as well as cultural and artistic practices (Iton, 2008; Raiford, 2006, 2009). This idea of constitutive practice and relations parallels Patterson and Kelley's affirmation that the bonds that tie the Black diaspora are not inevitable, are historically and socially constituted and articulated (2000). Black diasporic communities are thus better understood as a process that is continuously reconstructed through people's transnational movement and the movements of cultural, intellectual production and political struggles, as well as a lived condition influenced by that process (Patterson & Kelley, 2000).

In this dissertation, Black diaspora is therefore used as a theoretical and analytical tool to capture how transnational communities sharing experiences of racialization but shaped by similar and different socio-historical, political and economic factors and processes, are articulated and negotiated by their members and in relation to other communities, through sets of relations and various practices. In this specific case, the community in question is a Haitian diasporic community in Canada, engaged with a community organization. The following excerpt of Joanne Hyppolite's essay *Dyaspora* (2001) shows how the term has been integrated in Haitian language with its Creole spelling. *Dyaspora* with a y thus refers to a very specific Black diasporic community, born out of a specific history. A reference I went back to throughout my

dissertation, the text informed my theoretical framework and illustrates the practices, set of relations, conditions, processes and junctions/disjunctions integral to the formation of every Black diasporic community.

When you come to Haiti they call you *Dyaspora*. This word, which connotes both connection and disconnection, accurately describes your condition as a Haitian American. Disconnected from the physical landscape of the homeland, you don't grow up with a mango tree in your yard... Haiti is not where you live... Your house in Boston is your island. As the only Haitian family on the hillside street you grow up on, it represents Haiti to you. It was where your *granme* refused to learn English, where goods like ripe mangos, plantains, *djondjon*, and hard white blobs of mints come to you in boxes through the mail. ... You are dragged to Haitian plays, Haitian *bals*, and Haitian concerts where in spite of yourself *konpa* rhythms make you sway. You know the names of Haitian presidents and military leaders because political discussions inevitably erupt whenever there are more than three Haitian men together in the same place. ... Your parents speak to you in *Kreyol*, you respond in English, and somehow this works and feels natural. ... You do not remember Haiti because you left there too young but it does not matter because it is as if Haiti has lassoed your house with an invisible rope. ... The choice of neighborhood is a condition of the reality of living here in this city with its racially segregated neighborhoods. Before you lived here, white people owned this hillside street. After you and others who looked like you came, they gradually disappeared to other places, leaving you this place and calling it bad because you and others like you live there now. (Hyppolite, 2001, pp. 7-8).

Section 2. Knowledge as a Socio-Historical Process

Historical Context: Disciplining Knowledge

Ideas of rationality, expertise, universality led to the perspective that intellectual work can be detached from the material and lived conditions in which it happens and that different ‘types’ of knowledges have different values (Mignolo, 2000). These ideas were also promoted through the expansion of institutions of higher education as well as the rise of academic disciplines such as anthropology (Trouillot, 2003), and research methodologies, such as ethnography (Willis & Trondman, 2000; Simpson, 2007; Smith, 2005, 2013) which served colonial rule and expansion (see Gordon, 2011). The rise of scientific racism explained above also fits here. As Trouillot (2003) astutely observes “[a]cademic disciplines ... only legitimize a particular organization of meaning ... in that sense, they truly *discipline*” (p. 8). This articulation of the distribution of intellectual work along disciplinary lines, to the global expansion of the modern/colonial system served to categorize, value, and hierarchize knowledge depending on who produced it and where (see Mignolo, 2000), as well as to commodify knowledge (Smith, 2005). It emphasized the idea of knowledge as a ‘product’ generated by isolated individuals, downplaying the social and processual character of knowledge production as well as the fact that this process is always historically and politically situated (Choudry, 2014; Kelley, 2002; Naples, 2009). In fact, even the emphasis on knowledge as a singular term “already situates the question in a framework that is alien to precolonial times, for the disparate modes of producing knowledge and notions of knowledge were so many that knowledges would be a more appropriate designation” (Gordon, 2011, p. 95). Over time, this has led “to a tendency not to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of activism, or recognize the lineage of ideas and theories which have been forged outside of academe, often incrementally, collectively, and

informally” (Choudry, 2009). It also led to the under- or over-evaluation of knowledges depending on how they are expressed and by whom. For instance, the imposition and use of colonial languages such as English, French, Spanish etc., around the world has sometimes led to the perception, of the universal relevance and applicability of certain ideas and discourses expressed in those languages merely because of the language used (Mignolo, 2000). Their exportation across the globe also relied on writing which gained primacy over orality as a more valid and ‘scientific’ way to express knowledge, something I will address in the next section.

Literature Review: Social Learning, Activism and the Social Nature of Knowledge

Social learning and community education. If the production of knowledge is social and historical, so is its transmission. According to Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger’s (1991) social theory of situated learning, learning is an intrinsic part of what people do as they socialize. It is a cumulative process that happens through people’s daily actions and activities and is embodied as well as historically and culturally situated (Contu & Willmott, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991; O’Reilly, 2012; Wenger, 1998, 2000). As Himani Bannerji notes, “what we call knowing and knowledge, all involve and build on conceptual practices, premises, and assumptions, as all kinds of production rely on earlier modes of production” (2011, p. 24). People occupy different roles, and learn by engaging “in activities, conversations, reflections, and other forms of personal participation” as well as by producing “physical and conceptual artifacts—words, tools, concepts, methods, stories, documents, links to resources, and other forms of reification” (Wenger, 2010, p. 180). Learning and knowing emerge from participating in complex social learning systems, partly organized around those artifacts which reflect and transmit shared experiences (Wenger, 2000, 2010).

For Wenger (2000), learning from the communities we are a part of is central to “meaningful knowing” (p. 229) and can be an important source of education. Stein and Imel (2002) propose that four key elements help understand how education is anchored in a community: 1) the importance of space; 2) the fact that learning is related to the community’s life and needs; 3) the local production of knowledge; and 4) the fact that power relations also play out within communities. No community, society, nation, is completely homogeneous: power runs through all human groups. Whether they are contesting power within or power between communities, people also learn from those contestations (Choudry, 2015). As Foley (1998, 2001) and Choudry (2015) argue, the relation of learning to struggle is constitutive, complex and sometimes contradictory, but it is also very powerful. By questioning the social relations they are embedded in, the power of institutions such as the state, and by working to transform their lives, people produce knowledge and learn from their actions. Knowledge is not only produced within a social and historical context, it is also circulated and acquired in this context.

Social action: activism and community work. Activism encompasses a vast array of strategies, actions, and orientations aiming to bring about change, whether that be social, political, environmental etc. Community organizing and education are important aspects of it. Community organizing refers to the process of mobilizing groups of people to take action on issues affecting them. It usually encompasses, and relies on, a variety of collective actions such as community building, planning, development, mobilization, education and so on (see Doucet & Favreau, 2011c; Bourque & Comeau, 2007a; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 1998). I also use the term ‘community work’, to highlight the fact that all those actions are intricately connected and to emphasize the actual labour (more or less visible) at the core of this process. Community

organizing frequently sustains or is connected to other socio-political processes to bring change such as social movements, advocacy campaigns and so on (see Choudry, Hanley, & Shragge, 2012; DeFilippis, Fisher, & Shragge, 2006, 2009; DeFillipis, 2008; Shragge, 2013; Stall & Stoecker, 1998; Kruzynski, 2004). Broadly, organizing aims to bring together a group of people with shared concerns, to address these concerns and work to change their living conditions. Its goal is to build collective power that can be used as political leverage. Usually, changes at the local level are perceived to be a strategic step to bring about changes at a broader level (Fisher & Shragge, 2000), with the objective of addressing inequalities, the centralisation of power, and structures and relations of domination, amongst other things (Doucet & Favreau, 2011b). Focuses and strategies will also vary depending on factors such as the basis upon which the community is imagined; its history; the context(s) its members live in; the grievances it has; and its political orientation (see Bourque, Comeau, Favreau, & Fréchette, 2007; Brady & O'Connor, 2014; Doucet & Favreau, 2011c; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 1998). For example, approaches such as those inspired by Saul Alinsky's work in the United States (U.S.), have focused on social conflict as a source of change (see Alinsky, 1971, 1989). Others, such as more women-centered or feminist approaches (see Gilkes 1994; Kruzynski, 2004; Mizrahi, 2007; Mizrahi & Lombe, 2006; Mizrahi & Greenawalt, 2017; Naples, 1998, 2012), emphasize the importance of relations for the construction of the community as a political unit. In practice, there is often a mixture of strategies making various approaches overlap (Stall & Stoecker, 1998). Education is often transversal to community organizing activities (Kruzynski, 2004; Shragge, 2013). Influenced by the political aims, the educational approach framing the pedagogical strategies and objectives pursued might be at any point on a continuum from most conservative to critical (see Boughton,

1997, 2013; Burbules & Berk, 1999); popular (see Beder, 1999; Foley, 1998; Holst, 2009); emancipatory or radical (see Allman, 1994; Foley 2001).

Theoretical Premises: Theorizing, Praxis and Informal Learning

Thinking “theoretically is a gift and a competence of human beings” no matter who they are, where they are, when they live and what language they speak (Mignolo, 2000, p.110).

Building on the work of Marx and Engels (1978), Allman and Wallis (1990) write that people’s theoretical understanding of the world emerges from their lived realities since

it is through our life activities that we produce the material of our minds as well as our material world. ... this life activity takes place within definite forms of social relations between people and between people and the objects of their world.” (p. 15)

The quality or nature of people’s ideas is always influenced by their living conditions and contexts, and the social relations they are embedded in. Praxis refers to the mutual constitution of thoughts and actions shaped by social relations and material realities (see Allman & Wallis, 1990; Carpenter & Mojab, 2011; Carpenter, Ritchie, & Mojab, 2013; Freire, 1972). For Cornelius Castoriadis (1987) praxis is ultimately the way people understand *and* transform their reality. Though theories are defined as systems of ideas or suppositions to explain a phenomenon (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020) and praxis is defined as the “the practical application of a theory” (Merriam-Webster, 2021), in reality, the two have an organic relation (see Beder, 1999). Even if the ultimate goal of praxis is ‘doing,’ new knowledge always emerges from it and “[t]heory in itself is a doing, the always uncertain attempt to realize the project of clarifying the world” (Castoriadis, 1987, p. 74). For Paulo Freire (1972) critical reflection is also a form of action. Social imaginaries also refer in part to the knowledge people constantly produce about their world through their actions in relation to this world (Castoriadis, 1987, 1991).

Consequently, they are “crucially bound up with the possibilities of knowledge, with knowledge politics – and knowledge practices” (Moore, 2016) and are continuously shaped by and enacted through people’s actions (Verran, 1998). There is an influential interaction between people’s imaginaries and their political and social actions, for instance between their imaginaries and the social institutions they establish (Castoriadis, 1991), as illustrated by the intricate relation of the colonial/imperial geographies of imagination and management (Trouillot, 2003).

Though praxis and imaginaries are different, both focus on the fundamental relation between knowledge and action, their social and material nature, and their political character. At the core of activism is thus this organic articulation between the knowledge produced, transmitted and acquired by people and their actions. This knowledge includes their politics and encompasses both formal political ideology as well as the ideas, values, aspirations, and theories that people have regarding the functioning and organization of their world.

Section 3. Archives and Archiving

Historical Context: The Imperial and Colonial Roots of Archives

The terms ‘archive’ and ‘archives’ can refer to *the space* that houses historical material, to *the records* that make up the archival collection and to *the program* that is in charge of the archiving process (Hamill, 2013; Yakei, 1994). Historically, archival institutions and processes have had an intimate relationship to power and control (Caswell, Punzalan, & Sangwand, 2002; Cook, 1997, 2013; Ketelaar, 2002, 2007; Trouillot, 1995).

Although the preservation of old documents and artefacts happened elsewhere in the world, the dominant theoretical pillars of archival sciences date back to record management practices that emerged during Western European monarchies and transformed with the advent of nation-states (Cook, 2013; Duchein, 1992; Velios, 2011). Around the 11th and 12th centuries,

record-keeping practices became more systematic, especially for the preservation of legal and financial documents such as land titles (Duchain, 1992). Archives became the seal of financial, legal and political power of monarchies and the Vatican. They also played an important role for colonial expansion. Colonial governing apparatuses rested on an ever-increasing variety of documentation, such as the writings of colonial officers, clerks and travellers, to account for what was conquered and to be governed (See Dubois, 2014; Richards, 1993; Smith, 2015; Stoler, 2002, 2009; Trouillot, 1995, 2003; Tuck & Yang, 2014). As writing and written document gained authority over oral knowledge and agreements, institutions to preserve those documents became increasingly important. As Ann Laura Stoler observes (2002), “[i]f it is obvious that colonial archives are products of state machines, it is less obvious that they are, in their own right, technologies that bolstered the production of those states themselves” (p. 98).

Around the 18th century, as nation-states arose, archives started to acquire their historical importance (Duchain, 1992). Countries and communities to be governed had to be redefined and imagined on new terms, with a history of their own (Cook, 2013; Ketelaar, 2007). Archives acquired a new significance as the source of history, intertwined with political power (Duchain, 1992; Ketelaar, 2007). In their attempt to gain control over their resources and populations to monitor and pacify the latter – and improve their productivity, the bureaucracy of nation-states exploded (Ketelaar, 2007). Archives became increasingly complex and secured, managing and preserving the growing number of records produced by states, filtering access to knowledge. Towards the end of the 19th century what led to the current ‘archival sciences’ formalized, focussing on the arrangement and description of archival records (Duff & Harris, 2002; Cook 2013; Velios, 2011). The two main theoretical pillars of archival sciences come from that era (Duchain, 1992; Harris, 1997; Yakel, 1994).

The first principle of “respect pour les fonds” [respect for the fonds] from which the principle of provenance later emerged, was articulated in 1839, by the French Minister of Public Instruction (Duchemin, 1992). Provenance refers to the idea that records should be kept together according to their creator –whether individual or institutional. The second principle, that of original order, emerged from Prussian archivists’ work in 1881 to formally regulate the Prussian State Archives (Duchemin, 1992; Schellenberg, 1961). Original order refers to the idea that records should be kept in the order in which they were originally maintained by their creators (see Schellenberg, 1961). In 1889, the *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* written by Dutch archivists was published, tying together these principles and laying the ground for the standardization of archival practice (Cook, 1997; Velios, 2011). Wendy Duff and Verne Harris (2002) argue that the standardization of the procedure of archival description and of archiving in general should be seen as part of a

a late modernist endeavour to find order and sanity in increasingly chaotic tumblings of reality. ... the linkages [between this phenomenon and the broader conditions of modernity, bureaucratization, and globalization] are undeniable... standardization cannot be understood outside of historical and political processes. (p. 281)

Literature Review: Rethinking Archives

Archives and power. The power in, and of, archives and archiving practices is thus complex and multilayered. The theoretical roots and practices of archival sciences are intertwined with positivist ideas about progress, order, scientificity, and directly connected to the imperial/colonial ‘modernization’ project (Cook, 2001; Harris, 1997). Archives have historically been concerned with control of legal, financial, and political information (Cook, 1997, 2013; Harris, 2002; Ketelaar, 2002, 2007; Mbembe, 2002). When they acquired their historical

significance, archives sanctioned what and whose documents were to be preserved (Cook, 2001, 2011; Ketelaar 2008; Ketelaar, McKemmish, & Gilliland-Swetland, 2005). The power to include or exclude peoples and histories from archives shaped the knowledge derived from them, which in turn feed historical narratives, social and political imaginaries (Mbembe, 2002; Stoler, 2002, 2009; Trouillot, 1995; Ketelaar, 2001). This is also illustrated by “the differential power relationships at play between the global, the national, and the communal, manifested in a lack of local archival expertise, fiscal resources, and robust technological infrastructures” to preserve some group’s archives (Ketelaar, McKemmish, & Gilliland-Swetland, 2005, p. 148). Power thus rests in the archive as an institution that 1) gathers and controls access to information and knowledge; 2) gives status and meaning to society and history; 3) defines what is archivable or not (meaning worthy or not of preservation) through the process of archiving; 4) defines whose documents are more valuable; 5) that influences the knowledge that can be produced or silenced based on the content or accessibility of the archives. In the context of Quebec and Canada, Williams (2006) traces a direct connection between the social and political marginalization of Black communities to the absence of their records in official archival repositories, which in turn led to further invisibility because of their erasure from historical narratives.

Shifting Power: Community Archives. Because of archives’ relationship to power, contemporary scholars, archivists, and activists have increasingly questioned how archival institutions, practices, and records were historically defined (Caswell, Punzalan, & Sangwand, 2002; Ketelaar, McKemmish, & Gilliland-Swetland, 2005). Different groups and communities have developed new spaces and ways to preserve what they define as their archival records (Caswell, 2014b; Flinn, 2007, 2011). As Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) note, “the radical archiving principles of some independent community archives draw attention to the questions of

custody, repatriation, disputed and shared ownership of archives and cultural heritage” (p. 82).

The term ‘community archives’ encompasses a diversity of groups and processes and some have a clear activist or political agenda and others not (Flinn, 2007, 2011; Stevens, Flinn, & Shepherd, 2010). Their goal is usually the preservation and transmission of cultural and historical knowledge ‘by and for’ a self-defined community through a variety of archiving practices (see Caswell, 2014a; Caswell, Gabiola, Zavala, Brilmyer, & Cifor, 2018; Cifor, Caswell, Migoni, & Geraci, 2018; Flinn & Stevens, 2009; Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd, 2009). The historical over-reliance on textual documents, and even on particular types of textual documents, has led many community archival endeavours to “include a much broader range of materials than would traditionally be collected and preserved in a mainstream archive” (Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd, 2009, p. 79). This over-reliance also connects to the value given to written knowledge over other forms of knowledge expression.

In essence, community archives attempt to shift power back to the group that created the archives by regaining control over: ownership and access to archives that relate to them; the process of archiving; the choice of what to archive; and the use of archives. For many, owning their archive is a way to claim back, and assert their right to tell their own history. Some work to create alternative standards “within a context that is explicitly political” (Sellie, Goldstein, Fair, & Hoyer, 2015, p. 16). Others have radical (Nestle, 1979) or anarchist (Pell, 2015) approaches to archiving. Certain Indigenous communities archive from Indigenous ontologies and philosophies (Duarte & Belarde-Lewis, 2015; Littletree & Metoyer, 2015; Smith, 2015) and assert the importance of memories and meaning-making in the description of archival records (Howarth & Knight, 2015). Certain Queer communities are questioning the use of standard archival classification labels (Martínez, 2014; McKinney, 2015). Other groups are also archiving the

knowledge and cultural productions that are created by social movements (Hoyder & Almeida, forthcoming; Ramamurthy, 2006). Participatory approaches to archiving differ in their processes and outcomes but they broadly aim to transform the dynamics between the archivist and the users of the archives, where control of the process and of the information generated about the archive shifts (Huvila, 2008).

As Andrew Flinn (2011) notes, when a community archive is “informed by a radical public history agenda” it can open “a space in which the archive can become a significant tool for discovery, education, and empowerment” (p. 9). Such is the case for certain migrant community archives (see Bastian, 2014) and activist archives (see Moore, 2016; Pell, 2015; Sellie & al., 2015).

Theoretical Premises: Silences, Societal Provenance and Community of Records

In his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995) Trouillot writes that power in the forms of silences enters

the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance). (p. 26.)

Trouillot’s reflection had theoretical and methodological implications for my work. It helped me critically reflect on how and when power potentially shapes knowledge production, and on the multiple factors that impact what we learn from archives. This informed how the methodology I developed attempted to address questions of power and silences through archiving principles and practices aimed at accounting for: the context in which the archival records are created; how the knowledge contained in the records was generated; how the archive was assembled and

preserved; and finally, how the archival records were read, analyzed and interpreted. This approach relied on three main archiving principles: societal provenance, the archival continuum and communities of records.

Societal Provenance and archival continuum. The concept of provenance is one of the main theoretical pillars of archival sciences, referring to the point of origin of records based on a narrow understanding of the creator (whether an individual or an institution) and the custodial history of records (Duchemin, 1992; Hamill, 2013; Nesmith, 2002, 2007). However, archivists have greatly expanded this concept which has had direct repercussions for archiving practices (See Bastian 2014). In the 1970s, Archivist Hugh Taylor observed that more attention ought to be paid to the processes through which people created documents instead of a sole focus on their content (see Taylor, 2003; Nesmith, 1993). Terry Cook (2001) stressed the role of the social context in which a document was created (meaning the context surrounding the creator and the activity of creation), and then interpreted and archived, conceptualizing the *societal provenance* of records. Tom Nesmith (2002, 2007) brought forth the idea of an *archival continuum* taking into account the ‘life’ and ‘context’ of records even prior to their creation, and the ways they were then reinterpreted as archival documents. He emphasized the social nature of *all* activities surrounding the creation, use, preservation, description and interpretation of records, arguing that societal provenance meant accounting for the social character of the entire life of every archival record. For Eric Ketelaar (2008) and Jeannette Bastian (2006, 2014), societal provenance and the significance of archival documents also need to be understood in relation to individual and collective memory, a point to which I will return to in the following section. Ketelaar also proposes the idea of ‘archivilization’ (2000, 2001), to refer to the moment and process of determining the archival value—or lack of—of potential archives, which precedes what Jacques

Derrida's calls archivization (1996), meaning the creation, by archivists, of the archival frame within which they apprehend archives. Ketelaar and Derrida's ideas both emphasize the subjectivity that both precedes and underlines the actual archiving process. Working from the premise of an archival continuum demands that we account for and document the context of creation, of the creator and of the archival history of a record, to gain insights "into the social and cultural factors, the standards and values, and the ideology that infuse ... the creation of records and archive" (Ketelaar, 2000, p. 328, citing Armstrong-Ingram, 1997).

Communities of records and collective memory. Jeannette Bastian (2009b; 2012) argues that where and how communities record and document their lives and activities might be different than what was traditionally perceived as archival records, with a strong focus on written documents. Records in all their formats, are, in essence, tools of communication (Foote, 1990). Myriam Chancy (2012) and Grace Sanders (2013), for instance assert that literature holds a special role as archives of Haitian women's histories and memories. Bastian suggests that elements such as monuments and places, artefacts, oral and cultural traditions, rituals and celebrations, cultural expressive arts such as dance, grey or public literature like cultural magazines and so on, should be considered as archival records (2012). She argues that cultural collective performances and celebrations that reoccur and have been passed on over time represent instances of collective remembrance and knowledge dissemination through what she calls the living cultural archive (2009b). Living cultural archives highlight the crucial role of oral and physical traditions in the dissemination and preservation of community knowledge (Bastian, 2012). The Caribbean carnival is an example of this (2009b). In addition, the relationship of the community to the records it has created and the connections between various types of records need to be thought of as constitutive, through communities of records (Bastian, 2003). The

community functions “both as a record-creating entity and as a memory frame that contextualizes the records it creates” (p. 4) and the records “become both the creators as well as the products of the societal memory of a community” (p. 5). A community of records highlights the different levels and mechanisms of reciprocity between a community, its collective memory and its archives. It may be “imagined as the aggregate of records in all forms generated by multiple layers of actions and interactions between and among the people and institutions within a community. Layers of records parallel the active life of the community itself” (p. 5).

However, though they definitely connect, relate and can be constitutive of one another, archives and memories should not be necessarily equated (Hedstrom, 2010). Memories can be thought of as types of archival records. Certain objects such as artefacts, places, and monuments, can ‘hold’ memories (Bastian, 2012; Ketelaar 2005), but memories ultimately exist in the minds of people, not in the objects themselves. Memories can be triggered through archives, no matter what their format is, only when archives are engaged with and used (Jacobsen, Punzalan, & Hedstrom, 2013; Millar 2006). Memories are also always framed by the social references and contexts in which they are inscribed and from which they are retrieved (Halbwachs, 1925). Ketelaar (2005) observes that it is through cultural tools, which can take written, oral as well as physical form, that knowledge is shared socially, linking individual memory to social memory. Those tools are how communities record and transmit their knowledge, of which memories are a part of. They can be oral, textual, visual, sculptural and so on. In communities where orality and oral tradition play an important role in preserving and transmitting knowledge, oral records are important types of archival records (Ketelaar, 2005; Foote, 1990). There is therefore a dynamic interplay between archives, memories and the communities that generate them, for which knowledge is central.

Working from the premise of societal provenance, archival continuum and communities of records provides a frame to both engage with and archive a community's historical records, accounting for how silences can enter at every crucial step. It also allows to account for communities' experiences of racialization, and processes of knowledge production and transmission over time. Tracing the societal provenance of La Maison d'Haïti's archive of activism is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3. The Black Radical Tradition as Societal Provenance

In the old building of La Maison d'Haïti, a poster of Charlemagne Peralte hung behind the reception desk. During the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915-1934), Peralte rebelled and fought alongside the Cacos – a peasant resistance movement – against the occupation. Brutally murdered by U.S. forces in 1919, he became a symbol of resistance for Haitians (Chancy, 2012). The occupation became a rallying point across the Atlantic for various political movements denouncing U.S. imperialism and the treatment of Black populations worldwide (see Adi, 2009; Joseph, 2012). Peralte's portrait was a reminder of La Maison d'Haïti's connection to histories of Haitian political movements of resistance inside and outside the country, to other transnational and international political movements, as well as its embeddedness in a long line of Black activism across the Atlantic.

As noted in an open letter written by some of the first members and founders of the centre, to fully understand the ideological roots of their activism, their connections with the reality of Quebec, North America, the Caribbean and the international context must be known (Céliné, Jean-Pierre, Élysée, Pierre-Louis, Dehoux-Tardieu & Dehoux-Tardieu, 2016). This chapter provides an overview of some of these connections while tracing the societal provenance of the archive from the onset of the Haitian Revolution to dictator François Duvalier's arrival to power. The chapter then presents the first 20 years of the organization's activities. This focus on the first 20 years is partly due to the fact that most of the archives processed covered that period and that these decades allow me to explain the institutionalization of La Maison d'Haïti (See Appendix B for timeline of these decades as well). In addition, important political changes in Haiti and in Quebec in the 1990s slowed down and reoriented some of the centre's activities, which also led to a gap in the archive.

While the historical stretch might seem extreme, I contend that the diasporic activism undertaken by members of La Maison d'Haïti has historical precedents in two ways. First, it is partly tied to what some call the Black radical tradition (see Kelley, 2000, 2002; Robinson, 2000), to Haitian resistance movements as well as to Caribbean and international Left politics. According to Robinson, the Black radical tradition “was an accretion, over generations, of collective intelligence gathered from struggle” and comprises philosophical, political, historical and social knowledge and theories (2000, p. XXX). Based on the knowledge enslaved peoples first brought with them from West Africa to the Americas, it then developed from the small acts of daily opposition to slavery, leading to more systematic forms of resistance and eventually, to structured political and cultural movements such as Pan-Africanism, *Négritude*, *Indigénisme*, Black Internationalism, etc. Those movements have also influenced, and been influenced by, other intellectual and political traditions (Kelley, 2000, 2002). The theories that emerged from those movements were thus nurtured by complex social, political and historical processes. Second, some of the main components of activism which emerged from the analysis of La Maison d'Haïti's archives can actually be traced throughout the history that preceded the organization. Three of those interrelated components are: the *constellations* upon which this activism relies; the *connections* that foster it; and the *circulation* that shape and inform it. A fourth one, the *shared praxis of activists* illustrates the interrelation of the intellectual and physical labour that sustains the other elements, and a fifth one, which I call the *Black diasporic node*, allows for the articulation of all the elements. These components provide a theoretical frame through which Black diasporic activism more broadly can be apprehended.

Constellations. A *constellation* can be defined as a collection or group of things, objects or people that are related in some way, as well as to the configuration of qualities, ideas,

characteristics, feelings, objects etc., also related in some form (Merriam-Webster, 2021). It refers both to the patterns of relations as well as to the shared meaning and/or intentions underlying these relations. The idea of network is often used in relation to social movements, and has been extensively studied (see Crossley, 2008; Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012; Passy, 2001). I find, however, that the concept of constellation denotes something more organic with regards to diasporic activism. Shared meaning and meaning making are essential here. Constellations denote the webs of various individuals and institutions which are established through activism but also serve to enable it. Interpersonal as well as institutional constellations sustain social action for change. The nature and motivations of the relations that connect individual and organizations are what give meaning to constellations and also differentiate them from one other. The same people or organizations might be part of separate constellations, as the relations that tie them might be based on different causes, interests, intentions, politics, practices, geographies, identities etc. Constellations also differ depending on the patterns and density of relations.

Connections. For diasporic activism to happen, the connections that help foster and articulate constellations have to be meaningful and can be established on different basis. Crossley and Ibrahim found that “mass per se is of little value in relation to collective action in the absence of connection” (2012, p. 607). *Connections* are the points of junction between people or groups and can be premised on contact between individuals (personal connections); on shared spaces or on attempts to connect spaces (spatial connections); or they can be established on political grounds (political connections). People often become politically active and involved in organizing because of the personal connections they forge (Passy, 2001; Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012). Personal connections are elements that not only bring people to activism but that also facilitate social action in return (Crossley, 2008). Diasporic activism is often about creating

space, but activists also need space to develop their craft. Spatial connections refer to both the connections that happen because of space and to the connections that happen because people attempt to bridge different spaces. Finally, as will be shown further, political connections based on shared causes and ideologies as well as, for instance, shared Black diasporic identities have historically been important triggers of activism.

Circulation. The trans-Atlantic movement of Black populations is the foundational block of the Black Atlantic and of the Black radical tradition. The mobility of Black activists, artists, families, communities and so on, not only led to activism but it has also been a key strategy of this activism. These movements also led to the transnational circulation of knowledge whether by people themselves or through the artifacts of knowledge they produced – meaning documents, art, music etc. Resources (material, financial etc.) have also moved beyond borders. *Circulation* therefore refers to the back-and-forth movements of people, knowledge, and resources.

Shared praxis. The *shared praxis* of activists refers to the articulation of the collective actions and convictions that people developed as they organized and mobilized *together*. It is not only refined through further collective actions, but ultimately, it also forges communities as will be shown in chapters five and six.

Black diasporic nodes. Finally, *Black diasporic nodes* are the spaces and places that communities create for themselves, such as community groups and organizations, something I will explain in further details in Chapter seven. Nodes fulfill multiple functions both for activism and for communities, and there is a constitutive relationship between the five components of Black diasporic activism. Nodes emerge from a combination of the convergence of constellations and the relations established through various connections. They are shaped by the circulation of people, resources and knowledge and are instituted through communities' shared praxis. In turn,

nodes become points of intersection where migratory paths cross; points of juncture where connections happen and constellations merge; and points of rupture where constellations and relations also break. They are points of regrowth where people heal together from shared experiences of violence and the disruption of transnational migration, as well as points of growth where diasporic communities build themselves through the praxis they develop.

These five components have, to various degrees, also sustained Black diasporic activism in different places and over time, stretching back to the Haitian Revolution.

An Unthinkable Revolution

The havoc that Christopher Columbus brought and wrought on the island of Ayiti Boyo Quiskeya was resisted by the Indigenous populations that lived there in different ways, from marooning to warfare (see Béchacq, 2006; Wilson, 1992). Though the colonial metropole of France eventually claimed ownership of Saint-Domingue (now Haiti), as it did of Nouvelle-France throughout the North American continent, colonization never went unchallenged. Saint-Domingue was France's most productive, and probably the most profitable colony of the Caribbean by the end of the 18th century (Robinson, 2000; Smith, 2014). This productivity relied on excruciating labour conditions causing the death of many enslaved labourers – at first the Indigenous peoples of the island – leading to increased numbers of West Africans being brought to the colony for their labour (Casimir, 2001). They brought a wealth of ontological, social, political, historical, spiritual and cosmological knowledge along with them which fed into various modes of resistance (see Casimir, 2001; Barthélémy, 1997; Bellegarde-Smith, 2004; Girard, 2009; Robinson, 2000; West, & Martin, 2009a) and furthered some of the resistance strategies Indigenous populations before them had developed, such as marooning (Béchacq, 2006). Marooning aimed at creating spaces and places of communal living for communities of

resistance. Though for colonial administrators and slave owners, every “case of unmistakable defiance, each possible instance of resistance [by slaves] was treated separately and drained of its political content” (Trouillot, 1995, p. 83), they were foundational for the Black radical tradition.

The August 14th, 1791 Vodou ceremony of Bois Caïman is often viewed as the start of what became the Haitian Revolution: 13 years of complex armed battle between multiple factions. These included freed Blacks and coloureds (often children of Frenchmen and enslaved or freed Black women), enslaved and maroon communities, which at times fought against each other but eventually rallied against Napoléon’s French troops and led to Haiti’s independence in 1804 (see Bellegarde-Smith, 2004; Fick 1998; Geggus, 2014; James, 1963; Nicholls, 1979; West & Martin, 2009b). The struggles due to the factions’ differing and sometimes opposing interests, what Trouillot (1995) called the “war within a war” (p. 40), had long term consequences. But Napoléon’s attempt to reinstate slavery in Saint-Domingue in 1802 united everyone against the French (Stinchcombe, 1994). Despite its internal contradictions, the Haitian Revolution at once banished “slavery, colonialism, and White supremacy, the three foundational institutions of the post-Columbian dispensation in the Americas” (West & Martin, 2009b, p. 72). For Trouillot (1995), the historical and political meaning of the revolution – that slaves won their own freedom by defeating the French – was *unthinkable* to colonial powers and led to historical silences about its global importance. 15 years before, France’s own 1789 revolution had led to the *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* which claimed theoretical universal freedom and equality but did not apply to enslaved Africans and freed coloureds in the colonies (Nesbitt, 2005; West & Martin, 2009b). The abolition of slavery was thus “conceived not in the heads of the abolitionists, Black or white, but in slave revolts, culminating in the Haitian Revolution,” a foundational block of Black internationalism (West & Martin, 2009b, p. 94). Black

internationalism is understood as a political philosophy, epistemology and institutional practice that questioned and confronted the forced integration and (ab)use of Black populations in the advent of colonialism, imperialism and racial capitalism, especially around the Atlantic (see Featherstone, 2013a, 2013b; Joseph, 2012; Patterson & Kelley, 2000; Stephens, 2005; West & Martin, 2009b). The plural use of the term is more appropriate to illustrate the variety of movements and ideologies it entails.

The creation of a Black state at the height of the Atlantic slave trade left its mark politically and symbolically: Haiti was isolated politically and economically (see Ferrer, 2012; Nesbitt, 2005; Pierre-Charles, 1973; West & Martin, 2009b; Stinchcombe, 1994; Smith, 2014; Matthewson, 1996). This did not stop its leaders from supporting other anti-colonial struggles (Pierre-Charles, 1973; West & Martin, 2009b) or providing protection to runaway slaves from other colonies (Ferrer, 2012). It was a revolutionary example of Black freedom in the Caribbean, South Americas, the U.S. (see Ferrer, 2013; Genovese, 1979; Linebaugh & Rediker, 2013; Robinson, 2000; West & Martin, 2009b) and a threat for colonial, slaveholding and trading powers (Buck-Morss, 2000, 2010; Fick, 1998, 2007).

Inside Haiti, the legacy of conflicts that had occurred during the war of independence between the different communities that now made up the Haitian nation, led to further conflicts based on, among other things, land ownership, urban/rural regional divisions, colour, class, political power (see Casimir 2009; Dubois, 2014; Hector, 2006; Smith, 2014). The complex dynamics related to the articulation of color, economic and political power, class and gender also stems from that. The first constitutions reinforced the collusion of political and military power, with long term consequences on Haitian politics (see Fick, 1998, 2007; Gaffield, 2007; Smith, 2014; Trouillot, 1990). Nevertheless, the 1805 constitution also contained an article defining all

Haitian citizens as Black, regardless of skin colour, in an effort to unify the nation and conceptualize race ideologically and politically rather than biologically (Gaffield, 2007). This explicitly situated the nation's shared Black identity and political project of Black freedom and sovereignty in opposition to European nations' global colonial endeavours. This assertion of Blackness alongside gains of freedom for Black populations outside Haiti during the nineteenth century, "moved hand in hand with the rise of new ideologies of domination, most notably scientific racism" (West & Martin, 2009b, p. 80), which led to new struggles by Black activists.

The meetings and writings of Black intellectuals, including Haitians, in Western Europe at the turn of the 20th century were crucial to these struggles (see Fluehr-Lobban, 2000; Joseph, 2012; Smith, 2014). For example, in 1885 in Paris, Haitian scholar Anténor Firmin published *De l'égalité des races : Anthropologie positive*, a critique of Arthur de Gobineau's racist eulogy *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853-1855). Firmin's work was shaped by his movements across the Atlantic (Leonard, 2014) and connections with other Black thinkers, such as at the Pan-African Congress in London in 1900 (Fluehr-Lobban, 2000). The congress brought together a constellation of Black activists and intellectuals. Firmin's intellectual legacy, in turn, later influenced the Négritude and other Pan-African movements (Joseph, 2012; Leonard, 2014).

International and Black Diasporic Solidarity against the U.S. Occupation

In Haiti, the turn of the 20th century was marked by political instability, partly linked to the political and social context inherited from the revolution, exacerbated by the international treatment of the new Black republic. The young nation's political and diplomatic isolation over important periods of the 19th century because of its hard-won independence only heightened the difficult economic situation it faced (Stinchcombe, 1994). Racism, with the country's internal political challenges, fueled an international discourse about its ungovernability, often used by

British and U.S. writers and journalists to claim the “impossibility of Black self-governance” (Smith, 2014, p. 202). This provided the U.S. a perfect excuse to invade Haiti in July 1915, part of their imperialist expansion in the Caribbean and Latin American region (Castor, 1988, 2014; Angulo, 2011) which propelled, amongst other things, the internationalization of their banking sector (Hudson, 2013; Louis, 2010). A little over a hundred years after having won its independence from colonial domination, Haiti’s sovereignty was now threatened by imperial conquests. The occupation lasted almost 20 years and seriously put the meaning of Haitian freedom to the test (Smith, 2014). In Haiti and abroad, people came together to challenge U.S. imperialism and racism.

Inside the country, peasant movements like the Cacos opposed the occupation through armed battles. Charlemagne Peralte, whose poster hung at La Maison d’Haïti, was a leader of this movement. Market women sustained extensive intelligence networks (see McCrocklin, 1956). Part of the urban élite articulated new nationalist discourses, inspired by earlier Haitian nationalist and anti-racist writings like those of Firmin and later by Black literary movements and radical ideas emerging from Harlem and Paris (Smith, 2009). Some, such as the Indigénisme movement, stressed the importance of Haiti’s African legacies (Lowney, 2000; Smith, 2009). The cultural and scholarly impact of the Indigénistes was important inside and outside Haiti, eventually influencing movements like Négritude, emblematic of the circulation of Black radical thoughts and of how this circulation shapes political and cultural movements (see Bellegarde-Smith, 2004; Joseph, 2012; Smith, 2009; Gilroy, 1993). Professional and labour associations (Hector, 1989) as well as anti-occupation organizations such as L’Union Patriotique were set up (Sanders, 2013).

Outside Haiti, the occupation became “an important point of reference for both Black nationalist and communist radicals” (Lowney, 2000, p. 415). Through its official organ *The Negro World*, the Universal Negro Improvement Association [UNIA] denounced the occupation (Putnam, 2009). The UNIA was a Black nationalist, Pan-African association founded by Jamaican Marcus Garvey in 1914. It had chapters throughout North and South America and the Caribbean (see Putnam, 2009; Marano, 2010; McDuffie, 2016). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] in the U.S. pressured politicians (Plummer, 1982; Lowney, 2000) and at some point, even helped revive L’Union Patriotique in Haiti, connecting Haitian and African American men and women activists (Pamphile, 1986). Other groups also took positions such as the pro-Communist American Negro Labor Conference during its 1925 meeting (Plummer, 1982). The Caribbean community in New York was growing at that time and included a small number of Haitians who mobilized against the occupation (Charles, 1996; Plummer, 1982). This in turn, influenced various West Indian and American intellectuals during the beginning of what grew into the Harlem Renaissance (Joseph, 2012; Lowney, 2000).

The U.S. occupation brought back the Haitian Revolution in various Black diasporic activist and artistic movements, becoming “an important, if not fully appreciated, trope in the Black international renaissance, political and cultural, that followed World War I” (West & Martin, 2009b, p. 98; see Joseph, 2012). Black historical political knowledge fueled new struggles for Black freedom. A few examples are C.L.R. James’ 1936 play *Toussaint Louverture* and 1st edition of the book *The Black Jacobins* in 1938 (see Barson, 2010); Aimé Césaire’s founding text of the Négritude movement, *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (1939); and Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein tentative collaboration with Black U.S. actor Paul Robeson for a movie project on the Revolution in the mid-1930s (Forsdick & Høgsbjerg, 2014). Toussaint

Louverture was one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution. The organ of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers [ITUCNW], *The Negro Worker*'s August-September 1933 issue also featured an illustration of him (Sweeney, 2011). The ITUCNW was actually launched by the Communist International [Comintern] in 1930. Therefore, besides circulating communist politics and ideology, *The Negro Worker* reported on Black workers' struggle around the Atlantic and provided pragmatic struggle advices, serving "as something of a collective organizer, helping to foster a sense of unity of struggle throughout Africa and the African Diaspora" (Adi, 2009, p. 166). The interwar period was particularly fertile for Black internationalist ideologies and movements through the circulation of, and encounters between Black thinkers in the diaspora (see Stephens 2005; Joseph 2012).

During the 1930s, various connections with the Comintern led to the emergence of a Marxist-infused pan-Africanism (Adi, 2009), which eventually made its way to Haiti, though Black thinkers before had certainly reflected on and theorized the relationships between capitalism and racism (see Robinson, 2000). Some initial proponents of Indigénisme, such as Jacques Roumain and Max Hudicourt, eventually turned to Marxism, seeing the need for explicit political participation. In 1931, Roumain met African American writer Langston Hughes in Haiti (Fowler, 1981; Joseph, 2012). The following year, Roumain went with another comrade to New York, seeking financial support and resources from the Communist Party of the United States of America to form a communist party in Haiti (Smith, 2009). In 1932, Roumain and Hudicourt wrote the first Marxist critique of Haiti, *L'Analyse schématique* 32-34. It was also the program of the first Haitian communist party, the Parti Communiste Haïtien [PCH], founded in 1934 which instantly sent the government on an anti-communist hunt (Smith, 2009). This led to Roumain's arrest on charges of reception of 'dangerous' material from abroad, namely literature on the

Scottsboro case which had been a rallying point for African American activists and the Comintern to denounce U.S. racism (see Smith, 2009; Adi, 2009). The case related to the unfair trial of nine Black adolescents wrongfully accused of raping a White woman. News of Roumain's arrest led to mobilization by Black activists in New York where Hughes and others formed the Committee for the Release of Jacques Roumain (Hoffman, 2014; Smith, 2009). These types of political connections and exchanges between Black cultural and left movements on local and international levels would re-emerge over time, including in Montreal in the 1960s.

1934 also brought the end of the U.S. occupation and the formation of the first formal Haitian women's organization, the Ligue féminine d'action sociale [Ligue]. Some members had been involved in anti-occupation activism and had established connections with African American women (Sanders, 2013). In 1937, one of the founding members, lawyer Madeleine Sylvain, visited Quebec, giving talks on inequalities faced by Haitian women and women in Quebec (Sanders, 2013). At its inception, the Ligue had clear political goals, such as women's suffrage, but dropped most of them after being temporarily banned by the government (Bellegarde-Smith, 2004). In the 1950s, the Ligue again picked up the struggle for women's suffrage. Adeline Magloire was twenty at that time. Though she does not recall being particularly influenced by them, she was aware of their actions. The Ligue

a fait ses manifestations de rue avec
pancartes et tout ça, banderoles...
elles sont allées au Gonaïves, elles
ont campé dans la rue, les familles de
Gonaïves ne voulaient pas les
recevoir pour la nuit. (Adeline)

[held its street demonstrations with
placards, banners and all of that...
they went to Gonaïves, they camped
in the street, the families of
Gonaïves did not want to receive
them for the night.]

Those protests, alongside other actions, eventually helped women win the right to vote in 1957. Adeline was born three years before the foundation of the Ligue, in 1931 in her ancestral family home in Pétionville. The eldest of four, she was very close to her brother born right after her, followed by two sisters. Her childhood was a happy one, with loving parents. Although they were not rich, the family was from a privileged background and never lacked anything. Adeline went to a unique elementary school led by her father's aunt, where children directed their own learning. At the end of elementary school, she passed national exams, winning the national prize for French and entered the nun's high school for girls, L'Institution Sainte Rose de Lima.

Haitian political life in the 1930s was marked by the 11-year presidency of Stenio Vincent (1930-41) followed by Elie Lescot (1941-46). In the beginning of 1946, national protests (known as the 1946 Revolution) initially led by students toppled Lescot. Some of the students, a new generation of Marxists, were later sent to study in Paris which led to new radical connections with other political and intellectual movements (Smith, 2009). For example, during his stay in Paris student Jacques Stephen Alexis engaged with members of the French Communist Parti and of the Négritude movement (Heady, 2016). At the first Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Paris, in 1956, Alexis presented his theory of marvelous realism which both built, critiqued, and moved beyond the work of fellow Caribbean artist Alejo Carpentier and also critiqued some of the ideas of the Négritude movement, once again showing the transnational circulation of ideas (Kramer, 2014). Alexis became an influential intellectual and writer, and was later involved in politics, founding the left party, Parti d'Entente Populaire [PEP] in 1959. Like Roumain before him, Alexis navigated literary and left political circles.

After 1946, students would remain important actors in the Haitian political landscape in and outside of Haiti. In the months following Lescot's overthrow, different left and *Noiristes*

parties were created (see Hector, 1989; Smith, 2009). Inspired by Indigénisme, Noiristes nonetheless moved towards a Black nationalist rhetoric (see Péan, 2010). In August 1946, politician Dumarsais Estimé was elected and though he attempted more socially oriented economic reforms, his government fell prey to the same kind of corruption as earlier governments (Smith, 2009). The year Estimé was elected, 11-year-old Céradieu Toussaint moved to the city of Gonaïves to pursue studies while living with an uncle. There, he finished elementary school and part of high school and was involved in various youth groups, ranging from sports to cultural activities and others. Céradieu was born in 1935 and grew up in a rural village of the Artibonite administrative department, in the north-east of Haiti. His father was a peasant who cultivated his plots of land but also worked for bigger landowners. His mother passed away when he was three. His father remarried and had five other children. Although they were not rich, Céradieu remembers his family lived well because of his father's work. While studying in Gonaïves, Céradieu often went back to see him during holidays. During these trips, he also worked with some of the youth groups he was involved with to help peasants organize against expropriation by rich, urban families. They helped found peasant cooperatives and connected them with lawyers sympathetic to their cause. One of the families that peasants denounced and opposed was the Estimé family who attempted to take over land in the region.

In 1950, Estimé was ousted and replaced by Paul Magloire, an ex-army officer whose six years in power led to the institutionalization of military governance, increased repression and anti-communism (Smith, 2009). In 1950, Adeline also came back from a year in Jamaica where she studied English and typewriting and started a relationship with the man she later married, Max Chancy. Though Max quickly left for Europe to study for three years, he and Adeline continued to correspond. Adeline started at the national teacher's training college École Normale

Supérieure in 1951, attending for over a year before stopping because of her mother's death. Having to help the family financially, she did various internships and eventually started to work in a law firm as a secretary. This encouraged her to start a law degree in 1953, the year Max came back. They got married shortly after. In 1954, the Marxist-leninist party Parti Populaire de Liberation National [PPLN] was formed and Max quickly joined the party. So did Céradiou, who joined around 1955 in Gonaïves. In 1956, Adeline finished her studies and gave birth to their first son right before leaving with Max to Germany for his PhD. While in Germany, Haitian politics remained a centre of interest for them since the year they left, Magloire resigned from the presidency when opposition arose as he tried to stay in power after his mandate. This led to a complex and volatile election campaign, that brought noiriste politician François Duvalier to power on September 22nd, 1957.

The Birth of a Dyaspora

Duvalier quickly set the tone for what became a brutal 29 years father-then-son dictatorial regime. Over the next decades, the regime effectively put in place a political and legal framework that institutionalized its authoritarianism; made violence and repression core to the state structure and its workings; favoured economic predation; and dismantled or co-opted most civil institutions such as the Catholic Church (see Charles, 1996; Diederich, 2005; Diederich & Burt, 1969; Dupuy, 1988; Louis, 2010; Péan 2010, Pierre-Charles, 1973; Romulus, Forthcoming; Trouillot 1990). Duvalier neutralized political opposition by centralizing power, attacking all institutions “producing elites, knowledge and shaping opinions,” and setting up a “complex repression apparatus” (Romulus, n.p., Forthcoming). Adeline recalled that:

Il n'y avait pas un espace pour parler,
liberté d'expression, liberté

[There was no space to speak,
freedom of expression, freedom of

d'association, rien, rien, rien, même
les choses les plus innocentes.

association, nothing, nothing, nothing, not
even the most innocent things.]

Duvalier created a paramilitary militia first known as the Cagouards, and later the Tonton Macoutes, which he institutionalized in 1962 as the Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale [VSN], (Péan, 2010). That his paramilitary bears the same name than the paramilitary wing of Benito Mussolini's National Fascist Party in Italy, the *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale* [Voluntary Militia for National Security], is no coincidence, speaking volumes to the political role Duvalier envisioned for himself (Péan, 2010).

Teachers' and student unions were harshly repressed. For example, the teachers' union, Union Nationale des Membres de l'Enseignement Secondaire [UNMES], was dissolved in 1959. Some of its members – including Max Chancy—were also part of the PPLN. Max became involved in anti-Duvalier resistance right after his return from Germany in 1958. Although Adeline's formal political engagement started a few years later, she always supported the resistance movement, and typed a lot of the party's propaganda material. After their return, she gave birth to their second son and went back to school to finish her initial teacher's degree. She and Max both taught in various institutions while he continued political organizing, travelling for instance in newly independent Guinée-Conakry in 1960 for a Congress of socialist writers.

Educational institutions were some of the most harshly attacked and repressed by the government. Duvalier progressively brought the state university, l'Université d'État, under his control. This was denounced by professors and students, such as through protests and a strike initiated by the student union, L'Union nationale des étudiants haïtiens [UNEH] in 1961 (Péan, 2010; Legros-Georges, 2014). While non-partisan, some UNEH members were Marxist students associated with the PPLN. Some of the teachers who had been part of UNMES like Max, also

supported the strike, which led to him being banned from teaching in the public sector. Céradiéu, who came to Port-au-Prince in 1958 to study, was briefly arrested after participating in these protests as well. Although not a student anymore, his participation led him to be identified by Duvalier's regime and forced him to go into hiding. With the help of his father, he remained underground for a year. Between 1961 and 1966, he also held important political responsibilities for the Gonaïves region for the PPLN. In 1962, *Femme Patriote* a committee of women from different left parties was formed (see Romulus, Forthcoming). Adeline joined the committee. The following year, Max was briefly arrested and tortured. By then, most unions and federations across the country had been dismantled. In 1964, Duvalier proclaimed himself President-for-life, and the PPLN was renamed the *Parti Union des Démocrates Haïtiens* [PUDA].

Until that point, children, elders and women had been relatively spared from targeted political violence though they had felt the brunt of general state repression. Under Duvalier, however, women became direct targets of the state (see Charles 1995; Sanders, 2013, Romulus, Forthcoming). The 1957 elections were the first where Haitian women voted. Tellingly, one of the regime's first victims was journalist Yvonne Hakim Rimpel, member of the *Ligue*. In January 1958 she was kidnapped, brutalized, sexually assaulted and left for dead after writing a newspaper article denouncing the election campaign's anomalies (Vitiello, 2019). In 1964, 12-year-old Marjorie Villefranche's parents sent her to Montreal alone, first for a summer camp and then for boarding school. Although they never said it explicitly, eventually she realized that her parents sent her away to protect her from the regime. Marjorie was born and grew up in Port-au-Prince in a family that was part of what she saw as a relatively privileged, closed social circle. She had an older brother to whom she was really close. Her mother worked for a private electrical company and then as a seller for a tourist boutique. Her father worked for the oil

company Shell. Although she was raised a Catholic, Marjorie's parents were not religious. Very sociable, they had an extensive network of friends, with whom they often gathered, and who, like them, were anti-Duvalierist. Marjorie remembers that even during celebratory gatherings, there were constant political discussions even if her parents were not formally involved in politics. Under Duvalier's regime, her mother was briefly arrested on accusations of defamation against the president. Following this, the family slept with relatives and stayed away from their home for a few months. Later, after the disappearance of an uncle, Marjorie's cousins came to stay with them for a few months. These various events, and the increasing threats to young women, persuaded Marjorie's parents to send her to Montreal where she spent a first year in boarding school before moving to another one in Trois-Rivières. Her brother joined her there, though in a boarding school for boys. In 1968, the family was finally reunited in Montreal, where Marjorie finished her last year of high school before entering post-secondary schooling in a Collège d'enseignement general et professionnel [CEGEP].

In 1965, threats to Adeline's husband's life forced the family into hiding for a week which she spent locked in a room with her two youngest sons, separated from her oldest child and her husband. Once reunited, they left for Canada where they were welcomed by family members, other Haitian exiles as well as various Quebec intellectuals. In Haiti, repression increased and in 1966 Céradiou and many others were arrested after the eruption of anti-Duvalier protests in the north of the country. This time, he was imprisoned for longer:

Je suis resté là pendant cinq ans, à
dormir sur le plancher, des fois une
natte ... épaisseur d'un millimètre
...avec des punaises ... Ah ça te

[I stayed there for five years,
sleeping on the floor sometimes on a
mat ... only a millimeter thick, full
of bedbugs...it eats you all night

mange toute la nuit, tout le jour,
c'est dur, c'était dur. (Céradiou)

all day, it's hard, it was hard.]

Some of the first exiles of Duvalier's dictatorship, like my mother's family, left Haiti as early as 1959. The start of dispersal of Haitians across the Atlantic led to the emergence of the diaspora with a y. In Montreal, the first Haitian organization L'Association des haïtiens du Canada (AHC) was created as early as 1962, my grandfather Louis Roy, nicknamed Routo, being one of the founders (La Maison d'Haïti Inc., 1992). Haitians who arrived in Quebec during the 1960s were mainly, but not solely, French speaking professionals, who fitted into Quebec's need for qualified labour in changing school and health systems (Déjean, 1978; Mills, 2016).

The Growth of Quebec's Black Communities

When Haitians arrived in Quebec, they arrived in a province with a Black population of its own. While there were no large plantations demanding large numbers of forced labourers in this part of New France, slavery was nevertheless also part of its social and economic fabric (see Gay, 2004; Trudel, 1960; Trudel & d'Allaire, 2004; Rushforth, 2012). The majority of enslaved individuals were Indigenous, but Black enslaved also came from West Africa or other colonies, such as Saint-Domingue. In the 18th century, following military defeat, France ceded the Nouvelle France colony to Great Britain.

The initial presence, and later immigration, of Black peoples to Quebec was thus historically mostly tied to labour demands (Calliste, 1994). This is also connected to a history of immigration policies at the national level which have sustained a racialized construction and structure of Canada as nation, especially through labour distribution (Thobani, 2007; Hanley & Shragge, 2009). The late 19th century's expansion of the railroad increased demand for workers. Black men were recruited from the rest of Canada, the U.S. and the Caribbean to be employed as

porters (High, 2017; Mathieu, 2010; Williams, 1997). By the beginning of the 20th century, African Americans, African Canadians from other cities, West Indians and Montrealers made up Montreal's diverse Black community. Women often worked as domestics or were employed in factories. Legal segregation did not officially exist in Québec, but the lived experiences of Black community members was of limited access to certain places, employment opportunities, and services as well as daily experiences of racism, such as in schools (see Bertley, 1982; Este, 2004; High, 2017; Williams, 1997). Like elsewhere in the country (see Gooden, 2008), this led Black community members to set up organizations to fulfil different needs, provide support and services and advocate against racism and discrimination (see Este, 2004; McDuffie, 2016; Williams, 1997). Those organizations – or Black diasporic nodes – in turn helped to build the community by providing spaces for people to gather, connect and build new networks.

The first formal institution was the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal [CWCW], founded in 1902. It provided relief and aid to community members (Este, 2004). Some CWCW members, alongside other Black women, helped found and later held key roles in other organizations (Hébert, 2015; Williams, 1997). In 1907, in response to the discrimination they faced in churches with majority of White followers, community members created a multi-denominational Black church. The Union Congregational Church, later called the Union United Church [UUC] had a strong welfare vocation and was also a platform to advocate against discrimination and racism (see Bertley, 1982; Este, 2004; Williams, 1989). The end of the First World War brought on a wave of West Indian migration to Montreal connecting the city to a West Indian cross-American transnational network stretching as far as South America. One institution which facilitated those connections was the Montreal division of the UNIA, created in 1919. It engaged in political advocacy and provided cultural, educational and recreational

activities, aiming to foster a positive sense of Black identity (Bertley, 1982; Este, 2004). Women's involvement there was also crucial and facilitated relations with other institutions (McDuffie, 2016; Williams, 1997). In 1927, members of the UUC and other community members founded the Negro Community Centre [NCC] to protect Black residents' rights, improve their well-being and living conditions and provide learning and leadership opportunities (Bertley, 1982; Este, 2004). The NCC also served White families from the area and housed other groups' meetings. It became the heart of community life in the Little Burgundy neighbourhood, where the majority of Montreal's Black population lived. Through the transnational connections of its residents and organizations, Little Burgundy was tied to other North American cities and "centres of 20th century Black culture" (High, 2017, p. 27), part of the cross-Atlantic Black diasporic web.

In the 1960s, Quebec underwent important restructuring with the provincial government slowly taking over control of some services which had until then been the domain of the Church (Saint-Victor, 2017). Known as the Quiet Revolution, the period was also marked by a cultural, political and social movement for the reaffirmation of a Francophone national identity as *Québécois* instead of French Canadians (see Bouchard, 2005; Mills, 2010). Citizens' committees, associations, and cooperatives were set up all over Quebec with people demanding better living conditions, access to more services and eventually, increased control of those services (see Bélanger & Lévesque, 1992; Bourque & Comeau, 2007a, 2007b; Doucet & Favreau, 2011b, 2011c; Kruzynski, 2004; Lamoureux, Lavoie, Mayer & Panet-Raymond, 2008; Mayer, 1994; Mayer & Groulx, 1987). As teachers, the Chancy's quickly found work in the expanding school sector. Adeline worked in one of the new polyvalent high schools emerging from the educational reforms. Max eventually worked in a CEGEP, a new type of post-secondary

institution founded in 1967. Changes and reforms in immigration laws in 1962 and 1967 also now emphasized the education, qualifications and resources of potential immigrants as decisive factors for their immigration to Canada, instead of their country of origin as had been the case before, opening more opportunities for immigrants from areas like the Caribbean region (See Labelle, Larose, Piché, 1989).

In 1965, teacher Suzie Boisrond was invited to Montreal for a conference on education by fellow Haitian teachers, where she was immediately recruited by the Peter Hall school for deaf children. Suzie was born in 1938, the oldest of three siblings in a village called Camp-Perrin in the South-east of Haiti. Her mother raised them on her own, but the children were well surrounded by extended family. Suzie defined her childhood as very harmonious, even if they were not rich. Camp-Perrin only had an elementary school for girls and one for boys, so once done, Suzie was sent to high school in the closest city, Les Cayes, when she turned twelve. There, she lived with a host family for three harsh years, and recall sometimes going hungry, before her mother and siblings joined her. Her mother worked as a seamstress. After finishing high school, Suzie moved again alone, to Port-au-Prince to start teacher's training college, eventually earning a boarding scholarship for the École Normale Supérieure. When she started studying there, the rest of the family moved to Port-au-Prince and Suzie began tutoring fellow classmates to support them financially. In 1958 she finished her studies, and as the top graduating student from the national exams, received another scholarship. This scholarship was for a year-long specialisation in Paris, at the Université de la Sorbonne. After returning to Haiti in 1961, she started to work as a teacher and continued private tutoring to help her family. Although she had come to Montreal only for the conference, Suzie decided to stay after receiving the employment offer and worked in numerous schools in the 1970s and 1980s. She pursued

higher education in Québec, for which she again received two scholarships, got married and had a daughter and a son.

Mireille Métellus's parents were also both teachers who arrived in Montreal in the early 1960s after a brief passage in New York. She stayed with relatives in Port-au-Prince before joining them in 1966. In Haiti, Mireille moved between Port-au-Prince and Léogane, another city, where her aunt sometimes took her to protect her from repression in the capital. A child, she was nonetheless highly aware of the events around her, such as the disappearance of family members and her grandmother's sense of justice and anti-Duvalier politics. Arriving in Montreal aged 13, she immediately got involved in youth groups such as the Catholic group Club Jeunes du Monde where she sang songs for peace and against the war in Vietnam. This only furthered her political awareness and interest in arts and politics.

Adeline, Suzie, and Mireille's parents were part of the many Haitian professionals whose labour was crucial to the social transformations underway in Québec (see Déjean, 1978; Mills, 2016; Saint-Victor, 2017). Although it is sometimes assumed that those who came to the province in the 1960s did not encounter racism or immigration problems because of their relatively easier entry into the job market, they certainly did. My own grandparents denounced harassment by immigration officers in an interview with Radio-Canada in 1966. Adeline and her family remained without formal, permanent status until 1982 and were also often threatened with deportation by immigration officers.

The changes in Canadian immigration laws in the late 1950s and the 1960s, coupled with the country's labour needs and increasing economic ventures in the Caribbean also led to increased immigration from the West Indies during the 1960s (Hébert, 2015; Piché, 1989; Saint-Victor, 2017). In Montreal, as the Black community grew with West Indian and Haitian

immigration, it spread around the city which led to the emergence of many new community, cultural, and island-based organizations, and student and activist groups. Adeline observed that at that moment, “Montréal était comme un carrefour,” the city was a crossroads for Black activists where, amongst others, part of the Caribbean left theorized and articulated visions for the region’s future (Austin, 2007).

Diasporic and Exile Politics: The 1960s

According to Gilroy, “the powerful effects of even temporary experiences of exile, relocation, and displacement” should be taken into consideration with relation to the development of Black art, culture and politics (1993, p. 18). Duvalier’s repression of the left and students pushed many out of the country and the groups they set up in exile, including in Montreal, were often connected to groups in Haiti and the diaspora (see Charles, 1996; Lindskoog, 2013; Saint-Victor, 2017; Pierre-Louis, 2002). West Indian students and activists also set up groups in the city, connected to others outside Canada, such as the C.L.R. James Study circles, the Caribbean Conference Committee [CCC, first known as the Conference Committee on West Indian affairs], and more (see Austin 2007, 2009, 2013). One of the ways in which transnational constellations of anti-Duvalier groups and of West Indian groups connected was through the political affiliations of activists to different Caribbean left groups and parties. These constellations were thus forged on political connections, based on common ideologies and struggles. Interestingly, Adeline noted that political connections between members of various left parties and movements are actually part of political strategies.

In great part because of the presence of these Caribbean leftists in Montreal during that period, the city became “a hotbed of radical socialist and anti-colonial political activity,” also influenced by the U.S. civil rights and Black Power movement (Austin, 2007, p. 528). This, in

turn, had a great impact on Quebec activist and political movements (Mills, 2010). What was happening in the U.S. influenced budding activists in Montreal such as Mireille and Marjorie.

For Black communities in the city, 1968 was a turning point: as Adeline noted, “tout s’accélère dans l’année 68” - everything accelerated that year. On April 4th, Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated in Memphis which sparked protests across the U.S. and eventually in Canada. Alix Jean, an 11-year-old in Brooklyn, New York at that time, also remembers witnessing some of these protests. The protests, along with the rise of the Black Power movement deeply marked him. Alix was born in New York to Haitian parents who met in the city. Soon before his first birthday, his parents had to send him to live in Haiti with relatives because of a lack of family support network in New York. His mother travelled back and forth over the years to see him, and the family grew over time with three more siblings. Alix first lived with his grandmother, and then an aunt, before going to live with one of his mother’s great-aunts in Gonaïves to start elementary school. At the age of nine, in 1966, he came back to live in New York. Alix spent a total of five years there, where he entered the scouts and was a choirboy, before his family moved to Montreal in 1971.

To denounce Luther King’s assassination, a memorial rally was organized in Montreal on April 7th, 1968, bringing together anglophones and francophones, Blacks and non-Blacks (Hébert, 2015). Once again, Black activists from different spheres connected over a common cause. For instance, Adeline established contact with Rosie Douglas, a young activist from Dominica and

après la manifestation il y a eu ce

petit groupe [d’étudiants antillais].

On se réunissait ... il y avait deux ou

[after the protest there was this small

group [of Caribbean students], we

met ... there were two or three

trois haïtiens parmi nous et puis, on
étudiait, ... le marxisme, on étudiait
des choses comme ça et, et c'est là
qu'on a planifié le Congrès des
écrivains noirs.

Haitians among us and then we
studied, ... Marxism, we studied
things like that and, and that's where
the Congress of Black writers was
planned.]

Adeline had had some exchanges with other Black activists before. She had gone to the NCC to teach French classes and her first outing alone in Montreal was to McGill University to hear Cheddi Jagan, founder of Guyana's left-wing People's Progressive party. But the connections that happened at the protest led to new realms of activism, especially as Caribbean Marxists established contacts. In the following months, activists organized the third Congress of Black Writers and Artists. Named the Congress of Black Writers: Towards the Second Emancipation, The Dynamics of Black Liberation, it was held at McGill University in October. The event brought together activists, scholars, intellectuals and students and marked a shift in political discourse and ideology towards an international Black consciousness, partly anchored in the discourse of Black power (Austin, 2007). During the 1960s, "[d]iaspora politics were [...] the lens through which Black peoples worldwide chose to assert their cultural specificity" (Ricci, 2016, p. 69) and the congress fitted right into that. It allowed thinkers to connect their struggles to a historical tradition of Black resistance (Hébert, 2015). The tone of the event, like most other Black internationalist movements events and discourses was very masculinist (see Austin, 2013; Stephens, 2005). Like other events such as the first Pan-African Congress of 1900, and the previous Congress of Black Writers and Artists [1956, 1959], the 1968 Congress of Black Writers also illustrates the importance of the convergence of various constellations of Black activists over common politics. These events happen because of prior connections and relations

but also allow for new ones to be forged. A few days after the congress, the Hemispheric Conference to End the U.S. War in Vietnam also brought together an array of people (Hébert, 2015). In addition, 1968 was a year of worldwide student mobilizations (see Comeau, 2007; Dreyfus-Armand, 2008) including in Quebec and university and CEGEP students were galvanized. Marjorie, a CEGEP student at that time, eventually joined the student movement.

In early 1969, the build-up of the political ideas that had circulated during 1968 helped give rise to an important student protest at Sir George Williams University (See Forsythe, 1971; Greenidge & Gahman, 2019; Martel, 2012). Led by a group of West Indian students who had filed a complaint alleging racism from a professor, the protest culminated in the occupation of the university's new computer lab and ended in flames when the police were called in. While relations between Haitians, West Indians and Black Montrealers were otherwise usually limited, events such as the Luther King memorial rally, the Congress of Black Writers, the Hemispheric conference and the Sir George Williams affair opened up spaces for lasting Black radical connections and constellations. For instance, the connections forged a constellation of Caribbean leftists who remained in contact way beyond that period. Some of the students who would go on to found La Maison d'Haïti in the following years also navigated various activist constellations which led them to be involved, for instance, in the Sir George Williams affair and other student events such as the protest by French-speaking students at McGill University (Céliné et al., 2016).

In Haiti, 1968 and 1969 meant something different than in Montreal. In 1968, an attempt to overthrow Duvalier led to his retaliation by executing political prisoners, including 72 of the 77 held at the jail where Céradiou was. In January 1969, the two main left parties, PEP and PUDA, united as one main communist party, the Parti Unifié des Communistes Haïtiens [PUCH]. A few months later, a new 'Anti-communist law' rendered all activities labeled as

‘communist’ subject to the death penalty, unleashing a repression that led to the assassination, imprisonment and exile of many members of the PUCH. The party cell to which Elizabeth Philibert and her partner belonged to was targeted:

Durant la razzia de 1969 nous avons
été victimes des macoutes ... mon
compagnon a été tué, c’était le deux
mai 1969 et moi j’ai, j’ai été en
prison enceinte ... j’ai fait la prison
presque quatre ans.

[During the 1969 raid we were
victims of the macoutes... My
companion was killed, it was on May
2, 1969 and me, I went to prison
pregnant.... I was in prison almost
four years.]

Elizabeth was born in the city of Pétionville in 1948. She was the eldest of six siblings of a Catholic family from what she called a humble background. Her father was a goldsmith and Elizabeth remembers him working hard to provide for the family before his untimely death in 1967. This forced her to stop studying to help provide for her siblings. That same year, she entered the PUDA where she met her partner, also a party member. Elizabeth’s political commitment was also inspired by the Cuban revolution and the anti-Vietnam war struggles abroad. In August 1969, in prison, she gave birth to her first daughter in excruciating conditions, barely receiving post-natal care because of her political affiliations. With the help of other prisoners, she cared for her daughter who remained in jail with her for two years before being released to Elizabeth’s mother.

At that time, even those who weren’t directly involved in political opposition experienced the repression. Jacquelin Télémaque, who lived in his city of birth, Cap Haïtien, in the north of the country also remembers 1969 as being pivotal:

Pas que j'étais dans un mouvement	[Not that I was involved in any
quelconque mais la répression se	movement but the repression was felt
faisait sentir dans cette ville-là aussi	in that city too, and so I saw a lot of
et donc j'ai vu beaucoup de jeunes	young people disappear, I had at
disparaître, parmi lesquels j'ai eu au	least four cousins who were taken in
moins quatre cousins qui sont partis	that wave.]
dans cette vague-là.	

Jacquelin was born in 1951 and grew up in Cap Haitian with two younger sisters and his parents. His father left when he was around 11 to work in the Bahamas. Although they did not see each other again until 1979 in Montreal, Jacquelin and his father continuously wrote to each other. Jacquelin's school, College Notre Dame, organized youth discussion groups and he was often invited to participate in these. Through this, he gained access to books and magazines which were not otherwise easily accessible and was also invited to write for the school bulletin. During his teenage years, in addition to his cousins, some of his teachers disappeared as repression hit the city harshly. As Jacquelin observed, Duvalier's regime perceived students and youth as potential agitators. This pushed his parents to send him to Port-au-Prince in 1968 to finish his studies and eventually, to Montreal in September 1970 with his younger sister. As soon as he arrived, he started CEGEP and quickly transferred to university to study political science at Université du Québec à Montréal [UQAM].

The 1969 repression led to a new surge in emigration from Haiti. Many students, like Jacquelin and his sister, left the country. Anti-Duvalier activists found their way to Canada, the U.S., Mexico, France, and Cuba, among other places. They joined exiled families, other activists and students. In Montreal, Jacquelin and his sister's house became a meeting point for many

other students who came from Haiti. Over time, Jacquelin also increasingly got involved in anti-Duvalier activism. Groups abroad became important spaces of anti-Duvalier mobilization and left politics (see Charles, 1995, 1996; Lindskoog, 2013; Batrville, 2014) and groups such as the Comité Haïtien d'Action Patriotique [CHAP] were formed with multiple committees in various cities. Membership sometimes overlapped with other groups. Jacquelin was eventually recruited into the CHAP by another Haitian organizer.

In Montreal, Haitian families settled and started to establish – and in some cases re-establish – bonds based on a mix of political, family, kinship or friendship affiliations. In the Outremont neighbourhood, families such as that of Mireille, Alix, Adeline, Suzie, Marjorie and many more slowly developed the nucleus of a community. The same thing most likely happened in other areas where Haitian families lived. Suzie's brother-in-law Dr. Ernst Gresseau knew Max and Adeline from Haiti. Max and Adeline eventually met Marjorie through her husband who was Max's CEGEP colleague, though Adeline had crossed paths with her before in Montreal. Mireille's family arrived in the area in 1968, two years after landing in Montreal and housed Alix's family when they arrived in Outremont. Alix and Mireille's family had briefly lived in New York at the same time. When Alix's mother divorced, she decided to join them in Montreal. While children and youth moved from one house to another, adults continued to mobilize against Duvalier but also started to organize activities for youngsters. Adeline and Max's apartment, located at 768 Champagneur street became a safe haven for many (Noël, 2018), and was even mentioned in a press release by Duvalier authorities in New York. Suzie recounts how efforts were made to gather people and form this small but growing community through, for instance, organizing events for the children:

On a commencé avec les
dépouillements d'arbre de Noël! Et
on allait à ... l'école secondaire
d'Outremont Gérin Lajoie...suite à
ça on s'est dit « Faudrait qu'on se
réunisse plus souvent » et ça a
germé. Mais Adeline a travaillé
comme une folle. Ah oui!! Les gens
au départ ... ont travaillé fort pour
ramasser le monde.

[We started with the distribution of
Christmas gifts to the kids! And we
were going to ... Outremont
secondary school Gérin Lajoie to do
that ... after that, we said to ourselves
“We should meet more often” and it
grew from there. But Adeline
worked like a maniac. Ah yes!!
People at the beginning... worked
hard to gather everyone together.]

Adeline also organized a play for children with a group of mothers and collaborated with other
activists such as her friend Ana Kovak for the publication of patriotic calendars. Ana and her
husband, Aly André set up Samba, a cultural group for youth in which Alix participated

vers la fin de 71, début 72 je pense,
on commence avec Samba. ... qui
était finalement un mouvement
culturel, on faisait la danse, un peu
de théâtre et ... on avait commencé à
préparer une sorte de théâtre, de mise
en scène mais surtout sur la situation
sociale, politique en Haïti.

[towards the end of 71, beginning of
72 I think, we start with Samba. ...
Which was finally a cultural
movement, we did dance, a bit of
theatre and... we started preparing a
kind of play on the social, political
situation in Haiti.]

Mireille also joined Samba, where she continued to connect art and politics.

The political situation remained a focus for many when François Duvalier died in 1971

and his 19-year-old son Jean-Claude took over the presidency, continuing the dictatorial regime. This ushered a new era of economic and political hardship. Emigration from the country reached massive numbers which led to renewed forms of organizing across the diaspora.

Projet Maison d'Haïti: From Student Activism to Community Activities

In this context, a group of students started to organize to receive compatriots reaching Montreal in the winter of 1970-71. Adeline and her husband first established contact with them during that period. While involved in anti-Duvalier activism, the students were nevertheless critical of what they saw as the short-sighted vision of older Haitians activists whose focus tended to remain the overthrow of Duvalier (Céliné et al., 2016). There were a number of Haitian groups around the city at that time and political ideologies and orientations differed, directly impacting how people envisioned the actual work needing to be done on the ground. For the younger activists the struggle was one and the same: to defend the rights of Haitian workers who were migrating to Quebec, to struggle against the dictatorship in Haiti, and participate in the struggles of other peoples in their search of freedom anchored in the right to self-determination (Céliné et al., 2016). Inspired by the Black Panthers, Montreal's Black community sector and Quebec sovereigntists, amongst other movements, their reflections also entailed the well-being of Haitians inside and outside the country (Céliné et al., 2016). Because of their participation in many of the events of 1968 and 1969, the students were connected to various activist constellations from French Quebecer nationalists to Anglo-Caribbean students (Céliné et al., 2016). Although it is unclear if it was the first or second grant received, in summer 1972 they obtained funding from the Projet d'Initiatives Locales [PIL], a federal program to create student employment and foster social engagement (Bélanger & Lévesque, 1992). This allowed them to formalize the project entitled Projet Maison d'Haïti and set up office at the YMCA on Parc

Avenue, in Outremont. Their activities mainly consisted of providing translation and accompaniment services to newcomers, for instance through a mobile team that went to the airport. Over the summer, they also organized camping and outdoor activities. Once the fall arrived, the project took another turn and procedures to obtain legal status were launched. More funding applications were also done such as one in October signed by Charles Dehoux, Pierre Normil and Jean Richard. Referral services continued and collaborations with Haitian groups such as Samba developed. Mireille and Alix's first contact with La Maison d'Haïti was through Samba which provided sports and cultural activities to youth.

Anti-Duvalier activists also remained active and the city became an important centre of Haitian left politics, even influencing groups in New York (Charles, 1996). Members of the PUCH welcomed fellow comrades reaching the city such as Céradieu, who was released from prison in 1971 and arrived in Montreal in September 1972:

... là les gens qui étaient au Canada,	[... the people who were in Canada,
les anciens membres du parti au	former members of the party who
Canada ils étaient au courant du	were in Canada, were aware of the
dossier, comme s'ils m'attendaient.	file, as if they were waiting for me.
Ils m'attendaient. ...J'ai rencontré	They were waiting for me. ... I met
certaines amis, anciens militants qui	some friends, former activists who
me connaissaient et puis ... j'ai	knew me and then...I started my
retrouvé mon style de vie de militant.	activist lifestyle again.]

These connections eventually got him involved with La Maison d'Haïti the following year. In Haiti, a few months after his release Céradieu had gotten married. His wife Célitard and his son, who was born after his departure, came to join him in Montreal in 1974.

The early 1970s saw the emergence of Quebec's community sector (see Bélanger & Lévesque, 1992; Côté & Simard, 2010) as well as many left groups (see Doré & Plamondon, 1980; Lagüe, 1979; Laurin, 2005; Mills, 2010; Warren, 2007). Citizens' committees of the 1960s gave way to community-based organizations, such as community centres and clinics. After being involved in the CEGEP student movement, Marjorie entered En Lutte, a Marxist-Leninist group and also worked for a community clinic. Other Haitian centres were founded such as the Bureau de la communauté chrétienne des Haïtiens de Montréal, later renamed the Bureau de la communauté des Haïtiens de Montréal (BCHM) in 1972 and the Centre N A Rive in 1973, reflecting the diversity of experiences and sub-communities among Haitian immigrants (see Déjean, 1978; Mills, 2016; Saint-Victor, 2017). La Maison d'Haïti became one of the various Black diasporic nodes being set up by Haitian community members.

In January 1973, the organization's members received another PIL grant and started their own immigration and tax services, as well as employment and medical referrals. The official charter of the institution was signed on February 9th by students Charles Dehoux-Tardieu, Pierre Normil, and Nirvah Casséus Tate. Tellingly, some of the activists who initiated the project could not sign because they themselves did not have the legal status to do so at that moment, such as Marie Yolène Jumelle. Many other names of people involved in the first activities of the organization are also present in the archives of that period. Some of them are Ghislaine Méhu, Frédérick Thélusma, Josette Élysée, Rose Jean, Judith Despradel, Félix Saint-Pierre, Monique Tardieu, Aly André, Anna Kovak and more. Later that spring, La Maison d'Haïti moved into a new space on Saint-Denis street and offered literacy and English classes. In less than a few months, the student project became a budding organization which aimed to provide leisure activities to families, promote Haitian culture, and defend the rights of the community while



Figure 3.1 Poster, New year's community celebration (c. 1975)

ensuring its growth, similar goals to that of the NCC before it as well as to those of other immigrant groups (See Campanile, 2007).

A fire in early 1974 forced the organization to move to a smaller space, slowing down but not stopping most activities. The group started to plan various research on the community to better grasp needs and organize accordingly (La Maison d'Haïti, 1974). Leisure and cultural events like picnics or celebrations of Haitian independence (see

Figure 3.1) and Christmas became recurrent community activities, for which the organization often partnered with other groups.

In the fall of 1974, due to changing immigration regulations, many Haitians in Quebec found themselves in limbo with regards to their legal status, before receiving deportation orders (See Mills, 2013, 2016). This situation led to massive mobilization within and outside of the Haitian community to denounce and halt the deportations. Some of the people affected, alongside Haitian community groups and activists, mobilized, garnering a wide and varied base of support ranging from French Quebecker activists, trade unions, civil rights organizations and Black community groups, amongst others (Mills, 2013). With other groups, La Maison d'Haïti helped found the Comité d'Action Anti-Déportation [CAAD] which played a key role in the

mobilizations. Through this, people like Marjorie got involved

Max et Adeline ont commencé à
m'intéresser à ce qui se passait, donc
ils m'ont ... intéressé à La Maison
d'Haïti qui existait à peine. ...on
commençait plus à aller dans les
manifs contre la déportation des
haïtiens ... et j'ai commencé comme
ça à être introduite ... dans la petite
communauté qu'on était.

[Max and Adeline started to interest
me in what was going on, so they...
got me interested in La Maison
d'Haïti which had just started to exist
... we started to go more and more to
protests against the deportation of
Haitians ... and like that, I started
being introduced ... to the small
community that we were.]

Though tensions and divisions existed in the community, often because of divergent political positions with regards to the vision of a post-Duvalier Haiti, most Haitian activists and organizations joined efforts during the crisis (Saint-Victor, 2017). The struggle fostered political alliances, even if temporary. The campaign also gave a push to the organization, though it might have also caused the denial of funding from the Canadian Labour and Immigration Ministry in the following months (La Maison d'Haïti, 1975, 1975 Nov.). This did not stop the core group of activists to continue volunteering to provide services. Céradieu recalls that during that period

les gens arrivent en masse Il faut
des bras pour amener les gens à
l'immigration. Il faut des bras pour
accompagner... on a un petit local, il
faut nettoyer, il faut ouvrir à telle
heure, il faut fermer à telle heure, on

[people were arriving in great
numbers.... It takes people to get
them to immigration services. It
takes people to accompany them...
we have a small room, we have to
clean, we have to open at a such

fait tout ça...Et je me rappelle quand
Adeline Chancy, ... va travailler
avec son aspirateur derrière son auto
et puis au retour elle passait à La
Maison d'Haïti pour faire le
nettoyage avant de rentrer chez elle!
Ben écoute, on n'avait pas d'argent,
on pouvait pas payer un concierge
pour faire ça, c'est entre nous, ça se
fait entre nous.

time, we have to close at such time,
we did all of that... And I remember
when Adeline Chancy, ... went to
work with her vacuum cleaner
behind her car and then on her way
back she went to La Maison d'Haïti
to do the cleaning before going
home! Well listen, we didn't have
money, we couldn't pay a janitor to
do that, it was all between us, it was
done between us.]

Community organizing and collective social actions are often led by relatively small groups (Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012; Staples, 2009). Such was the case with La Maison d'Haïti's core group of activists who came together over the first years:

Ça se passait entre nous, parce qu'il
n'y avait pas grand monde là... il y
avait beaucoup de monde mais pas
beaucoup de monde qui *veulent*
s'impliquer vraiment, on était un
petit groupe très restreint.

[It all happened between us, because
there weren't many people... there
were a lot of people but not a lot of
people who really *wanted* to get
involved, we were a very small
group.]

(Céradiou)

The activists around La Maison d'Haïti also worked through various sub-groups and committees to divide the work. These committees were partly based on people's interests and affinities. In

addition, many people were also part of, or connected to, anti-Duvalier groups and other groups.

In 1975, the International year of women, the Haitian women's committee Rasanbleman Fanm Ayisien (RAFA) was founded (Rasanbleman Fanm Ayisien, n.d.; Sanders 2013, 2016). It emerged

d'une série de rencontres de femmes	[from a series of meetings of women
qui prennent conscience de la	who became aware of the condition
condition de la femme et ... de toutes	of women and ... of all forms of
les discriminations à son égard même	discrimination against them, even
de violence etcetera mais ... qui	violence etcetera but... who also
prend aussi conscience qu'il faut	realized that we have to fight against
lutter contre, qu'il faut changer ça.	that, to change that.]

(Adeline)

The women met through various Haitian mobilizations and some, such as Adeline, were involved at La Maison d'Haïti. Several also belonged to the Union des Femmes Haïtiennes, a coalition of members of women's branches of clandestine left parties, including the PUCH, which had strong connections to communist parties in Latin America, amongst others, and to the international socialist movement (Charles, 1995; Romulus, Forthcoming). The committee's political framework was thus embedded in socialist and anti-imperialist politics and in solidarity with other women's movements. During the year, RAFA organized series of information and discussion activities (see Figure 3.2 on following page) including with La Maison d'Haïti, and collaborated with other Haitian women to publish the booklet *Femmes Haïtiennes* [Haitian women], to send to an international socialist event in Berlin. The publication was reprinted in 1976 for further distribution and is part of the first publications addressing the plight of Haitian



Figure 3.2 Pamphlet cover, RAFA summer program (1975)

women, historical and contemporary, including of women political prisoners under the Duvalier regime (Rasambleman Fanm Ayisien, 1976).

While being involved in Samba and La Maison d'Haïti, Alix, Mireille and other Haitian youths in Outremont also began to organize their own projects. In 1974, with funding from the government program Perspective Jeunesse, they started a bilingual summer camp to bring together Black youth of Haitian, Caribbean and Canadian origins. The camp was named Jean Jacques Dessalines, one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution. The NCC eventually approached the youth and integrated the camp into their satellite activities

across the city. Tellingly, Alix noted that all the camps were named after “someone in the Black diaspora...someone in Black history” (Jean, 2014, November 13). Alongside revolutionary figures such as Dessalines, Malcolm X, Patrice Lumumba, Harriett Tubman, one camp was named after Reverend Charles Este, who was instrumental in shaping Black community organizations in Little Burgundy in the early 20th century. This first connection with the anglophone Black community inserted Alix and Mireille in a new constellation of institutions and put them in touch with various Black anglophone activists and artists. Over the next years, they continued to be involved at the NCC where Mireille taught dance, and Alix organized the basketball league and the summer festival Afro-Festival, amongst other things. Mireille also joined the Black Theatre Workshop, which

furthered her artistic training and launched her professional career. Through her work with them, she even organized the French section of the Canadian delegation to the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in 1977. In the following years, both got involved in different organizations such as the Black Studies Center [BSC] and Black Community Communication Media [BCCM] for Mireille and the Black Community Council of Québec [BCCQ] for Alix. Her employment in these organizations helped Mireille pay for her university studies at UQAM in education.

Between 1972 and 1975, the people who mobilized at La Maison d'Haïti brought together various activist constellations. Researchers have found that dense networks where activists are connected in multiple ways – which they call multiplexity or multiplex ties – are conducive to activism (Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012). This means that the interpersonal constellations where activists relate on different levels foster social action, whether relationships are established on different basis (e.g. familial, friendly, professional, political) or because of different impetuses (e.g. the cause being addressed, political affiliations, geographical proximity). This is precisely what happened in the case of La Maison d'Haïti: people were related through their anti-Duvalier activism, because they lived in the same area, because they were affiliated to left parties and groups and so on. The anti-deportation crisis became a cause that strengthened the commitment of many to the new organization, becoming a political cause that connected activists. The various interpersonal constellations that came together and initiated the various activities and programs were forged through personal, political and spatial connections. This is what built La Maison d'Haïti which was eventually institutionalized and formalized *through* its activities and programs.

Though people had various interests and got involved through different activities, what

solidified the group was what *underlined* these activities, as expressed by Adeline:

C'est pas tout simplement un pique-nique, c'est pas tout simplement un centre communautaire tu vois...c'est un rassemblement de force, c'est une cohésion de la communauté qui a une âme, c'est le pays. On a un devoir vis-à-vis ce pays. Moi c'est une vision, c'est pas une simple vision sociale, généreuse comme j'ai dit, c'est une vision politique.

[It's not just a picnic, it's not just a community centre you see...it's a gathering of strength, it's a cohesive community that has a soul, it's the country. We have a duty towards this country. For me, it is a vision, it is not a simple social or generous vision as I said, it is a political vision.]

This political vision was the common thread that made La Maison d'Haïti evolve from a student summer project to recurring activities and which sustained the struggle for Haitian migrants' rights. It is also what made the group start to organize for a full-fledged community centre.

Institutionalization of a Community Centre

Though the idea of a centre had emerged in prior documents, in October 1975, the community centre project was formally articulated in two key documents: one outlining the vision and program and the first newsletter (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4 on following page). The publications aimed to present to, and foster feedback from, community members on the programs which were guided by collectively defined objectives but initiated and led somewhat autonomously by various committees. Communication activities and shared space served to tie them together.

The first rendition of the newsletter ran from October 1975 until April 1977 and a second

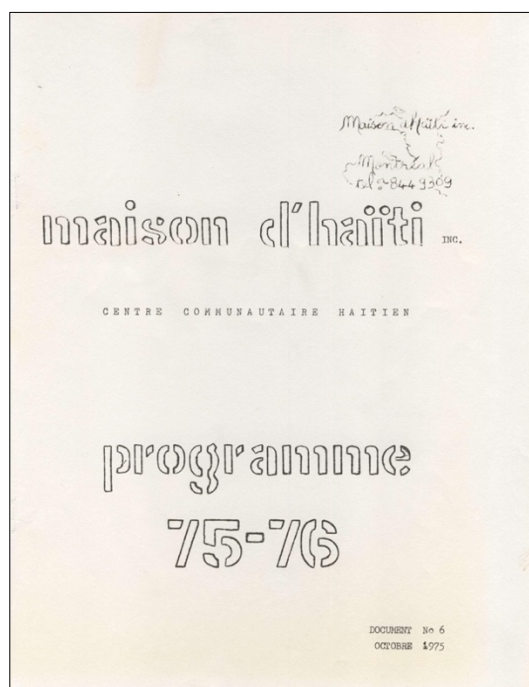


Figure 3.3 Pamphlet cover, Program description (October 1975)



Figure 3.4. Newsletter cover (Nov. 1975)

one ran between 1979 and 1980. It intended to facilitate communication within the community by circulating information on what was happening in the organization; analyzing challenges faced by community members; informing people of their rights; and fostering collective actions (La Maison d'Haïti, 1975, Nov.). It also disseminated news from Haiti, Quebec and Haitians in the diaspora. The newsletter's role was directly inspired by the communist party organ said Adeline. Like *The Negro Worker* in the 1930s (see Adi, 2009), the newsletter was a tool for political organizing that connected Black diasporic struggles and left politics. She remembers Max quoting Lenin on the role of the party organ, which she thought was also perfectly relevant for community groups. For Adeline, by disseminating information the role of the organ

c'est pour magnifier l'action. C'est pour, à la fois guider ... et éduquer... le triple rôle du bulletin c'est d'informer, de former et d'organiser.

[is to magnify action. It is to simultaneously guide ... and educate ... the triple role of the newsletter is to inform, train and organize.]

In October 1975, a proposal for a radio show was presented to Radio-Centre Ville (André & Dehoux, 1975). *La Voix d'Haïti* [The Voice of Haiti] started right after and ran for about eight years. Its main subjects paralleled the newsletter with more segments on Haitian history and politics, and local and international politics (La Maison d'Haïti, 1976, July-August). In July 1976, a special edition on the American occupation of Haiti aired, for which Jacquelin was recruited. This started his formal involvement at the centre, though he had also participated in picnics. His connections with various Haitian activists, including some at La Maison d'Haïti, had partly been established through the CHAP. In 1979, a youth section of the radio show was eventually created. *Combo* focused on music, entertainment, youth culture, while also soliciting the public's participation, recalled Alix, who was part of the team. Alix and other members of the team that formed around the Combo show had also worked together for a radio show in their CEGEP and some of them knew each other from Outremont.

In January 1976, the community centre finally materialized when the organization moved to a new space at 4150 Saint-Denis. In March, a community clinic, the Clinique Communautaire Haïtienne [CCH] was also inaugurated in the new offices. Initiated by the Haitian doctors' association, Association des médecins haïtiens à l'étranger [ADMHE] and the Haitian nurses' association, Ralliement des infirmières et infirmières auxiliaires haïtiennes [RIIAH] the CCH evolved in collaboration with La Maison d'Haïti. The CCH's activities gave a certain stability to La Maison d'Haïti and its own expanding activities (see Figure 3.5 on following page). Envisioned by Doctor Alphonse Boisrond and social worker Claudette Gresseau, the clinic offered information sessions in Creole; social, emergency and medical services to all, regardless of status (Clinique Communautaire Haïtienne, 1977). Emphasis was given to health education, including women's reproductive health.

the radio shows were detached from the organization by the radio station, though some members remained on the team.

In 1980 the organization was involved in another campaign to help Haitians without status living in Quebec. Marie-Andrée Baptiste arrived in Montreal in 1980 for a visit, to help a cousin who had just given birth but decided to stay once the opportunity opened to regularize her status because of the ongoing campaign. Born in a rural village called Lawobe, in the Artibonite department, Marie-Andrée grew up on the maternal family compound with a large extended family around her. The eldest of nine children, she moved to Gonaïves at the age of five, where her father eventually bought a house so the children could study while remaining in their mother's care, as he continued to earn a living for the family. Her father was a farmer and her mother, a seamstress and seller. When Marie-Andrée finished high school, she went on to study to become a teacher at École Normale de Damien, which specialised in education for the rural sector. She then worked in an elementary school in a small village called Terre-Neuve for ten years. There, she initiated and taught literacy classes to her students' parents, most of whom had never gone to school. During these years, she got married and had three daughters. Tired of being separated from her family because of work, she eventually quit teaching and moved with her children to join her husband in Port-au-Prince. There, she worked for the Bureau National de statistiques, the national statistics institute, and decided to take professional training in sewing and typewriting. Marie-Andrée eventually decided to settle in Montreal and brought her family over two years after. In Montreal, she had a fourth daughter and adopted a son from Haiti. She got involved at La Maison d'Haïti in 1983 through an employment program, when they had just moved into their new offices at 8833 Saint-Michel street, in the Saint-Michel neighbourhood. The area was home to a growing Haitian community as "Haitian immigrants became spatially

concentrated not through a conscious effort to regroup, but rather as the result of networks responding to racist housing and employment practices which provided alternative contacts” (Paul, 1992, p. 221). This made Saint-Michel the natural place for the community centre, which remained in those offices for 33 years.

Programs Evolve

Between 1975 and 1991, the centre’s main areas of programming and advocacy continued to evolve. The fact that programs were often initiated, driven and sustained by sub-groups, or committees allowed for the organization to open spaces for different community members (youth, women, workers etc.).

Youth Programs: Fostering Identity Through Haitian Culture.



Figure 3.6. Flyer, TPZM & NGPT (c. 1976-77)

The youth activities that had been organized sporadically eventually led to the first steady youth program called Nou Gen Peyi Tou [We have a country too] [NGPT] in November 1975. The objectives were to foster a strong sense of identity by making youth learn about Haitian history and culture; support them academically; discuss and address some of their problems, such as racial discrimination and paternalism (La Maison d’Haïti, 1976, March; 1976, April-May). Educators like Max Chancy and Charles Dehoux-Tardieu – one of the founders of La Maison d’Haïti – were important in shaping the program’s framework and approach. A few months later the TPZM

program for young children was founded by a group of mothers, including Marjorie who by then had married and had two daughters:

Toutes les filles qui étaient là à	[All the girls who were there at the
l'époque on avait toutes le même âge	time, we were all about the same age,
à peu près, c'était toutes des mamans	they were all mothers of very young
de très jeunes enfants et tout le	children and everyone was trying to
monde cherchait comment maintenir	find a way to maintain this culture
cette culture d'origine.	of origin.]

Black women often get involved in community work through addressing their children's needs (Collins, 1991; Gilkes, 1994; Stall & Stoecker, 1998). Though many of the women who formed the group were involved first in anti-Duvalier activism and left parties, the children's program brought them together to another form of activism. The monthly activities aimed to foster youth discovery of their identity through songs, folktales, plays and games about Haitian culture and history (La Maison d'Haïti, 1976, February). Suzie recalled:

On voulait que nos enfants ne soient	[We didn't want our children to be
pas coupés de leur culture, donc on a	cut off from their culture, so we
commencé avec une affaire toute	started with a very small thing ... We
petite. ... On a commencé par des	started with cultural meetings, songs,
rencontres culturelles, des chants,	dances, Carnivals, things like that.]
des danses, des Carnivals, des	
choses comme ça.	

Over the years, the women developed a unique pedagogy which they captured in the 1984 publication *Ti Pye Zoranj Monte* mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation. The program

ran until the early 1990s and was adapted to youth's changing interests over the years, with the integration of Canadian and North American cultural elements into the activities. NGPT ran until 1983, when lack of participation brought the program to an end. A few years later, the short-lived Carrefour des jeunes Haïtiens attempted to provide activities for teenagers but also had a hard time harnessing participation.

In 1981, building on his years of experience with the Dessalines summer camp, Alix, along with two other young men, Jean-Pierre Chancy and Manuel Moïse, presented a summer camp project to La Maison d'Haïti. The camp started to run the same summer and remains the longest running youth program. In the following years, after-school academic support was also implemented.

Women's Program: From a Discussion Circle to a Centre

In November 1977, a group of women – including some of whom belonged to RAFA and/or were organizing the TPZM program – started a discussion series and information sessions. Attended by between 12 to 20 women over time, these eventually evolved into the centre's first women's program, Fanm Vlé Palé [Women want to talk]. Together, women analyzed the problems and issues faced by Haitian women (La Maison d'Haïti, 1980-1981). Strengthened from their experiences, in 1982 the women published a pamphlet and prepared a slide show to be used for activities, both entitled *Fanm Poto Mitan* (Maison d'Haïti & Nègès Vanyan, 1982). "Poto mitan" in Kreyol refers to both the pole that join the living and spirit world in Vodou temples and the pillar of something, "Fanm" means women. In this case it refers to the fact that Haitian women are the backbone of families and communities, also connecting different worlds together. Fanm Vlé Palé was also supported by members of Nègès Vanyan, a Haitian women's collective founded in late 1979 after RAFA's dissolution. More focused on community

work, Nègès Vanyan had 11 to 12 members over the years, including Adeline, Marjorie, Mireille and Elizabeth. The membership overlapped with that of La Maison d'Haïti, including with the Fanm Vlé Palé program. Elizabeth arrived in Montreal in September 1979. In 1971, she had been released from jail by a commando that kidnaped the American ambassador and negotiated the release of political prisoners. She then spent time in Mexico, Chile and Cuba where she stayed for six years. There, she gave birth to a second daughter but decided to come to Montreal after her partner passed away from consequences of his own prison time in Haiti. Her first-born daughter came to join her in Montreal from France in December 1979. In Cuba Elizabeth worked as a secretary and administrative assistant. In Montreal, she was welcomed by, amongst others, comrades from the PUCH and through them, got acquainted with La Maison d'Haïti.

Nègès Vanyan's goals were to address issues faced by Haitian women in the diaspora, support the struggle of women and for democracy in Haiti, and establish contacts with international women's groups (Nègès Vanyan, 1981). In addition to their work at La Maison d'Haïti, they organized a reading seminar and collaborated with other women's groups, including for the organization of two conferences on Haitian women, Colloque Femmes Haïtiennes, in 1983 and 1984 (Nègès Vanyan, 1983-1984). The international left connections which had been crucial to RAFA remained important for Nègès Vanyan whose members, for instance, travelled to Cuba in 1984. Adeline and Marjorie had also been to another socialist women's encounter in Prague a few years earlier.

In Quebec, the early 1980s brought new movements of women and feminist organizing (Fisher & Shragge, 2000; Kruzynski, 2004; Ricci, 2013, 2016). Immigrant women set up their collectives and the government invested in programs and conferences, in which many women from La Maison d'Haïti participated. In 1983, under the organization's umbrella, a Haitian

women's program was founded, named the Centre de femmes haïtiennes [Haitian women's centre], which became the Centre d'animation pour femmes haïtienes à Montréal [CAFAHM] [Animation centre for Haitian women in Montreal] and in the early 1990s the Centre d'animation pour femmes haïtienes et immigrantes à Montréal [Animation centre for Haitian and immigrant women in Montreal], illustrating the changing orientations and demographics of membership.

Over the next decade, CAFAHM developed into one of the most attended programs, through which various sub-programs were initiated. The increased importance of CAFAHM also eventually paralleled the increased presence of women in the management of various programs and eventually of the organization itself. The centre's activities encompassed: information and educational activities; consultation and guidance; visits to women in need; literacy classes for women; recreational and leisure activities; employment training and integration; collaboration with other women's organizations etc. Elizabeth's first formal employment in Canada was at CAFAHM as an animator. Marie-Andrée also got involved through CAFAHM, where she participated in an employment program. After the program, she told Marjorie and the then director Célitard Toussaint

Pourquoi on fait pas un cours de
machine industrielle pour les
personnes, les femmes qui sont
arrivées et qui ne connaissent pas les
machines qui veulent aller travailler?

[Why don't we do a course on
industrial sewing machines for
people, women who have arrived and
who don't know the machines and
want to go to work?]

The sewing classes she proposed remained a staple of the women's centre until the early 1990s. Marie-Andrée developed different versions of the classes, adapted to different groups of students, including for younger students and a class for men and women. Between 1986 and

1991, CAFAHM's new programs revolved around developing skills for employment, integration or reintegration into the labour market and also established multiple collaborations with other women's groups.

Literacy Work: From Teaching to Advocating

Between 1977 and the early 1980s, literacy and French classes evolved into a full-blown program. Adeline's work was influential here. Over the years, she anchored the program's approach in Malcolm Knowles' andragogy (1968). Core aspects of andragogy are that adult learners should lead their learning process which should build from the wealth of knowledge they possess. It is also based on the premise that adults have pragmatic interest in learning that is linked to desires to transform their social roles, and other internal motivation factors (see Knowles 1968, 1980; Merriam, 2001; Reischmann, 2004). La Maison d'Haïti argued that adults had to be taught to read and write in Creole, a political position also influenced by the push for the recognition of Creole by artists, educators and activists in Haiti and the diaspora in the same period. After the move to Saint-Michel, program attendances doubled from 30 to 65 regular participants. Most of them arrived through family reunification programs

et c'est là que tu as des gens qui	[and that's when you have people
arrivent et qui ne sont pas scolarisés,	arriving and who have never been in
du tout, du tout. Ils sont même	school, at all, at all. They are even
analphabètes. ... début des années	illiterate. ... Early 1980s, late 1970s
80, fin des années 70 tu avais des	you had people who had never gone
gens qui n'étaient jamais allés à	to school in their lives.]
l'école de leur vie. (Marjorie)	

This pushed the literacy educators to adapt and refine their pedagogical approach and develop their own material. They even helped start the coalition for adult literacy, Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec [RGPAQ]. In the late 1980s, the third iteration of the newsletter was a literacy tool to encourage students to read, write, and express themselves.

Advocacy and Collaborations: Anti-racist, Black, Haitian and Immigrant Coalitions.

Anti-racist advocacy and collaborations with Black groups were important for the organization since its inception. In the late 1970s, both intensified and anti-racist struggles remained central during the 1980s. For example, in 1978, members of La Maison d'Haïti helped found the Mouvement Québécois d'Action Contre le Racisme, which became the Mouvement Québécois contre le racisme [MQCR]. Jacquelin was the main point of connection between the two entities. He recalls that :

Dans ce mouvement là il y avait
plusieurs courants, plusieurs
associations plusieurs individus, dont
des gens de la communauté arabe.
Beaucoup de palestinien, qui avaient
à cœur la cause palestinienne, et
donc du coup le Mouvement
québécois est devenu le Mouvement
québécois pour combattre le racisme
mais avec deux pendants
internationaux : un, l'apartheid et
deux, la question palestinienne.

[In this movement there were several
currents, several associations, several
individuals, including people from
the Arab community. Many
Palestinians who had at heart the
Palestinian cause, and therefore the
Quebec Movement became the
Quebec Movement to combat racism,
with two international aspects: one,
apartheid and two, the Palestinian
question.]

MQCR was active on many fronts, organizing conferences, speaking tours in schools, and publishing pedagogical material, etc. In 1978 as well, various Black community groups and individuals formed a committee on education, the Comité sur l'Éducation de la communauté noire. In a report submitted to the Conseil Supérieur de l'éducation, the provincial education council, they denounced the racism faced by Black youth in the school system. In summer 1979, a violent altercation between policemen and young Haitian men led to community mobilization to denounce racial profiling and racism at the hands of the police. Numerous articles on the subject were published in the newsletter and La Maison d'Haïti took part in protests denouncing the events (see Mills, 2016). Between 1982 and 1984, Haitian taxi drivers denounced the racism they faced at the hands of clients, company owners and other taxi drivers. Their mobilization and denunciations prompted an inquiry by the Commission des Droits de la personne, the province's human rights commission, at which La Maison d'Haïti testified (see La Maison d'Haïti, 1982, December; Mills, 2016). In 1983, with six other groups, the centre founded a committee, the Comité conjoint sur le Sida, as part of their mobilization to denounce the discrimination and racism faced by Haitians in relation to the AIDS crisis (see Namaste, 2017, 2019). In March of that year, the Canadian Red Cross had issued a public statement advising that Haitians, alongside other targeted group, could not donate blood because of supposed heightened rates of infections to the newly discovered virus. Haitian doctors, nurses, and other health practitioners, alongside community members and groups denounced the prejudice and discrimination caused by the Red Cross, which had publicly pointed to specific groups as higher-risk groups, including Haitians, though much remained unknown about the virus itself. Haitians denounced the racism and stigmatization they faced from the Red Cross, health sector and broader society. Although those were some of the most overt and public actions, over the years the centre struggled against

various racist attacks, whether against its members or on the organization itself. Between 1982 and 1988 alone, La Maison d'Haïti submitted three briefs on the subject of racism at public inquiries. In 1987, Anthony Griffin, an unarmed 19-year-old Jamaican man was shot dead by a policeman in the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce neighbourhood. The cause rallied Haitian, Black anglophone and Anglo-Caribbean groups. In 1988, a coalition of six Haitian organizations along with the NCC and BCCQ in the Black anglophone sector was created to set up a mechanism for monitoring and sanctioning police behaviour towards visible minorities; as well as to facilitate Black youth's entry into policing as a career. In 1990, following youth riots on Saint-Hubert street, organizations once again rallied, and the Bureau d'appui à la jeunesse Québécoise d'origine haïtienne was founded.

Haitians and other Black groups also collaborated for other things such as educational initiatives. Collaborations entailed providing a space for Haitian nurses of the RIIAH to give French classes to Anglo-Caribbean nurses or participating in the preparation of four TV shows for the *Black is* series for the community-based Black Media production in 1979 (La Maison d'Haïti, 1979). During the 1970s as well, RAFA members participated three times in the annual conference of the National Congress of Black Women of Canada (see Sanders, 2013; Mills, 2016). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Haitian groups often came together around issues pertaining to youth, inside and outside schools. For instance, in the mid-1980s, different programs and mobilization aimed to support Haitian youth through their schooling. Suzie, who was teaching at the Centre de ressources éducatives et pédagogiques [CREP] at that time, got her students involved at La Maison d'Haïti on different occasions.

Finally, the centre mobilized again for the regularization of Haitians in 1980 and eventually became a founding member of the coalition for the rights of refugees, the Table de

concertation sur les réfugiés. In addition to anti-Duvalier activism, between 1976 and 1986 La Maison d'Haïti cooperated with other Haitian organizations in multiple instances. In 1980, various groups organized the Haitian cultural festival, Festival Culturel Haïtien. Earlier that year, they had partnered with the BCHM to open the Centre Haïtien d'Orientation et d'Information Scolaire [CHOIS], an organization specifically dedicated to improving schooling experiences of Haitian youth and families. The centre functioned until 1983.

In addition to working with other Haitian, immigrant and Black groups, Marjorie observed that people campaigned in different Quebec movements, “donc on bougeait, dans tout, on n'était pas juste La Maison d'Haïti” [so we were moving in everything, we weren't just La Maison d'Haïti.]. Not only did people move between groups but they also ultimately belonged to various constellations of activists working for different causes, which in turn influenced the work of the center over the years.

1986 & 1991: From Hope to Consternation

On February 7th, 1986, the 29 years of the Duvalier regime finally ended. Haitians in Haiti and in the diaspora celebrated loudly. In Montreal, this also momentarily sparked confusion regarding the future of organizations like La Maison d'Haïti for whom anti-Duvalier politics had been such a driving force (La Maison d'Haïti, 1986). Even Nègès Vanyan questioned their relevance as well as the role they could play in Haiti (Nègès Vanyan, 1986). Many activists went back to visit right away, and some, like Jacquelin and Adeline went back to live in Haiti before the end of the year. The new possibility of formal connections between groups within and outside of the country led to the creation of multiple instances of collaborations over the following years. For example, in 1988, the Association québécoise des organismes de coopération Internationale [AQOCI] created a special funding program called the

Fonds Délégués AQOCI-Haïti to channel funds through partnerships between Haitian organizations in Canada and Haiti. La Maison d’Haïti sponsored at least three projects.

After failed elections in 1988, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected in Haiti in 1990. But in September 1991, Haitians in the country and abroad were stunned when a violent coup d’état ousted the new president. Having rejoiced at the idea of a ‘second independence’ (Gresseau, 1986, February 21), lived through the anxiety of failed elections in 1988, Haitians were in complete shock. In Montreal, people were also still reeling from the multiple struggles against racism of the 1980s. Many mobilized for the restoration of democracy as recalled Jacquelin, though a state of consternation and uncertainty pervaded the community. For many, the prospect of going back to Haiti had been a focus for years but was now increasingly slimmer. In addition, the difficult economic context of the early 1990s impacted members and the centre, prompting serious reflections on its future:

On bougeait pas beaucoup.... la
communauté avait fini de vivre cette
affaire de SIDA et...on avait été
assez traumatisé par cette affaire là.
Et les gens étaient plutôt tranquilles,
c’était plutôt calme. (Marjorie)

[We didn’t move much.... the
community had just finished living
the AIDS crisis and... we had been
quite traumatized by it. And people
were pretty quiet, it was pretty
quiet.]

The community was also undergoing transformation due to divergent intergenerational experiences and aspirations. While older generations had lived to the rhythm of Haitian politics for years, a new generation was facing different challenges in what was now, for many, their country of origin.

Conclusion

In its first 20 years of activities, La Maison d'Haïti went from collective actions done by a group of Haitian students to a community centre, as activities led by different groups developed into programs. Their activism built on a long tradition of Black resistance, self-organizing, as well as political, social, cultural and community activism. It relied on various constellations of people and institutions, on the connections people forged on a personal and political level and through space, and on the circulation of people, knowledge and resources.

The constellation of individuals around La Maison d'Haïti was built on a mix of activist, extended kinship and friendship ties. This is similar to what happened in Little Burgundy at the beginning of the 20th century where interpersonal constellations of community activists were formed because people were neighbours, had family connections, political or religious affiliations and so on (see Bertley, 1982; Williams, 1997). As for the NCC, the institutionalisation of La Maison d'Haïti was itself facilitated by the coalescence of multiple groups *and* by people's personal affiliations to different groups. Over time, these affiliations also led La Maison d'Haïti itself to belong to institutional constellations that operated on different levels either through formal partnerships, informal affiliations or even clandestine and concealed collaborations. As had happened throughout Montreal in the 1960s and 1970s because of increased Anglo-Caribbean immigration, Haitian activists set up different groups that collaborated to various degrees. These institutions were also part of much wider transnational constellations like the UNIA before them, and connected, for instance to anti-Duvalier activism or to left international webs. Institutional constellations spanned different geographies: local, national or transnational. They were based on different affinities, for example depending what

cause or crisis were addressed, or shared political positions and identities. They also operated on varying temporalities, such as for a specific protest or for long term collaborations.

The connections that brought people together were also significant for their activism on individual and collective levels. Connecting to people who are similarly politically inclined incites collective action (Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012). For example, the associations Jacquelin made while involved with the CHAP eventually brought him to community organizing. Her connections through the anti-deportation protests of 1973-1974 encouraged Marjorie to further engage with other activists around La Maison d'Haïti. Spatial connections were also important: the physical proximity of living in Outremont, where the first offices of La Maison d'Haïti were located, facilitated the emergence one of the constellations that got involved in the organization after the students had founded it. As in Little Burgundy (see Bertley, 1982), this geographical closeness impacted people's relationships and community work. Over time Black radical movements and activists have often converged around specific political causes or events, which could be understood as moments of Black radical political connections, from the Haitian Revolution to anti-racist protests in Montreal. Political affinities also brought people to connect across borders: from Jacques Roumain and Langston Hughes meeting in Haiti in 1931; to Jacques Stephen Alexis connecting with communist party members in Paris in the late 1940s; to the Caribbean Marxists who connected in Montreal in the late 1960s.

It is through their circulation that Black activists have connected across the Atlantic: from Anténor Firmin's travels to Europe at the turn of the century; to Haitians and West Indians artists and intellectuals in New York during the interwar period; to the West Indian and Haitian activists present in Montreal in the 1960s, and so on. In turn, activist networks are important communication channels through which political and pragmatic information is relayed (Crossley,

2010; Passy, 2001). Knowledge produced out of resistance has always circulated and was key for cross-Atlantic resistance movements (see Linebaugh & Rediker, 2013; Scott, 2018). This ranged from the knowledge enslaved Africans brought with them to Saint-Domingue; to the spread of the news of the Haitian Revolution; to the anti-racist writings authored by Black activists in Europe at the end of the 19th century; or information about the struggle against the U.S. occupation of Haiti; to the knowledge circulated through La Maison d'Haïti's various activities. Finally, the circulation of resources was also a way for Black groups to show their solidarity with one other. For instance, in 1985, La Maison d'Haïti made a donation of 50\$ to a Haitian refugee centre in Miami which was attacked and vandalized (Toussaint, 1985, January 9). Though their own resources were limited, sending money a way to show and provide support.

The vision that brought people together at La Maison d'Haïti initially and guided their work was informed by their knowledge and participation in different political and resistance movements, whether in Haiti or in Montreal. However, diasporic activism and La Maison d'Haïti are also, in turn, what brought into being and cemented this Black diasporic community, to use Marjorie's words

On était amis, ...mais ce qui nous
rendait cohérent, ce qui donnait de la
cohérence à ce qu'on faisait c'était
tout le temps qu'on revenait à La
Maison d'Haïti puis on faisait
quelque chose, ... On était aussi des
militants, et on militait ensemble...
je pense que c'est La Maison d'Haïti

[We were friends... but what made
us coherent, what gave coherence to
what we did was that we always
came back to La Maison d'Haïti to
do something... We were also
activists, and we organized together
... I think La Maison d'Haïti gave
meaning to what we did, even to

qui donnait un sens aussi à ce qu'on
faisait, à ce qu'on était même. Parce
que soyons sérieux, on était une gang
d'illuminés en dehors de leur pays!
Voulant faire des choses, mais on a
fait des choses magnifiques.

what we were. Because let's be
serious, we were a gang of
enlightened and passionate people
outside their country! Wanting to do
things, but we did wonderful things!]

These wonderful things and collective actions are ultimately what brought about the community of records that makes up the archive we organized. It is thus only natural that the archiving process itself was also sustained by collaboration, community work and collective knowledge.

Chapter 4. Community Archiving as Ethnography: A Collaborative and Community-based Methodology

Research and archiving both entail engaging with, organizing and generating knowledge. According to Carolyn Steedman (2002), the archive is a place where the labour of the researcher, the archivist and the people documented in the records, intersect. Community archiving as ethnography is about making the intersection of these different forms of labour both visible and intrinsic to the method, one way to address power in the process of knowledge production. It uses the work involved in community archiving – such as sorting, inventorying and describing records – to identify and collect data, as well as engage in different levels and forms of analysis. This chapter explains what informed the methodology and ethics of the project, before describing how it unfolded.

Ethnographic Research: Weaving Archiving, Data Collection, Analysis, and Writing

Ethnographic research aims to draw connections between the micro (people's lived experiences, thoughts, feelings, etc.) and the macro (the historical and current context in which people's experiences are embedded, and in turn, shape). Especially useful to capture what Hodson (2001) referred to as the subtle and emergent life of organizations, interpretive forms of ethnography provide entry into a community's internal discourses, systems of thoughts and symbols (Smart, 1998). A qualitative methodology used in different disciplines, it relies on methods such as observations, interviews, archival research, amongst others (O'Reilly, 2012; Singer, 2009). Ethnographic research allows to grasp how knowledge is generated and used through collaboration in institutional settings (Smart, 1998). It is also useful for critical inquiry into processes of politicization and activism (see Kruzynski, 2004; Naples, 1998, 2012).

Ethnographies are based on a constant back and forth between data collection and analysis since actions like observations and interviews are also the product of an analysis in the making (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). As with other qualitative methodologies, interpretation and analysis need not be restricted to specific moments, nor framed rigidly and can happen in different spaces and circumstances, whether alone or collectively (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). Furthermore, informal, inductive and organic analysis always feed into more formal, procedural analysis and interpretation (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016; Stanley, 2016; Tamboukou, 2016). An ethnographic research design therefore continuously evolves since it attempts to respect the complex nature of the social context it investigates, as well as captures and recounts multifaceted, credible and thoughtful stories (O'Reilly, 2012). Paillé and Mucchielli (2016) note that the qualitative analysis at the heart of ethnography is a multidimensional act, a theory in progress, that unfolds throughout the research and builds from one's complex interpretive universe. For instance, though writing is often seen as the end product, it is in reality an intrinsic part of the entire process, and key to interpretation and analysis (see Stanley, 2016; De Certeau, 1975). Different types of writing, such as note-taking, transcriptions, articles, journaling, and preparing presentations are crucial to collecting and tracking information but also to build an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the information (Stanley, 2016).

From Ethnography of the Archive to Community Archiving as Ethnography

With regards to archival research, ethnography *in* the archive was the favored theoretical and methodological approach for a long time (Stoler, 2002, 2009). More recently, the objectivity and totality of the archive started to be questioned, and different forms of investigative engagement with it have been suggested. Ethnography *of* the archive, as Stoler (2009) calls it, is a way to explore the social imaginaries of those that created and organized the archive. Some

have proposed that the archive be read to find traces of resistance for example, from colonized communities (see Bastian, 2006; Guha, 1997), or to grasp the uncertainty and anxieties of colonial epistemologies and systems (see Stoler, 2002). Whoever the creator or creators of the archives are, their narratives, including their political narratives, are weaved through their archival records (Tamboukou, 2010). For scholars Moore, Salter, Stanley and Tamboukou (2016), these novel approaches to archival research reflect a new archival sensibility, based on four overlapping ideas. First, the archive should be understood as a complex structure of information. This structure is constructed by the connections and coherence of items within archival collections and fonds, and by the relation of those collections or fonds to the context in which they were created. Archives should thus not be used like libraries from which individual documents are pulled out of and analyzed on an individual basis but rather as constituted entities. Second, archives encompass multiple types of records, spaces and practices that are not necessarily those labelled as official or formal. Consequently, research demands an engagement that reflects and responds to this archival diversity. This engagement relates to the third concept: that archival research is an embodied meaning-making process, constituted by human encounters with materials, self-reflexivity, lived experience and personal interpretations (see Tamboukou, 2014, 2016). Finally, technology, including access to digital information, now impacts how researchers envision and engage with archives.

Community archiving as ethnography aims to document and preserve a community of records in the original context of the organization. Those records comprise the documents, photos, audio and video records, as well as the life stories and memories of activists, ‘captured’ through oral histories. Other scholars have also engaged with community archives project for ethnographic research (see Alleyne, 2002; Moore, 2016) though our methods differ. Engaging

with the records through archiving and mapping out the societal provenance of the archive provide a socio-historical and political frame, meaning the macro context in which the institution's work and that of the activists is inscribed. Conducting interviews provides insights into people's lived experiences and personal politics, and in turn, feeds into the construction of the archive by adding oral history records.

Oral History: Making Meaning Through Conversations

The formalization of history as a discipline, beginning in the 19th century, brought a reliance on textual documents (Thomson 2007; Thompson, 2000), which led to the devaluing of oral transmission in relation to historical knowledge. This is also connected to the rise of the bureaucratic archive as the source of national histories explained in Chapter two. Oral history as a methodology (re)emerged after the Second World War, stressing the importance of people's stories, memories, and meaning making processes, for historical narratives. Oral histories can provide multiple perspectives and insights, filling gaps within written accounts (see High, 2014, 2015; Frisch, 2008). They allow us "to capture structures of meanings" (Passy, 2001, p. 177) and understand how people make sense of their memories and history, the events they lived, and how these relate to those of their communities (Sarkar, 2012). In addition, as Portelli (1981) observes, oral histories "tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did" (pp. 99-100). They are critical to document the context, reasons and processes that bring people to activism (Passy, 2001; Naples, 2012); as well as the significance people ascribe to their practices and actions (Denzin 1989):

Every activist has a personal story about becoming an activist and what their activism means to them. These stories may capture important common themes that allow us to

better understand the development of political identities, as well as motivations for activism. (Curtin, Kende, & Kende, 2016, pp. 264-265)

The stories conveyed through oral histories also connect individual to community histories (Bastian, 2009a; Flinn, 2011; Hamilton & Shopes, 2008), therefore providing a more complex and rich understanding of the collective experiences within communities (see Ketelaar, 2005).

Collaborative and Community-Based Research Methodologies

Like other participatory approaches to research, collaborative and community-based research methodologies aim at democratizing knowledge production to create knowledge that is also useful to participants (See Israel et al., 1998; Stoecker, 2009; Strand, 2000; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003). While definitions and methods vary, key elements of community-based and collaborative research are pertinent for community archiving as ethnography.

By valuing equity within the research process, these approaches attempt to shift the power of expertise by favouring collective processes of knowledge production. Although they differ based on the forms of involvement of participants, as well as their level of control over the process, objectives and outputs (see Bednarz, Rinaudo, & Roditi, 2015; Desgagné, Bednarz, Lebuis, Poirier, & Couture, 2001; Stoecker, 2009; Morrissette, 2013; Savoie-Zajc & Descamps-Bednarz, 2007) and their historical and political roots (see Anadón, & Savoie-Zajc, 2007), they are rigorous methodologies, yet flexible and adapted to needs of the different stakeholders. According to Joëlle Morrissette (2013), a key element across participatory methodologies, including community-based and collaborative research, is the feedback loop of planning, action, observation and reflection. Nonetheless, serious critiques have been advanced about the way labels such as participation, collaboration and community-driven are used to describe research

that actually remains very hierarchical (see Stoecker, 2009, Desgagné, 1997) for funding purposes (Minkler, 2004), as a tool of control and management (Cooke & Kothari, 2001), or to justify ambiguous academic-practitioner partnerships (Desgagné, 1997).

Community Based Research: Archiving a Community of Records

The variety of terms used to describe community-based research practices reflect their diverse intellectual roots and use by academic and non-academic researchers in different disciplinary fields and locations. These roots can be traced back to various political and academic ideologies, in different places (see Minkler, 2004; Strand et al., 2003). In South America, for instance, Marxism and liberation theology movements had a strong influence on the development of community-based research (see Fals-Boa, 1984; Freire, 1970, 1982). Approaches vary with regards to the methods used, the level of engagement of communities and the level of formality (see Khodyakov, Mikesell, Schraiber, Booth, & Bromley, 2016). Generally, however, community-based investigations entail continuous collaboration within the inquiry process, as well as critical analysis and social action. Everyone involved is understood as a learner, a teacher, and a contributor to the output (Strand et al., 2003). Three crucial aspects of community-based research are relevant for community archiving as ethnography. First, that community knowledge, spaces and lived experiences are core to help ‘de-emphasize hierarchy’ within the research process (Strand et al., 2003) and to favor collective forms of learning and knowledge production. Approaching the archive as a community of records highlights the importance of working at the junction of archival records and community knowledge. Working from that premise values the intimate relation between the records and the community that created them (Bastian, 2003) and provides a framework to contextualise and analyze the documents. This puts community knowledge at the forefront of the archive and at the centre of the research. Second,

community-based research brings together and validates different sources and forms of knowledges (Marullo et al., 2003). By valuing people's lives and experiences as "valid sources of knowledge" (Strand et al., 2003, p. 11), ideas about the supposed objectivity and neutrality of knowledge are countered. This relates to the sharing of power through the recognition of different expertise and the co-production of knowledge. Community archives also bring together and value different practices and knowledges because they are often collective spaces where flexible, formal and informal practices coexist (Moore, 2016). Finally, community-based research must have a practical relevance for the community to bring about concrete social action. This change itself also relies on bringing together and creating different forms of knowledge (Marullo et al., 2003). In this case, the preservation of the archives aims to do just that.

Reflecting on Practice: Collaborative Knowledge Production

Collaborative research involves working with someone or a group towards the co-construction of knowledge based on constant non-hierarchical cooperation (see Bednarz, Rinaudo, & Roditi, 2015; Benson & Nagar, 2006; Desgagné, 1997, 1998; Desgagné, Bednarz, Lebuis, Poirier, & Couture, 2001; Lefrançois, 1997; Morrissette, 2013). This emphasizes the fact that knowledge and learning are always social processes. In collaborative methodologies, collaborators do not necessarily all play the same role, do the same things, or even shape the investigative process (Desgagné, 2001). Tasks and roles vary, but the perspectives of all collaborators are integrated at all stages of the process (Desgagné, 1997, 2001; Desgagné et al., 2001; Badnerz, Rinaudo, & Roditi, 2015). Within the field of education in Québec, collaborative research typically entails the exploration of practitioners' knowledge and work. By providing opportunities to reflect on explicit and implicit aspects of their practice, researchers learn *with* practitioners and not *about* them (Desgagné, 1997, 1998; Desgagné et al. 2001, Badnerz,

Rinaudo & Roditi, 2015). Desgagné (1997) proposes that collaborative projects 1) focus on practitioners' own understanding of their professional work; 2) be developed through a contextualized exploration of concrete aspects of practice; 3) and evolve through constant interaction. Communities of records can also open spaces "where people's experiences can be transformed into meaning" (Ketelaar, 2008, p. 21) and doing oral history offers activists the opportunity to reflect on their practice by narrating it and engaging with concrete artefacts they have created through this practice.

Ethics and Validity

Too often in research, the question of ethics is reduced to procedures erasing the tensions entailed around the ethics of *being a researcher* and of *doing research* in general (Cascio & Racine, 2018). Ethics are constantly evolving and situated, "present in ways of being as well as acting, and in relationships and emotions, as well as conduct" (Banks et al., 2013, p. 266). Ethical research calls for constant reflexivity and caring of participants which influence how, why, and what decisions are taken throughout the process (Rossman & Rallis, 2010). As Rossman and Rallis (2010) note, "an ethical researcher ... *reflects-in-action*" (p. 384). In the context of community-based research, ethics ought to include the community partner's own ethical framework whether it is formal or not (Banks et al., 2013). Based on a review of community engaged research, Khodyakov et al. (2016) propose nine ethics principles. Research should be: 1) Action oriented; 2) Community driven; 3) Culturally appropriate; 4) Beneficial to the community; 5) Forthcoming about study risks and benefits; 6) Ready to involve community in interpretation and dissemination; 7) Based on equal partnership; 8) Grounded in trust; and 9) Scientifically valid.

In addition to ethical principles, what has been called everyday and relational ethics should also be taken into account in an inquiry such as this. Everyday ethics refers to the daily ethical negotiations and decision making that happen while conducting collaborative and community-based research (Banks et al., 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2010). Relationships are also crucial in such projects (Ellis, 2007). As Richman, Alexander and True (2012) write, relational ethics take “account of differences among individuals and their relationships and identifies duties we have to particular persons because of our connections to those individuals” (p. 20). Relational ethics can also make some of the decisions about the research process particularly difficult, even potentially tensed precisely because of the relational bonds that tie the multiple parties involved in the research. But relational ensure that these decisions are talked through and taken for the good of the collective first and foremost. Furthermore, the validity and rigour of research also rely on “how well the researcher got the relational matters right ... [since these] are central not only to ethical considerations but also to judgments about the overall trustworthiness of a study” (Rossman & Rallis, 2010, p. 382). By developing the methodology through constant dialogue and feedback, this dissertation project was indeed submitted to corrective criticism at different stages, which helped ensure a form of ‘interpersonal validity,’ that connects trustworthiness, ethics and rigor (Rossman & Rallis, 2010).

Creating a Living Archive of the Diaspora: The Pre-history of the Archive

“No archive arises out of thin air. Each archive has a ‘pre-history’” (Hall, 2001, p. 89).

In addition to its societal provenance, part of the pre-history of this archival project rests in the learning I did through my community and research work, as well as the networks I am embedded in.

The first organizations I worked with as a teenager were located in Little Burgundy. Much of what I learned about community work and education, and about the history of the city's Black communities was done informally and orally, through volunteering and organizing. Later, as a community educator working with youth like myself, whose parents or themselves were born outside of Canada, I constantly looked for resources to connect us to histories of other migrant communities in Montreal. Caribbean communities loomed large in this endeavour, partly because I belonged to one, as did a large number of the people I worked with. Looking for educational and informational resources, while trying to understand a more just and accurate history of Quebec, led me right back to the spaces where some of these histories are made: Caribbean and Black community organizations. My reflections continued to evolve while working at Head and Hands, a youth-oriented community organization with a rich history, located in the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce neighbourhood. Having been involved in community work for over a decade at that point, I was increasingly puzzled by the lack of historical documentation on the different organizations I knew. During my first master's degree course, I had the chance to do a practicum for which I decided to rummage through old boxes of documents and photos at Head and Hands. In the final paper for that class in fall 2010, I wrote:

To reflect community organizations, archives need to be built on the premises that they are subjective, incomplete and an ongoing reflection of a slice of history and we need to allow "for several orders, or even disorders to flourish among records of archives" (Schwartz & Cook, 2002, p. 18). ... "Archives are a social construct" (p. 3) but they are rarely socially or collectively constructed. Wherein lies the need to get participants involved in both the documenting and archiving process to ensure that their visions, experiences and realities are reflected in the archival world, and subsequently in history.

Special attention and appropriate methodologies need to be taken into account to try to rebalance the power invested in traditional archives.

While I was preparing a master's thesis on the impact of youth participation in community organizations, my community work increasingly aimed to connect archives and education.

During the summer of 2011, I also started to work as a research assistant for historian Sean Mills for what eventually became the book *A Place under the Sun: Haiti, Haitians and the Remaking of Quebec* (2016). This got me involved for the first time with formal archives. Sean's generosity in conversations, sharing resources, teaching me about research methodology helped me think a lot about the politics of historical production. The work for Sean took yet another turn when he unearthed documents that pertained to my mother's family. The excitement of finding traces of family history in Quebec archives was an emotional and intellectual experience that linked archives, learning and a diasporic family history.

Later in 2012, I developed a project with my supervisor Aziz Choudry and the Centre International de Documentation et d'Information Haïtienne, Caribéenne et Afro-Canadienne [CIDIHCA] to produce pedagogical material for community educators on the history of Caribbean communities in Quebec. The goal was twofold: to look for the places where archives of Caribbean community groups might be and then use those archives to produce pedagogical material. It was part of a wider discussion I was attempting to start between different groups about the archives of Caribbean community organizations in Montreal. My idea was to start using the archives to spark conversations about preserving them. It was through this project that my engagement with La Maison d'Haïti and with the BCHM started. I established contact with Marjorie in Fall 2012 for the pedagogical material project and we met in January 2013. As I

started going through their photographs for the pedagogical material, we began to discuss the organization's other records. She recalled our first conversations about the archives

C'était comme un truc tellement théorique. Je me disais « oui c'est vrai on a plein de papier mais je sais même pas qu'est-ce qu'on va faire avec ça ». Puis de te voir t'intéresser, de mettre de l'ordre, de classer tout ça. La première chose qui, enfin j'avais partagé avec toi, c'était de dire, « Ok. Il y a des archives c'est intéressant ... que la communauté ait des archives, donc des traces de leur passage et des traces de leur histoire, c'est bon pour les chercheurs mais est-ce qu'on peut le rendre plus accessible aux gens? »

[It was such a theoretical thing. I said to myself, “yes it's true, we have a lot of papers but I don't even know what we're going to do with them.” Then, to see you get interested, organize them, sort them all out. The first thing was to say, and I shared this with you, “Ok. There are archives, it's interesting ... that the community has archives, traces of their passage and traces of their history. It's good for researchers, but can we make it more accessible to people?”]

Through our exchanges and work, my involvement with the organization grew. In the following months, with a group of volunteers, we started to explore and inventory their material while talking with people in the organization about the potential of an archive project. Older records were stored in shelves in Marjorie's office and in different offices, the storage room, and even the kitchen. These first months allowed us to better understand the kinds of material they held. Heeding the advice of one of the volunteers, who is a professional librarian and archivist, we

began an initial processing of the holdings by first dividing the material into a resource library and an archival fonds. Processing archival records broadly involves appraising, documenting, describing, and preserving documents. I eventually found myself alone in the next months and started grouping documents we had identified for preservation in boxes according to themes linked to the organization's work (e.g., youth, women, literacy) and administrative units (e.g., direction, board of administration). Other volunteers eventually joined, and we continued to add to the boxes. We started a basic Excel sheet as an inventory listing the names of documents in each box. Our work evolved slowly because of schedule availability and space constraints. Nevertheless, between the summer of 2013 and the fall of 2014 about six or seven boxes of material had been rehoused, preserved, and the rest of the material to be sorted had been identified. When I started my doctoral studies in Fall 2013, community archives, especially those of La Maison d'Haïti, filled my mind with questions and wonder. I therefore decided to explore the potential relations between community archives, learning and education through my research.

Community Archiving as Ethnography: A Fluid Process of Data Collection and Analysis

2015: Framing the Projects

In winter 2015, archivist Kristen Young joined our volunteer group. We worked closely to figure out how to continue the project and find a balance between standard approaches, what we had already done, and what was doable in this context. We also talked a lot about our understanding of archives, both inspired by Jeannette Bastian's (2003) theory of a community of records. It was clear for both of us that the organizers' memories and stories were part of the centre's community of records, and that oral history was a way to document it. During 2015, still limited by space and time, we nevertheless continued to sort and arrange documents, with rotating volunteers. At this time, I also started preparing my comprehensive exams inspired by

practices and theories of community archives (Bastian & Alexander, 2009) and the kind of sensory, emotional, and dialogic learning experiences I was having within the various archives projects I was engaged in. Preparing my exams while working to systematize the project at La Maison d'Haïti highlighted the ways in which both processes were overlapping. It made me realize that archiving itself was core to my research methodology, not simply the archival records as sources for my research. I was also greatly inspired by various alternative community archives I visited in Toronto (Canada), New York (U.S.) and London (U.K.). Through my continuous discussions with Marjorie, the idea that this project would become my doctoral research crystallized. The community project also continued to evolve and when in Fall 2015, La Maison d'Haïti undertook the construction of a new building, a space devoted exclusively to the archive was planned.

Spring 2016: Moving, Ethics, and Collective Labour

By January 2016, I drafted an action plan for the archive. I also defended my comprehensive exams in January and prepared my research proposal. In that proposal, I argued that the investigation process was not linear and that the activities it entailed were permeable to one another. To write it and plan my methods, I used practices that informed my action plan on how to start planning an archive (Carmichael, 2012; Hamill, 2013). What I realized then is how the informal learning I had done during the first three years of the project had shaped my thoughts on how to envision the research methodology. Sorting documents was a crucial step in getting acquainted with the institution, its history, and the archives, which fed my ideas about archives and about research. Right after my proposal, I drafted an initial framework for the archive: its mission, role in the organization, a development plan, and a basic description of what we had arranged so far. To write it, I started to look more deeply into the archival records, to

create an overview of these documents altogether, noting down important information and dates. These eventually also became my first research notes.

As the organization began planning the move into the new building for Spring 2016, we devised a strategy to help ensure that no important document would be lost. Kristen and I wrote a short guide and I met with employees during staff meetings to explain the strategy to sort documents and box them. This gave us good momentum to go through material. It also got employees and volunteers involved with the archive project, further embedding it in the organization's daily life. After slowly downscaling material over weeks and during a few intensive days at the end of May and beginning of June, we ended up with about 90 boxes. As people discussed informally what to keep and throw away, this gave us cues about what were the most important documents for them to keep. Between the end of June and beginning of July 2016, with the help of volunteers, we moved the boxes to the new building. In conversation with Marjorie, Kristen and I continued to conceptualize the archive and we elaborated a preliminary arrangement scheme. Once in the new building, we started to open the boxes with the help of another volunteer, downsizing again and placing what we chose to preserve on shelves, according to our series of the arrangement scheme.

Usually, archives are classified based on a 5-level hierarchical arrangement scheme (see Carmichael, 2012; International Council on Archives, 2000; Schellenberg, 1961). Broadly, the levels are

1. Repository (the institution holding the archive).
2. Fonds (based on the institutional or individual creator of the archive).
3. Series (based on prior filing system or another activity such as the records creation, use or reception).

4. Filing unit (meaning a set of documents grouped together because they relate either to the same subject, activity etc.).
5. Item (the smallest unit of the archive, e.g., document, photo. When I refer to archival record it will usually be at the item level).

This arrangement is usually applied only intellectually: documents are ‘grouped’ together on paper, through listings and in the finding aid, but remain in the physical original order they were received in. In our case, since the documents had been moved, mixed and shuffled multiple times over time, we arranged the documents physically by series, grouped according to categories that were already used by the organization, alongside other series we devised.

During that period, La Maison d’Haïti was also starting to establish its own internal ethics process in response to increased external demand for research. I thus submitted a formal ethics application to the organization, to be approved for the project before submitting and receiving approval for my Research and Ethics Certification Application to McGill University, which contained the participation consent form to conduct individual oral history interviews (see Appendix C) and collective interviews (Appendix D); the individual (see Appendix E) and collective interview guides (see Appendix F); a project summary (see Appendix G) and a draft recruitment letter (see Appendix H). Since the research project was also intended to provide opportunities to add to the archive through oral history interviews and transcripts, the consent forms also gave people the opportunity to allow (or not) the transfer of their interview recordings and transcripts to the archive, and to the use of excerpts to describe parts of the archive. I also informally presented my project as it evolved, to some of La Maison d’Haïti’s board of administrators, employees and members.

The approval by La Maison d'Haïti was, in a sense, the formalization of a much more important relational and everyday ethics that has underpinned the project since its inception and continues to inform and influence my every decision and action. This research could really only happen because of the relationships and ethics embedded in the prior archives project. In turn, the project itself strengthened relationships and fostered new ones. Those personal, familial, kin, and professional relationships are also crucial to my work, intellectual and otherwise, as well as my personal ethics. There is an organic reciprocity and accountability meaning that while being true to my own intellectual quest, I am nonetheless responsible and accountable for my actions and their consequences for those that surround me (Slattery & Rapp, 2003; Ellis, 2007). This relational ethic also influenced the writing process as this meant that some subjects were left out of the dissertation. When engaged in a community project that is also a research that will be published in an academic database, what to say, how to say it, and to whom is a constant negotiation, which must be anchored in thoughtful meditations which I am still learning to balance. Throughout my research, I continued to volunteer and eventually also worked at La Maison d'Haïti in a variety of activities and positions which I would have participated in regardless of the research. But this also informed the research because the constant exchange with past and current members and employees ensured that certain decisions were taken in consultation with, and informed by, the knowledge of others. This accountability also relied on making the entire process visible and subject to feedback and transformation. We presented the project and its objectives in two annual reports (2015-2016, see Appendix I; and 2016-2017, see Appendix J), as well as at the Annual General Assembly in 2017, and during multiple events at La Maison d'Haïti such as the commemoration of the 2010 earthquake in January 2018.

Summer and Fall 2016: Community archives and Memories

Over the summer 2016, we continued to process the documents in the meeting room of the new building. Many people came to visit the new space and as they walked into the room we were working in, asked questions, looked at documents, and recounted anecdotes and stories. This informal and welcoming environment allowed for conversation about the project and the archives, which sparked increased interest by community members.

I realize that the sorting of the archive provides a very interesting space to talk: as you are going through papers and folders you talk to the people with you, about the material, about what it makes you think about, what it makes you think of, it's also fun to have people walk in once in a while and ask questions, or Marjorie come in and identify a document, or find an old picture of Alix as a young DJ, or documents about Mireille's involvement in past youth programming. It's as much about actually sorting things through as it is about the space it creates, physically and socially. ... Opening the boxes, making the archive alive is also taking the time to sort it in a space where people can pass by, walk in, sit at the table, ask questions. (Personal journal notes, 2016, August 12)

The exchanges provided us further insights into the organization's history and its archives. After a final rehousing of everything, we ended up with about 30 boxes of records, plus two full libraries of resources. Each box was identified with a short list of documents contained and the potential series they pertained to. They were stored in archival cabinets in the computer room. The special storage of archives is not only to organize material but also to prevent decay and ensure access to future generations. After this and until completion of the dissertation, the resource library remained in the meeting room and about a dozen boxes remained to be sorted.

This work gave us a clearer idea of the activities through which the records were created and of people's involvement over time at the centre. I started to take more notes and kept a calendar of our activities; took down the title of relevant documents; and scribbled ideas that arose while processing the records or meeting people. This helped me keep track of our work as well as helped me start the more formal data collection as I identified records I wanted to go back to. As I started to map a chronology of the organization to document the archive, a sort of informal analysis began: I recognized recurrent themes and drew connections between these and the records. As Tamboukou observes, “[a]nalysis always starts while we are still in an archive”, browsing through the records, wondering what we are looking for and looking at (2016, p. 94). That moment is also where “the narrative fabric of the archive is being interwoven with our subsequent analysis and the writing of our research outputs” (p. 94). By taking notes of the archiving process and of my encounters with the records, I slowly started to build for myself what Stanley (2016) calls “the archive of the other archive” (p. 39), a compilation of writings created by the researcher through her work in/on an archive. It consists of informal writings – such as fragmentary notes and names of references to search – and formal ones – such as copies of documents and interview transcripts.

During the weekend of October 15th and 16th 2016, La Maison d’Haïti celebrated its official opening with an open house. Over 750 people came. Current and past members, volunteers, curious visitors and neighbours, children, adults, and elders, participated in activities that ranged from soccer and dance workshops, to panel presentations, guided visits of the building, and book presentations. Many people just came to hang out. During a panel entitled “Récits, histoires, traces, marques ou mémoire?” [Narratives, histories, traces, marks or memory?], on the contribution of Haitian communities to Quebec history, we shared binders of

pictures and documents from the archive that visitors could interact with. The tables with the materials were ‘hosted’ by teenage girls from the youth program Juste Pour Elles. They presented the material and explained what they knew about it. Some visitors discovered these records for the first time, while others recognized familiar words, images, and sights. The informal and intergenerational conversations catalyzed by these materials were very generative as some people in the audience recognized themselves or their children on the photos. Memories were shared, stories were told: history was passed on and made. During this event, I also had the opportunity to meet people whose name I had seen in the documents and was introduced to others whom I was told I needed to talk to both for the archive project and for my research. Over the previous years, conversations and my work with the archives had allowed me to identify people who had been involved at the centre over important periods of time. When came time, these were also the first people I thought about to conduct oral history interviews with. To this list were eventually added names which emerged from the continuous archiving and others who were suggested to me. This list itself ultimately illustrates the breadth of the constellation of people who have been involved at La Maison d’Haïti (S. Martelly, personal communication, January 8, 2021). While I had prepared a standard letter to be sent to potential interviewees, I never ended up using it. The more the archive project evolved, the more names came up and the more people I was referred to.

Between October and November 2016, I worked with Adeline, who is the first person with whom I conducted an oral history interview. Through conversations with her, the memory frame of the archive started to take shape. I consider Adeline one of La Maison d’Haïti’s first archivists since some of the folders she meticulously organized during her 14 years with the organization were still intact. I even started to recognize her handwriting because of its

importance in the archive. Because of her unique collaboration with Marjorie, I decided to do an interview with both of them together, which I thought would be valuable for the archive.

During that fall, I wrote a grant with Kristen and the organization's development agent, Émilie Pacciarella, to help purchase proper archival material, which we received the following spring. In December, I started to scan the annual reports and newsletters to be able to build a timeline of the organization and make a classification plan. These were also the first documents I 'collected' systematically for my research. Key to mapping out the chronology of activities, they provided information about who was involved, at what point, and in what fashion. After having gained a broad view of the archive as a whole, I immersed myself even more deeply in the stories and content of the records (Stanley, 2016).

Winter 2017: Inventorying, Writing, and Analyzing.

In winter 2017, Kristen and I worked on a first draft of a more detailed inventory template on Excel, in lieu of a database which would require too much maintenance. Over the next months, I slowly inventoried the records, with constant feedback from Marjorie and Kristen. Based on the number of inventory back up files I saved each time I worked, knowing that each work session was an average of five and half hours (between three to eight hours each time), I estimate having spent at least 250 hours doing that first run of inventory. Information from different people was also integrated into the inventory as I often asked people to identify records or names. While I had envisioned that inventorying would give me an in-depth look at the records, it proved to be a much more thorough analytical exercise than expected. As other archival researchers have found, I realized that the inventory itself could be an analytical document, and not just a guide to the archive (Stanley, 2016). By noting key information about the records, such as dates, titles and providing a short description through a scope and content

section, I started analyzing the content of the documents and seeing their relations to one another. This, in turn, also informed the inventory. For example, two entries eventually added to the inventory pertained to the individuals and institutions/coalitions who either authored documents or were mentioned in them.

At this moment, a breakthrough occurred: the information I gleaned during this process highlighted the networks of individuals and organizations connected to La Maison d'Haïti and the ways certain individuals navigated between the organization and other groups. This insight was crucial as it brought forth the theoretical foundation for my understanding of the existence and importance of institutional constellations and the circulation of people in this context. This happened as I started to look at how names (individual and institutional) emerged and re-emerged throughout the inventory, as well as how the same people occupied different roles in different instances. For example, Alix authored documents as a board member of La Maison d'Haïti, as the instigator of the summer camp and as an employee. But other records in the archive where either authored by him or by collectives he was a part of outside of La Maison d'Haïti. This made me realize the extent of his involvement with other groups as well and his movements between the Haitian and Black anglophone community. The inventory essentially provided a tool to look at information about the records and to draw connections, allowing me to grasp the archive as a structure of information, get at its complex make-up, and understand the coherence and connections between the various items (Moore, Salter, Stanley, & Tamboukou, 2016; Scott, 2008). Some of the themes I identified at this point later became themes I looked for in the analysis of interviews, such as the mentions of solidarity and racism/anti-racism which I explain further in Chapter six. In the process of creating the inventory, I identified more

documents to look at again and scan, and continued to take various notes and add names to the list of potential interviewees.

In addition to formal and informal theories, the interpretive universe we bring to research is made up of different forms of knowledge, for example from professional or research experiences, readings, or simply tacit knowledge (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). Moreover, the informal writing we do through taking notes influences some of our more formal writing such as for presentations, which in turn influences our research process (Stanley, 2016). These writings are essential to process information, build new knowledge and frame the broader narrative of the dissertation or of any written output (S. Martelly, personal communication, May 9, 2019). They help to weave together the stories and narratives that emerge from the archival records, from the interviews, and from the researcher's own understandings and experiences (S. Martelly, personal communication, May 9, 2019). Whether they are formally integrated or not in the final writing project, they nonetheless inhabit it. For instance, preparing conference presentations or articles can also inform our interpretive universe. The notes I took while sorting and inventorying quickly became reflective and analytical notes of the work I was doing and the records I was processing. In April 2017, Kristen and I presented at the Annual Conference of the Archives Association of Ontario on our collaborative work and the archive project. The presentation, entitled *Building communities of records: collaboration and education through community archives projects*, forced us to reflect on our process and make it explicit. Later that year, we were also invited to write a collective chapter in the book entitled *Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity*, edited by Jeannette Bastian and Andrew Flinn (Rochat, Young, Villefranche, & Choudry, 2020). For Kristen and me, this was both personally and professionally meaningful since the first book, *Community archives: the shaping*

of memory, edited by Jeannette Bastian and Ben Alexander (2009), had been a source of inspiration for our emerging collaborative work and our community archiving practice.

2018: Interviews, Transcriptions, Writing and the Photo Collection

At the beginning of 2018, we started rehousing the records in new acid-free archival folders and boxes while revising the inventory. Though part of the archival process we engaged in followed regular archival procedures, our project was also responsive to the context and adapted to the skills and knowledge of volunteers. It was a learning process for all, illustrating “[t]he often chaotic messiness of grassroots archives” (Moore, 2016, p. 141). For example, our weeding procedures changed as I realized that by transferring documents in archival folders, we were inadvertently erasing the prior labour of people who had organized and labelled folders:

What do you lose when you standardise the material in which the archive is held and preserved and organized? Do you erase somethings, someone, when you change folders and re-write headers? Why do you need to standardize, what do you need to standardize?
(Personal journal notes, 2016, Nov. 6)

Kristen and I decided not to discard all the old folders and keep some binders of already arranged material intact, in the binders. The handwriting on some of the labels and the binders showed traces of the prior labour of arranging and preserving the documents, for instance by Adeline. Preserving these traces is part of making the archival continuum process visible, showing prior community archivists’ work. Two volunteers also helped rehouse the material. While doing this, I scanned the documents I had noted down during the first inventory. By spring 2018, I had inventoried 22 boxes of records, amounting to over 800 folders, and had scanned about 450 documents. My archival data collection was complete. Inspired by the inventory template, I compiled information about the scanned documents in an Excel sheet, which acted as my own

database and analytical tool. At that moment, we also reworked the mission, development procedures and description of the materials held in the archive, and I began the oral history interviews.

Interview Processes. I had initially planned to continue interviewing during 2017 but realized that the inventory work was too dense to do both at the same time. Additionally, only after the inventory would I be able to identify the documents I wanted to show to each interviewee to enhance our conversations. In terms of my criteria for selecting my interviewees, I decided to interview people who had a long-term involvement with the organization, and who had held different roles over time. Some of these candidates were still involved with the organization, and others not. 25 people were initially identified by me or suggested by others. I finally decided to limit myself to interviewing 13 people for feasibility purposes related to the time constraints because of the doctoral process and my work outside of it. I also wanted to do face to face in-depth oral history interviews that would involve multiple interview sessions and be able to give significant attention to the stories shared with me. I interviewed nine people out of the 13 selected because two declined - one for health reasons and the other did not disclose a reason, and one accepted but moved out of the country temporarily making it too difficult to conduct a face-to-face interview. Finally, I decided not to include the last person on my list as once I started transcribing, I realized I had a largely significant and rich body of material and stories I wanted to do justice to. The decision process was challenging as there are many more people I could have interviewed for this project, who would have had different stories about the organization. The eventual choice I made was because the 13 people I selected 1) had varying experiences and roles 2) we shared mix of affinities (I had prior relationships, or developed ones, with most of the interviewees through other work); 3) were available and open to participate in

long oral history interviews 4) could meet me in person to conduct the interviews (we were in the same country at the same time).

To formalize the recruitment for interviews, I presented my potential interviewees the documents that summarized the archive project and my research (see Appendix G) and obtained their formal acceptance and consent. With approval in hand, I started to conduct oral histories during the spring of 2018. In total, I interviewed eight people between February and April: Suzie, Alix, Mireille, Marie-Andrée, Marjorie, Jacquelin, Céradieu, and Elizabeth. These interviews, plus the ones with Adeline, and the one with Adeline and Marjorie together, made for a total of ten interviews (see Appendix A). Each interview lasted between two to seven hours. Five of the interviews were extended with additional sessions for as many as two or three times, while the five others were done in one session, with a break between the first and second part. Four of the interviews happened at La Maison d'Haïti only, while four others happened at the homes of the interviewee. In the case of two interviewees, the interviews happened both at La Maison d'Haïti and at their respective home. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in their entirety.

Some of the interview questions were informed by an adapted guide from the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University (see Appendix E). However, most of the interviews evolved conversationally, building from past exchanges and from questions I had based on information from the archive. The first part of the interview focused on people's lives while the second one was based on archival material I presented to them. For everyone, except Adeline, I also presented an organizational chart taken from the archive, dating back to the late 1970s, asking people to point to and discuss aspects with which they had been involved (see Appendix K). This allowed me to map out the different roles people held over time and directly informed my subsequent analysis of their activism. Because of the prior archiving work,

I went into the interviews with a ‘preliminary analysis’ of the archive and of La Maison d’Haïti’s work, which I was able to discuss and get feedback on. Interviewees also shared their own analyses of the materials I presented.

Part of the task of the interviewer is to create opportunities for insight to emerge and let them inform subsequent analysis (Forget & Paillé, 2012). Conversations were therefore generators of new information as well as analytical processes for the interviewees and me. They were opportunities for people to reflect on their practice, helping me learn *with* them and not *about* them (Desgagné, 1997; Desgagné et al. 2001). Walter Ong argues that orality cannot be as analytically and systematically rigorous as writing, even if what he calls ‘oral thinking’ can be reflective and sophisticated on its own terms (2002). While I agree that literacy affects thoughts, I still believe thinking things through orally can be a rigorous form of analytical work. Orality, with its own grammar and as an embodied and valid way of generating knowledge (see Bandia, 2015), might wield different conclusions than writing. But it is a process through which people can analyze, hypothesize and theorize rigorously, especially in conversations with others. For instance, orality has been crucial in the articulation and transmission (including intergenerational and transnational transmission) of Haitian feminism since its emergence (S. Martelly, personal communication, January 8, 2021). Haitian feminists have built and passed on knowledge through both informal and formal conversations and exchanges such as during events, conferences, collective organizing etc. Because of lack of time and space, organizers rarely take time to engage in deeper socio-historical analysis of their practice to draw lessons from it (Kruzynski, 2004; Fisher, 1999). By conducting oral history interviews, space was created, and time was carved out so people could sit and tell their life stories in their entirety.

Many commented on that :

Même moi j'ai jamais pris le temps
de voir qu'est-ce que j'ai fait dans
ma vie. J'ai *jamais* pris le temps.

(Marie-Andrée)

[Even I, I never took the time to look
at what I've done in my life. I *never*
took the time.]

J'ai jamais pris le temps de m'asseoir
pour mettre tout ça par écrit mais
c'est sûr que ce serait intéressant
[...] de le faire. (Jacquelin)

[I've never taken the time to sit down
and put it all in writing but it would
certainly be interesting [...] to do so.]

This gave them the chance to recount and observe the evolution of their work, and to make meaning individually and collectively. People were able to observe that although their work had evolved, it had also stayed coherent over the years. These exchanges also helped me reflect on my own praxis since I too, had never taken the time to sit and think about what I have been doing since my teenage years.

Transcribing was an integral part of analyzing the data corpus (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). Transcribing brought forth the stories that activists were telling me. I took notes of themes, ideas, and events in a notebook throughout the slow-paced process of listening, rewinding, paying attention to each word while transcribing. This first analysis allowed me to connect people's memories of the same events or to connect stories and memories to events I had noted down from documents. It led me to refine the recurrent themes I had started to identify and to find new ones. It provided context to some archival records. It is important to intersperse the moments we read and reread interviews with moments where we do other things, to allow the true message conveyed to emerge and influence our thoughts (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2016). Once I

finished transcribing, I put everything aside and wrote first drafts of my introduction, theory and methodology chapters based on my comprehensive exams and additional readings. Writing forced me to re-visit some of the theoretical foundations, based on what I had learned so far. I transcribed the interviews and wrote the first chapters while staying in Haiti for a few months, which made me reflect about all of our ongoing connections to the country and their significance in relation to activism. It highlighted the diasporic nature of my interviewees' lives and mine and our transnational circulation. In September I went back to Montreal, and to the interviews which I started to code. Relistening to each one, I highlighted key parts on the transcripts and took notes in the margins. I also kept a notebook of ideas. I used Word documents instead of a formal qualitative analysis software, finding it easy and useful to navigate.

In October, I was invited to hold a workshop on the methodology I developed on the use of alternative archives for research, and to present a lecture on the Haitian diaspora in Montreal at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico [UNAM], in Mexico City. To prepare, I summarized those notes from the archiving and transcription processes and grouped themes under broad conceptual categories. This exercise resulted in three of my main concepts regarding diasporic activism – namely constellations, connections and circulation – which later folded back into my analytical process.

During that fall, I worked to organize the photo collection in folders placing hundreds of photos in eleven binders. In November, I invited everyone I interviewed so that I could present my preliminary findings, including those presented in Mexico. The exchange was a conversation about what I had started to analyze, and about the research and archiving processes. I also laid out the folders of photos for the group to look at. Marjorie, Alix, Mireille, Marie-Andrée, Céradieu, and Elizabeth were able to come. This gesture was a way for me to check in with my

interviewees to ensure validity, transparency and authenticity. According to Paillé and Mucchielli, one way to honour the testimonies received in the research process is to share power and let ourselves and our ideas be transformed by those testimonies (2016). My discussion with the group that day changed part of my research questions, broadened my frame of analysis, and transformed some of my analytical themes. My initial focus was on education as a transversal activity in the group's activism. But it became clear from the conversation, that people's activism was the most important thing for them. It was driven by their convictions, and education was a by-product of that. My analysis had to look at activism as a whole to better understand their educational work whereas what I had so far done was the opposite: focusing on education to understand their activism. I also had to look at what convictions were driving their work.

This conversation (see Appendix A) and its transcript became key, not only as a new source of information, but also as a theoretical text that I kept on going back to for the rest of the analytical process. It highlighted the importance of orality in collective knowledge processes and in intergenerational transmission of knowledge within Haitian communities. Long excerpts of the conversation are presented in Chapter seven where I also detail the group's core convictions. The excerpts are not illustrations of my results, but core to the analysis itself as this conversation also helped me better grasp the societal provenance and context of their activist work.

2019 & 2020: Analyzing, Interpreting and Writing

Contextualizing and historicizing archives are also part of the analytical and interpretive work (Moore et al., 2016). I wrote the chapter on societal provenance during a second stay in Haiti, more precisely in Cap Haïtien. Cap Haïtien is situated in the North of the island, inside a bay opening on the Atlantic Ocean. During the colonial era, it was one of, if not the main entry port from Europe and the biggest city in the colony. The house I was staying in bordered the

water. A few hundred meters from the bayside, French canons from the colonial era laid submerged in water but still visible. Standing from there, I could also see ruins of some of the fortifications built by the French along the coast to protect the Saint-Domingue colony. The ruins and canons spoke volumes about the importance Saint-Domingue held for France and about the violence they engaged in to keep control over it. But from where I stood, I could also see standing atop a mountain the Citadelle Laferrière built after the independence by self-proclaimed King Henri Christophe, who was one of the many leaders of the Haitian Revolution. While the citadel also reflects the collusion of political and military power post-independence, it remains one of the strongest symbols of the nation's revolutionary Black independence and identity (see Minosh, 2018). Reading Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* (2000), Matthew Smith's *Liberty, Fraternity and Exile* (2014) while there, after having read Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the past* (1995), Jean Casimir's *La culture opprimée* (2001), C.L.R. James' *Black Jacobins* (1963) and many other authors who wrote about the Haitian Revolution made me understand this history beyond words. Reading and writing about Haitian resistance struggles, Black diasporic movements for equality and freedom in that setting added another layer to my comprehension of the political movements I was engaging with intellectually and the work of La Maison d'Haïti's activists. It made me understand the historical roots and ramifications of the Black radical tradition and the physical importance of the Atlantic Ocean for this tradition.

After writing this chapter, I went back to the interviews and refined my analysis. Thematic analysis can involve three main stages: 1. Identifying concepts; 2. Grouping those concepts to create categories 3. Explaining the relationships between category by identifying overarching themes (Bazeley, 2009; Brady & O'Connor, 2014). My thematic analysis of the interviews was a multiple step process that involved a back and forth between themes, categories

and concepts, between interview transcripts and archival documents and between analysis and writing.

First, I coded the over 500 pages of transcripts with broad themes and categories and highlighting key excerpts. I also used the transcript of a public interview I had done with Alix for another oral history project which is available on Youtube (Jean, 2014, November 13). Second, I transferred 717 interview excerpts into an Excel Sheet. Third, I started to group the excerpts identified according to four main subjects taken from my research questions: activists' personal experiences and learning; the community work done at La Maison d'Haïti; diasporic activism; and the archive. Some excerpts related to more than one subject. I created a new table in a Word document and entered the themes or categories of each excerpt under the relevant subject. This gave me a way to see what could be grouped under common themes. I then refined the themes again by summarizing them and developing broader conceptual themes. From this stage, I went back to analyze some of the archival records in more depth. I had over 400 documents scanned and had both skimmed some and read a few closely. For my systematic reading and analysis, I decided to focus on 1) the annual reports from 1973 to 2011; 2) some internal activity reports 3) the newsletters of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s 4) various publications such as pedagogical material or information booklets and, 5) some correspondence. In addition, once I started to write, I went back to key documents identified over the years for specific subjects. I read and transcribed excerpts from the chosen set of documents, highlighting and noting themes as I went along through a next round of reading.

I kept in mind the ways in which documents are interpreted and how this varies widely according to archivists and interpreters' socio-historical backgrounds and political positions (Nesmith, 2007). Indeed, the work I did with La Maison d'Haïti, anchored in my professional

work and personal politics, strongly influenced my analytical lens. I used the themes and concepts that had emerged from my interviews to annotate the transcribed excerpts from the documents. In addition, based on those excerpts, I completed the chronology of programs and events, which was intended to become a useful document for the archive as well.

Reassembling the archive.

If analysis involves taking a document or documents apart, then interpretation requires putting the components back together, but in a new way that provides an explanation of meaning, including often by connecting it with a bigger picture. (Stanley, 2016, p. 59).

In addition to informing our archiving, Bastian's concept of community of records (2003) provided the frame through which the archive and the relations within it were mapped out and analyzed. Mapping an archive provides an understanding of its contents and the interconnections between documents, which ultimately reflect their configurations in relation to time and space (Stanley, 2016), subject of the next chapter. It makes visible the people who contributed to the archive by locating them and their activities in time, as well as highlighting the purpose for which they created the documents (Stanley, 2016). I pieced together my interpretation of the whole by connecting the different records of the archive (such as excerpts of documents, photos and interviews excerpts); information gleaned from them (such as events, dates, names, formats, authors, locations, and so on); with my own analysis. This interpretation brings together the various pieces and fragments collected throughout the research, which are woven together through a narrative that answers my research questions (see Tamboukou, 2014, 2016; Naples, 2012). Writing this narrative eventually became my last phase of analysis which allowed me to again refine my concepts and the connections between them, providing me with a theoretical understanding of the components, process and role of diasporic activism.

Conclusion: Strengths and Shortcomings

Like all researches, this project had its strengths and limits. One of the strongest aspects of the process was definitely that preserving and researching the archive happened directly at the centre. This ensured that the knowledge produced through this research is not detached from the place where the original knowledge and archives were generated:

By maintaining ties to the geographical histories of the archive and associations with the organisations and individuals who created and used it, and by ordering and describing its contents in ways that are meaningful to the community, autonomous archives necessarily provide greater promise of transparent contextual layers that help to establish the reliability of the documents they contain. (Moore & Pell, 2010, p. 264)

As for all community-based research, the community remained a source, frame and anchor of knowledge throughout the entire process. La Maison d'Haïti not only anchored the archives and research project, but it anchored *me* for the duration of my PhD, precisely because I had a community around me for the entire process. Though I am the sole author of this dissertation, the knowledge it brings together and builds from emerges from collaborative labour, both physical and intellectual. However, giving the interview transcripts in advance of the collective discussion and doing more than one of these would have allowed for an even deeper co-construction of meaning through collective analysis. Systematically recording people's informal engagement with documents over time would have also brought different insights into the archive and a wider community input into the research. Had we recorded these, we would have documented the archival records and the archiving process in even more details. Lefrançois (1997) highlights that collaborative research is an embodied activity, which in this case implied multiple forms of embodiment. The evolution of the archiving and research activities followed the organization's

timeframe and needs. It slowed down when resources and space were unavailable, accelerated when the organization needed it to, and the methods developed were adapted over time to make them relevant to the context. This brought on another intellectual rhythm, where my ideas took shape in relation to everything else happening at the centre. Intellectual labour was fundamentally shaped by embodied labour. The major challenge came when I had to step back from community work in general, which included the archive project, to finish my thesis, which brought the archives project almost to a standstill. While I was writing the thesis, a partnership with a McGill funded project² allowed us to hire an archival assistant, Prakash Krishnan, who, with the help of Kristen helped further refine the inventory while we revised the finding aids. In turn, the project used some of the archival documents as part of their research data.

Affective responses and learning were also important parts of the process. The emotions and memories elicited by the archives showed the connections people had with the material and thus the necessity of the physical engagement with it. Céradiou's enthusiasm when I showed him documents was echoed by many others, during interviews or on other occasions

Et là qu'est-ce qui a? Mon Dieu! Ça	[What is there? My God! I'm so glad
me fait plaisir de voir ça hein, tu sais	to see this, wow, you don't know
pas combien tu me rends heureux là!	how happy you are making me!]

Nonetheless, during the interviews, people sometimes didn't remember the documents I presented. For the research, it wasn't necessarily a problem since I had many others, but it does speak to the limits of memory which, like the archive, is always partial. These reactions also speak to the affective character of archives, whether that relates to what archives document, to the emotions archives can trigger as well as to the emotions that arise from processing archives

² The project was led by Dr. Philip Howard from the Department of Integrated Studies in Education.

(see Caswell, 2020; Caswell & Cifor, 2016). Even for those of us who saw the archives for the first time, realms of emotions were triggered, ranging from excitement at discovering the joys that can emerge from community work as well as pain from seeing the continuity of traumatic experiences lived by community members such as racist attacks. These emotions are embedded in the archive, alongside the individual and collective stories, and discourses it carries. Even within its limits and partiality, an archive is always complex structure of information as will be explained next.

Chapter 5. Configuration of the Archive.

This chapter maps out the configuration of the archive and what it tells us about this Black diasporic community. Configuration is defined as “an arrangement of parts or elements in a particular form, figure, or combination” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020). Reading this set of records as a specifically configured and situated object (see Tamboukou, 2016; Stoler, 2002, 2009), made up of different parts or facets allows us to tap into the archive as a “discursive formation” (Hall, 2001, p. 90). Knowing that an archive can never be described in its entirety (Hall, 2001), mapping out its various facets provides a way to describe its overall configuration, as in its ‘natural’ arrangement. It gives an overview of the community of records that make up the archive by broadly describing its scope and content, as do archival finding aids. The records show that La Maison d’Haïti’s archive is simultaneously a Haitian living cultural archive, a transnational archive, an archive of resistance, and a Black woman’s archive. In turn, these facets of the archive, illustrate how this Black diasporic community was forged through its activism.

A Haitian Living Cultural Archive

As explained in Chapter two, living cultural archives (Bastian, 2012) are social, lived and embodied archives by which collectivities preserve and pass on their knowledge through tangible and intangible records. In this case, the organization itself was a Haitian living cultural archive because the rhythm of its activities was influenced by life in Haiti and historical and cultural transmission were crucial for many activities.

Moving to a Rhythm Connected to Haitian Life

“An archive is a dynamic space traversed and indeed constituted by multiple rhythms ... Conceived as an entanglement of space/time rhythms, the archive extends into the world.” (Tamboukou, 2016, p. 79).

As is the case with other Haitian organizations, while firmly located in Saint-Michel, La Maison d'Haïti is also anchored in the daily life of Haïti (see Laguerre, 1998; Lindskoog, 2013; Pierre-Louis, 2002; Wah & Pierre-Louis, 2004). What goes on in the Caribbean island has a direct impact on the centre's activities both with regards to the types of activities and their intensity. The internal rhythm of the centre is partly shaped by Haitian events, and this rhythm in turn, has shaped the archive. Some activities also connect the organization to Haiti and to groups elsewhere in the diaspora, making the archive 'extend into the world.' Publications such as the newsletters with articles on Haitian politics; the many public statements or information documents following political events in Haiti like the fall of Jean-Claude Duvalier, and like the coup d'état against Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the subsequent embargo, or after natural disasters such as hurricanes show how what happened in Haiti was constantly monitored. Internal notes and correspondence of various coalitions and mobilizations display what the centre did to actively respond to these events. Core to these responses is the circulation of information from Haiti, to Montreal and throughout the diaspora. Important as well is the exile and transnational politics of many – as will be detailed further. The program documents also indicate how activities – from the literacy classes to immigration services – were shaped by the needs of people whose lives themselves were directly affected by events in Haiti; whether they had recently arrived from there or had to support family members still living there. An excerpt from the 1985-1986 annual reports captures well the influence Haitian events have had on the institution,

[L]a chute de la dictature de Duvalier
... a provoqué un grand remous dans
la diaspora en général. Cet

[The fall of the Duvalier
dictatorship... caused agitation in the
diaspora in general. This event had a

évènement a exercé une grande
influence sur la communauté
haïtienne de Montréal et sur les
organismes, appelés à la desservir.
... pour un moment, il s'est planté
une confusion voire un doute sur
l'avenir des organismes au service de
la communauté.

strong influence on the Haitian
community in Montreal and the
organizations that serve it. ... There
was even...for a brief moment,
confusion and even doubt about the
future of organizations serving the
community.]

(La Maison d'Haïti, 1986, p. 1)

Historical, Political and Cultural Transmission

The records also highlight how the homeland was made present, and passed on abroad, through various means and sources of remembrance, as was the case for example with the Chilean community in exile (Jara, 2016).

The organization is a locus of transmission of historical, cultural and political knowledge from and about the island. Cultural work is often embedded in activism and community work (Choudry, 2015; DeFilippis, Fisher, & Shragge, 2009; Kruzynski, 2004). What happened at La Maison d'Haïti echoes what happened at the NCC, the UNIA and other Black and Caribbean organizations in Montreal before them: the transmission of cultural, historical and political knowledge often overlapped, and was done through a variety of mediums as the records attest. Those records include the planning documents of regular programs such as the youth programs and La Voix d'Haïti radio show, to documents pertaining to special one-time events such as conferences or festivals. Knowledge transmission was so important that it influenced activists' own learning of politics and about Haiti, something I will detail in the next chapter. Many

chronologies of Haitian history were produced over the years, either for programs or events. Histories of Haitian resistance, such as numerous references to the Haitian Revolution or to opposition to the U.S. occupation are found in newsletters, pedagogical material, public statements, documents produced for celebrations. For instance, Charlemagne Péralte, whose poster adorned the walls of the old building also comes up in articles in the newsletter. La Voix d'Haïti radio show had special episodes over the years on the U.S. occupation and other historical events as seen in many of the handwritten preparation and research notes. Transcription of patriotic songs can also be read in different folders and old reels of the movie *L'Aube Noire* (1979), an animation about Haitian independence used for educational activities, are still there. These stories, references and artifacts aimed at transmitting political knowledge as well as a culture of resistance. Even programs such as TPZM aimed to connect children to historical movements for freedom in Haiti and anti-Duvalier struggles through games and activities (La Maison d'Haïti, 1986). Almost all pedagogical materials, whether for children or adults, refer to aspects of Haitian history or culture at some point. Chapter three showed how the Haitian Revolution loomed large in Black diasporic activist imaginaries over the years, becoming an important trope in international solidarity against the U.S. occupation, which also influenced the Harlem renaissance and interwar Black internationalism. It is thus no coincidence that it was also important for Haitian and other activists in Montreal. A 1983 letter from La Maison d'Haïti's board president Ernst Gresseau to Dr. Leo Bertley, editor for the NCC newspaper *Afro-Can*, congratulates him on an article on one of the important protagonists of the Haitian Revolution, Jean Jacques Dessalines (Gresseau, 1983, April 28). These histories tied community work to the Haitian Revolution and inscribed them within the Black radical tradition.

Contemporary political knowledge about Haiti was also circulated. Again, the research notes of the radio shows illustrate the breadth of political subjects discussed. During the 1970s cassette tapes and newspapers moved throughout the Haitian diaspora (see Laguerre, 1998), some even coming from Haiti. The cassettes and newspapers were used for La Voix d'Haïti's programs, for the newsletters and more. Jacquelin remembered that members of the radio show's audience brought and shared cassette tapes from radio shows they recorded in Haiti, especially from Radio Haïti Inter, the first independent radio in the country, known for its rights advocacy, celebration of Haitian culture and use of Creole. Music as well as radical knowledge was thus circulated thanks to the tapes. Various slideshows, or public statements about Haitian politics used in events, presentations and conferences can also be found in the archive, as well as publications directly from Haiti, such as copies of the academic journal *Revue Haïtienne de Sciences Sociales: Les Cahiers du CHISS*.

Cultural and historical transmission were also the leitmotiv of youth programs over the years. Part of the main objectives of NGPT were to foster the development of a strong cultural identity through activities centered around Haitian cultural and historical education (Dehoux, c. 1976). Mireille taught Haitian dances and Marjorie and other mothers used folktales as themes of the TPZM activities. La Maison d'Haïti also collaborated with other groups for various cultural events such as for organization of the Festival Culturel Haïtien in 1980. Correspondence, meeting minutes, promotion and planning documents and photographs show the numerous collaborators involved and the variety of activities organized for the festival. A folder with correspondence, promotion documents also shows how, the same year, La Maison d'Haïti facilitated the presentation of a play by a French theatre company, Ensemble culturel Théâtre Noir. Their play was based on the book *Gouverneur de la Rosée* by Jacques Roumain. Though

the presentations were not well attended because of lack of promotion strategy, the collaboration between groups and the choice of the play itself show the importance of Roumain's cultural and political work for generations after him, and for artists and activists in the diaspora. The numerous lists of songs played on the La Voix d'Haïti show, and lists of cassettes received, attest to the place Haitian music had in the community's life. The preparation notes also illustrate the research done for segments on Haitian art in Haiti and in the diaspora. As with other Caribbean diasporic communities, the radio played an important role in the transmission and the

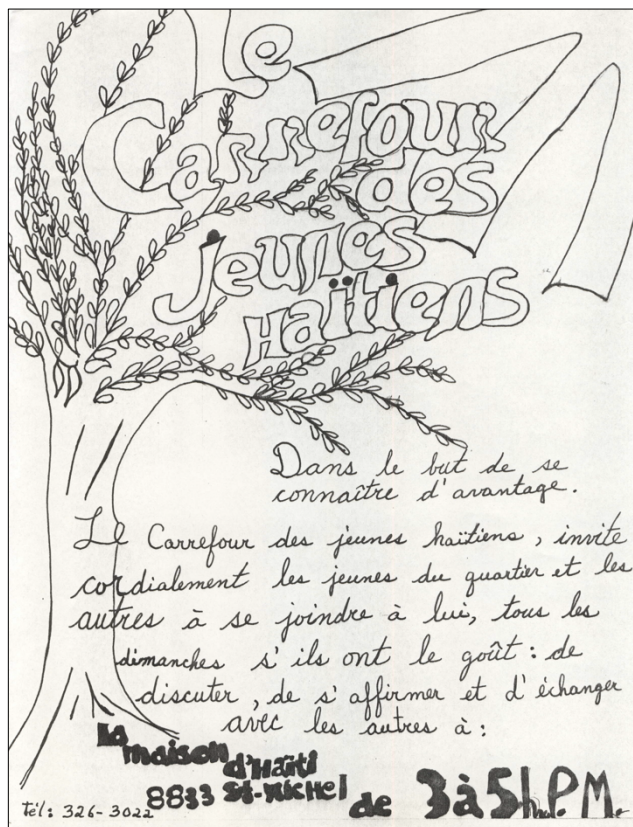


Figure 5.1 Flyer Carrefour des jeunes Haïtiens (c. 1986)

transformation of culture (see Gilroy, 2002; Iton, 2008). It allowed for the emergence of a new Haitian culture shaped by the younger team through the Combo show. The development of this new youth culture can also be gleaned through other records. Over the years, youth took more initiatives, whether as animators in the NGPT program, or in the programs they started such as the Carrefour des Jeunes Haïtiens (see Figure 5.1) and the Lakay summer camp.

The summer camp was to be centered around Haitian culture and history. The initial handwritten proposition signed by Alix and his two colleagues, submitted to the centre's director in 1981 as well as the documents pertaining to the camp's organization over the years are in the archive: from weekly reports, to planning documents and photos. Youth also initiated or

participated in sporadic projects such as the Forum de la jeunesse haïtienne in 1985, a forum which brought together Haitian youth in Quebec. The records and photos from some of those activities as well as various publications by youth such as magazines by Haitian students like *Demain: la revue des écoliers et étudiants Haïtiens à Montréal*, show that Quebec youth of Haitian descent are at the roots of the emergence of a new afro-Quebecker culture, as stated in the 1994-1995 Annual report (La Maison d'Haïti, 1995, p. 18).

Another important aspect of the transmission of Haitian culture was the use of Haitian Creole. Though most documents of the archive are in French, Creole was nevertheless always present. This can be seen in some of the bilingual publications; the internal staff notes; the documents of the short-lived creole class in the late 1970s; the preparation documents and pedagogical material of the literacy classes given in Creole; and the multiple statements published in French and Creole.

A Transnational Archive

While it can sometimes be difficult to track transient populations, such as exiles (see Smith, 2014) their experiences, alongside those of other migrants, are central in an archive like that of La Maison d'Haïti. The records illustrate the ways different migratory trajectories intersected in the space and through the activities of the organization and how for many, the experience of transnationalism also impacted their exiled and transnational politics.

Intersecting Migration Processes

Often the label 'migrant' or 'immigrant' community hides internal differences or tensions due to divergent conditions and identities as well as the fact that migratory trajectories and statuses are not the same for all (Glick Schiller, Basch, Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990). Like for other Caribbean and Black communities in Canada class, gender, status,

profession, colourism, family affiliations and more, were sometimes causes for divisions in the Montreal Haitian community (see Déjean, 1978; Jadotte, 1977; St-Victor, 2017). These factors also influenced the causes of people's migration and their lived conditions in the province. Migration does not automatically make for community. It makes for a shared experience. It is partly this experience that brought people to La Maison d'Haïti which became the place where various paths crossed. Those paths might not even have crossed in Haiti. Varied trajectories and needs also led to varied levels and forms engagement with the organization: some people just passed through for specific services, or stayed to organize those services, while others remained to build a new community. Suzie observed that

Max et Adeline ce sont des exilés,
 mais nous on n'était pas exilés, ...
 j'ai décidé de venir au Québec. Tu
 comprends? Mais il n'y avait aucune
 raison pour que je parte d'Haïti,
 contrairement à d'autres personnes
 qui n'avaient pas d'alternatives ...
 Ces personnes ... qui avaient aussi
 beaucoup plus d'expérience dans la
 question migratoire, ont travaillé très fort
 pour constituer un groupe.

[Max and Adeline are exiles, but we
 were not exiles, ... I decided to come
 to Quebec. You understand? But
 there was no reason for me to leave
 Haiti, unlike other people who had
 no alternatives ... These people ...
 who also had much more experience
 on the migration question, worked
 very strong to form a group.]

Both Suzie and Marie-Andrée remarked that they left the country primarily for professional reasons, unlike Adeline, Céradieu, and Elizabeth who were exiled. The documents from the programs and activities show how differing needs directly related to the experiences of migration

oriented the centre's activities. Some activities were focused on socioeconomic integration, or on family support while others remained focused on Haiti. What is important is that they cohabited and also stemmed from people's broad understanding of various realms of activism. For example, documents from the literacy and French classes, professional integration and training activities like the sewing classes show how these activities evolved over the years to facilitate the entry of Haitian and other migrants on Quebec's labour market. As is the case with migrant community organizing in general (Falicov, 2007), people shared knowledge and supported other newcomers' immigration processes, regardless of status, time in the province etc. Information related to provincial and national immigration legislation and legislative changes appears throughout the records whether for internal or external communication purposes. Articles on the subject can be found in the newsletter, notes can be read in the preparation documents for the radio show. Many public statements and information sheets were prepared over the years, and internal documentation folders on the subject show the work done to help people in their immigration processes. Most of the documents destroyed during processing and downsizing procedures were actually the immigration applications of refugees, asylum seekers, students, workers, people applying for family reunification and so on. While they needed to be destroyed for confidentiality purposes, their presence attested to the variety of migratory paths that intersected inside the institution. Another set of records partially destroyed were the attendance lists and registration for the literacy classes which showed the various origins of learners and their status. The rights of people without, or with precarious status was always at the heart of the principles of the organization. Legal status, or lack thereof, never stopped anyone from receiving services nor from participating in the centre's activities – even less from founding La Maison d'Haïti itself (La Maison d'Haïti, 2005). The collaboration of the organization with the AMHE



Figure 5.2 Poster, Information session CCH

and RIIAH in the 1970s for the CCH aimed to ensure the right to access to health services regardless of status (See Figure 5.2). Documents describing the clinic, as well as administrative records and promotional posters complete the information about the clinic which can be read in the newsletters and annual reports of the mid-1970s.

Exile and Transnational Politics

The lived experience of transnational migration also reaffirmed a transnational political outlook for many. Exile furthered their political convictions. As Jacquelin highlighted, for the group, “l’articulation possible entre le développement du mouvement démocratique à l’intérieur et à l’extérieur [d’Haïti], c’était évident” [the possibility of the articulation between the development of the democratic movement inside and outside [of Haiti] was evident]. The struggle for the liberation of Haiti was to be fought simultaneously in Haiti and abroad but was also understood in a wider political context where the Canadian governments was implicated. Many articles in the newsletter, as well as correspondence between groups and in certain cases with the Canadian government itself denounce the support of Duvalier’s regime by Canada through, for instance international aid (Télémaque, 1983, September 21). Connections were also drawn between the exodus from Haiti and the use of Haitian and Black labour in Canada. Migration was understood “in the context of the international capitalist system with its historical need to ensure a labour supply and its changing means to acquire one” and where “Haiti appears

as a source of cheap ‘reserve’ labour in the interests of international capital, both within Haiti and abroad” (Paul, 1992, p. 10). An article in the first newsletter in 1975 denounces the abuse of Haitian domestic workers and asks if in the context of relations between Canada and Haiti, the latter wasn’t becoming an important supplier of ‘domestic-slaves’ to Canada.

Exile thus became a place from which people reaffirmed and further theorized their understanding of politics and of continued colonial relations between countries and their populations. These politics were articulated, expressed, and debated through various written documents that circulated in and beyond Montreal (see Lindskoog, 2013; Charles, 1996; Williams, 2006). Alain Saint-Victor notes that (2017), for many abroad, writing became a way of resisting the process of obliteration that exile can represent. He affirms that literature, studies, and political writings on the country’s economy, history, and so on, were means of struggle against the dictatorship and against the repression mechanisms of a neocolonial state like Canada, but they were also a way to struggle against exile itself. Many of the writings he alludes to can be found in the archive since documents constantly circulated between groups. Whether they were publications, correspondence, posters, leaflets, or pamphlets they show the movement ‘to and fro’ Haiti, and between diasporic communities. For example, during the dictatorship era, Alix recalled that La Maison d’Haïti distributed publications that came directly from Haiti such as *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, a newspaper of which many copies can still be found in the archive. The presence of work files and journals of different groups such as the CHAP to which Jacquelin and other members of La Maison d’Haïti belonged, and the organs of different political groups, give insights into the political debates amongst exile groups and illustrate the political life of the diaspora. The records from anti-Duvalier groups are numerous, and they come from cities elsewhere in Canada, in the US, Mexico, other Caribbean islands and various countries in

Europe, showing the breadth of anti-Duvalier constellations and the circulation of people and information that happened through them. There are two boxes filled with documents produced by over 40 groups, and more records can be found dispersed in other boxes. Correspondence and meeting notes demonstrate how those groups mobilized and worked together but sometimes also boycotted each other (see Jadotte, 1977). As other forms of diasporic community media (Laguerre, 1998), even the newsletter aimed to spread that knowledge between multiple sites: attempts were made to distribute it through other Haitian organizations in Quebec and in other countries, and other organizations sought written contributions from the newsletter team (Gauthier & Jean Charles, 1979, August 29). The importance of transnational politics continued after the fall of Duvalier, with, for example mobilizations during Aristide's ousting gleaned through folders containing clips from news articles, government statements, information sheets on the coup d'état, as well as a poster calling for his return. As for other activists of the Pan-African Conference in London in 1900, or of the Congress of Black writers in Montreal in 1968, for Haitians in Montreal conferences, symposiums and other public events provided possibilities for debates about politics. They were spaces where ideas, theories, ideologies, strategies were discussed, refuted, refined and often confronted; spaces where the Black political tradition continued to be crafted.

The transnational politics of the centre also translated in its participation in groups such as the Fonds Délégués AQOCI-Haïti in the late 1980s and the Regroupement des Organismes Canado-Haïtiens pour le Développement [ROCAHD] in the early 1990s. Both groups worked to bring together a network of Haitian organizations in Québec who sponsored programs and projects in Haiti to facilitate Haitian organizations' access to funds. The folders of the centre's participation in these groups contain meeting minutes, correspondence, information documents,

funding applications from Haitian groups and so on. Interestingly, in addition to illustrating the circulation of resources and money they also highlight the transnational circulation of people: two people whose respective organization and project were funded by the Fonds Délégués AQOCI-Haïti and sponsored by La Maison d'Haïti had been participants and then animators in NGPT in the 1970s and early 1980s. A third one was a unionist who while in exile had come to give a presentation on the situation of workers in Haiti in the early 1980s. Photos of his passage are in the archive. Even youth groups from the centre, such as the Carrefour des jeunes de la Maison d'Haïti in 1986 attempted to maintain contact with a youth group called the Club Mackendar in Haiti, showing that transnationalism also informed their actions.

An Archive of Resistance

Resistance to oppression can take on many forms, some more formal and others less. For instance, organic communities of resistance can come together spontaneously, over common causes or hardships (Sivanandan, 1990). Laguerre (1998) observes that “within the social space of the dominant sector, diasporic subjects are found or made to occupy a ‘minoritized space’, the locus of everyday resisting practices” (p. 31). Systems of domination, exploitation and oppression are partly built upon their assertion of supremacy and normalcy (Jacobsen et al., 2013; Trouillot, 1995) which often relies on the silencing and denial of oppression and violence. Members of La Maison d'Haïti engaged in both organized and organic acts of resistance to different forms of oppression.

Resisting State Violence

State violence is deeply connected to a wider system of oppression and exploitation, especially in the case of a colonial state like Canada and in relation to Haiti and Haitians' positions in that global system. Within the organization, this understanding of the connections

between forms of violence and exploitation was certainly influenced by the politics of the many Haitian Marxist activists present. As such, “les archives de la Maison d’Haïti ça ne peut pas se dissocier du travail politique. [...] On est une organisation de gauche” affirmed Marjorie, the archives cannot be dissociated from the political work of the organization, which is a left organization, as were many community groups founded during the same period (see Lamoureux, 2010; Lamoureux, Lavoie, Mayer & Panet-Raymond, 2008). As mentioned before, for founding members of La Maison d’Haïti, struggles for freedom, self-determination and against injustice and discrimination had to be fought as one and the same (Céliné et al., 2016). For members of La Maison d’Haïti, the first realm of state violence experienced and contested was that of Duvalier’s regime. But state violence was also challenged in the context of Canada with regards to the treatment of migrants without, or with precarious, status which was also connected to the struggle against racism.

Anti-Duvalier activism. Contestation of Duvalier’s brutal regime was central to the politics of the organization and its members since its inception, as Jacquelin, Céradieu, and Adeline explained. This struggle is documented in numerous records of the first 14 years of the institution, which also trace the violence many had faced and were now denouncing. Nègès Vanyan explicitly aimed at circulating a counter-discourse to that of the dictatorial regime about the plight of Haitian women in Haiti through their work. Jacquelin commented that Haitian activists in Montreal used every platform possible to inform others in Quebec about the nature and realities of Duvalier’s regime which meant distributing tracts, protesting, speaking in public events, etc. The array of publications by anti-Duvalierist groups based in different locations also attest to the transnational circulation of knowledge between them. There are two boxes of folders of newspaper clips documenting the regime, including the multiple repression campaigns,

imprisonments and forced disappearances. There are also many folders of notes and documents used to prepare anti-Duvalier propaganda, special reports on the La Voix d'Haïti radio show and articles in the newsletters. In one of the correspondence folders, there is even a copy of a telegram sent in July 1985 directly to Jean-Claude Duvalier at the Haitian national palace, from La Maison d'Haïti, condemning the repression of the press and persecution of Church clergy members. Multiple copies of a booklet entitled *Prisonniers politiques*, are also present. The booklet details the plight of a group of political prisoners – of which Elizabeth was a part of – attesting to the regime's atrocities and the struggles to bring them to light. Those records alongside public statements, fact sheets, correspondence with the Canadian government, and the numerous publications by anti-Duvalier groups ensure that some traces of the brutality of the Duvalier regime are also preserved.

Fighting for migrant rights. According to Dahlam (2004), state structures often perceive and treat migrants as threats, whose border crossing questions the ability of sovereign states to control their population and territory. The (mis)treatment by states of people without or with precarious status is also a form of violence generated by states. The organization's initial activities aimed to ensure the rights of migrant workers and their families. They also argued that people, regardless of status had the right to access leisure, cultural and educational opportunities. The records map out the different efforts and objectives of those struggles: whether it was the challenges to immigration processes and laws, the denunciation of deportations, the battles waged on a case-by-case basis to ensure a fair immigration process or the work to provide families with accessible leisure such as through the picnics (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4 on following page) and outings.



Figure 5.3 Poster, Picnic 1977



Figure 5.4 Poster, Picnic 1987

As explained before, the documents pertaining to individual cases have been destroyed but the records of various campaigns show La Maison d'Haïti's efforts to secure migrants' rights: from the 1973-74 anti-deportation campaign called "Opération mon pays" [Operation my country] (see Mills, 2016; Saint-Victor, 2017); to the contestation of the lifting of an anti-deportation moratorium in the late 1980s, and even a campaign in 2004-2005 entitled "Des vies en suspens" [Lives on hold] on the plight of people without status. The multiple folders related to the 1973-74 campaign contain documents exemplifying the different strategies employed to advocate for migrants. The documents range from excerpts of journal articles on the subject,

correspondence between groups and with governmental authorities, solidarity letters from other groups, short publications by the CAAD, meeting minutes, tracts for protests, summaries of the situation etc. Over time, the organization positioned itself as a key interlocutor on the question of migrant rights, which can be read through the correspondence with different governmental figures and institutions. The extensive collaborations with migrant associations and organizations also emerge from folders containing information and promotion documents, meeting notes, correspondence, research documents, action plans, and joint public statements. For instance, La Maison d'Haïti was a member of various initiatives working for the rights of refugees such as the Table de Concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrante, the Conseil Canadien pour les Réfugiés; and the short lived Fédération des groupes ethniques du Québec. In addition, numerous documents highlight the work done to disseminate knowledge about the experiences of people often considered second-class citizens: from participation and presentations at different conferences, to investigations on the lived experiences of community members and public inquiry briefs on subjects, such as one on the participation of minorities in Québec and Canadian society (Télémaque, 1983, September 21). The brief, written by Jacquelin in 1983 and entitled *Mémoire présenté au comité spécial sur la participation des minorités visibles à la société Canadienne*, explicitly connected the increasing emigration from Haiti to increasing international aid from Canada to the country, while denouncing racial profiling and abuses from police and immigration officers. Numerous articles in the newsletters also aimed to inform migrants of their rights and documented abuses they were subjected to whether at the hands of landlords, employers or state authorities. The mobilization for Haitian migrants also extended to those outside the context of Canada. La Maison d'Haïti often denounced the treatment of Haitian migrants in the U.S., the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic in articles

and on the radio, and even participated in a meeting on the plight of refugees in Washington in 1982.

Workers' Struggles

The advocacy for the rights of migrant workers – with or without status – and of Black workers – men and women – always argued that the racism, discrimination and exploitation they faced were intrinsically connected (Maison d'Haïti, 1979, April 18). Various folders of documents from the first years of activities show the importance of advocacy for the rights of migrant workers, such as one entitled *Travailleurs immigrants*, meaning immigrant workers, dating back from 1973 and containing information documents pertaining to legislation; documents from other groups; open letters and letters addressed directly to the government; proceedings of debate at the House of Commons; notes; and excerpts of newspaper articles. 10 years later, the organization participated in a conference on labour in Quebec where they presented the paper entitled *Quelques recommandations de la : Maison d'Haïti Inc. à la Conférence socio-économique sur le travail* (La Maison d'Haïti Inc., 1984, June 12). That paper reiterated that the plights of Haitian workers in the Québec labour market had to take into account racism, migration, gender and class. Many folders for different campaigns for migrant workers' rights over years can be found, as well those pertaining to collaborations with workers' associations, unions or coalitions, such as the Table de concertation des travailleurs des communautés culturelles. The rights of immigrant women workers were also addressed in multiple conferences and colloquiums, especially in the late 1980s, traces of which appear in the annual reports and in folders with various conference proceedings. The struggle for women's rights also always made explicit that the exploitation women faced in Quebec was related to the fact that they were Black, immigrant *and* women workers. For instance, an article in one of the

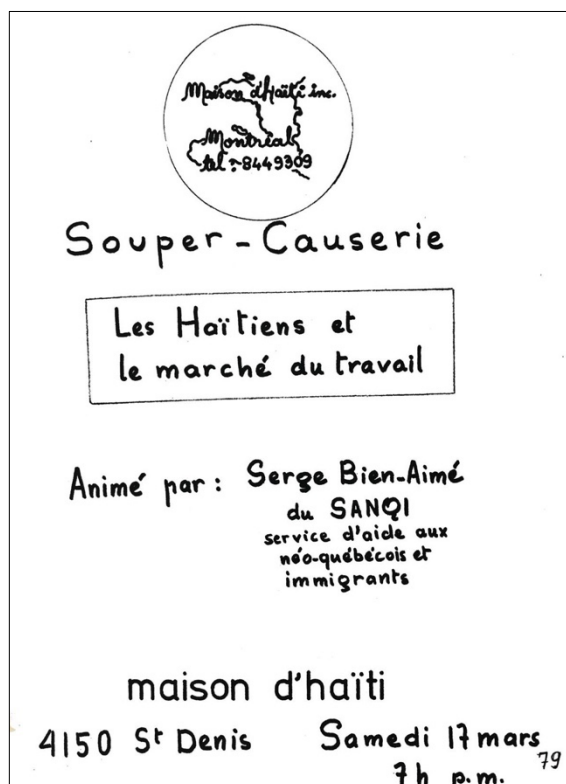


Figure 5.5. Poster, Discussion activity on Haitians and the labour market (1979)

newsletter addresses the plight of Haitian women working as domestic workers, their living conditions, and the exploitation, racism and sexism they confronted (La Maison d'Haïti, 1976, March). In addition to advocacy work, education about workers' rights was also significant, especially in the first two decades of activities. For instance, discussion activities on worker's rights, or the plights of Haitian workers in the Quebec labour market were organized (see Figure 5.5).

The first series of newsletters contains

numerous articles on workers' rights, such as the

right to strike and to unionize. The work done by CAFHAM also aimed to inform women workers about their rights because it recognized that most of them worked in sectors which made them particularly vulnerable to abuse, such as the factory sector (La Maison d'Haïti, 1975, Nov., p. 1).

Anti-racist Activism

Mainstream official and historical narratives of Canada tend to minimize its history of racial discrimination and inequality, often comparing it with that of the United States to put forth a myth of 'Canadian benevolence' (see Este, 2004; Williams, 2006). But the racism embedded in its state structure, social relations and social organization was always challenged. Anti-racist struggles have been a constant of Black activism historically across the Atlantic, including in Montreal, and one of the "biggest recruiter for Black politics" in general (Andrews, 2018, p.

452). In one of the first funding application La Maison d'Haïti in 1973 for the PIL, the struggle against every form of racism was an explicit objective. Racism was to be tackled at all levels, through different means and strategies. The organization framed its anti-racist work through what it eventually called a popular intervention model to fight against racism, using public advocacy as well as community mobilization, educational initiatives and pressuring companies for active change (La Maison d'Haïti, 1985). Writing was a key strategy in this work, as it had been for activists in the late 19th century, whether it was directed to government authorities, the public sphere, or La Maison d'Haïti members. The various public inquiry briefs, and correspondence with governmental offices were direct statements to state authorities, denouncing their role in racist discrimination, especially at the hands of immigration and police officers. The public inquiry brief written in 1988 on police and 'visible minorities', entitled *Mémoire présenté par La Maison d'Haïti à la Commission d'enquête sur la police et les minorités visibles* in 1988 (Gresseau, 1988) reminded the commissioners that La Maison d'Haïti was participating for the third time in five years in an inquiry on racism. They also asserted that it was an absolutely undeniable fact that ethnic minorities suffered from racism in Montreal. Newsletter articles, annual reports, and folders also document abuse and even deaths at the hands of the police, such as in the case of Marcellus François in 1991. A folder of newspaper clips, with a copy of the coroner report and other publications, documents the struggle for justice over his death. Even youth organized debates on racism (La Maison d'Haïti, 1993, October 29).

Activists also paid particular attention to the ways in which racism impacts people differently in relation to other factors such as age, socioeconomic status, gender, formal education, and health conditions as well as in different areas such as employment, housing, relations with authorities (La Maison d'Haïti, 1982, December). These arguments and the actions

taken to counter racism can be read in the folders from the campaigns against racism in the taxi industry in the early 1980s and against the AIDS crisis a few years later. Those folders contain working and meeting notes; public statements; newspaper clips; documents compiling information; correspondence; documentation from other groups and more. For Haitian activists, the stigmatisation and discrimination of Haitians with regards to AIDS was because of the prevalence of anti-Black racism socially *and* within the health system, as was the struggle of taxi drivers in relation to employment access and worker's rights. During the AIDS crisis, letters were sent to the Canadian Health Minister (Gresseau, 1983, March 15a), the president of the Canadian Red Cross (Gresseau, 1983, March 11), to the Quebec Minister of Social affairs (Gresseau, 1983, March 15b) denouncing the prejudices that were caused by identifying a community on the basis of its national origins as a vector of an illness that scientists didn't even fully understand at the time. These letters argued that the identification itself was prejudiced but also led to further stigmatization of an immigrant and Black community. Over time, the organization was part of many coalitions with Haitian and Black groups, who came together to denounce racism, such as the Comité 20 juin founded in 1979 to denounce a brutal arrest of a group of Haitian men by the police (La Maison d'Haïti, 1979, July-August, p. 5). In 1988, the Coalition des Associations de la Communauté Noire de Montréal was formed by 10 different Black community organizations, both French and English, to denounce the racial profiling and violence against Black youth from Police officers. In a report, they demanded changes in the recruitment and training of future police officers, the establishment of a committee and mechanisms to review complaints of police brutality, and the sanctioning of racist actions by police officers (Coalition des Associations de la Communauté Noire de Montréal, 1988, June 6). Together, these coalitions also often organized protests, documented in the archive. The multiple

folders of the work done by La Maison d'Haïti with the MQCR in the late 1970s and early 1980s, especially through Jacquelin's involvement in both groups, further illustrate the breadth of work done against racism. MQCR always had in its mandate to connect the fight against racism in Quebec, to Indigenous struggles, the anti-apartheid movement and the struggle for the liberation of Palestine (Mouvement Québécois pour combattre le racisme, 1981a). Folders contain meeting notes; promotion documents; activity calendars and reports; correspondence; public statements; conference documentation such as that related to a colloquium entitled Colloque Éducation et Racisme [Colloquium on Education and Racism] organized in 1981 (Mouvement Québécois pour combattre le racisme, 1981b). There is even an anti-racist pedagogical book published following the colloquium entitled *Cahier de pédagogie progressiste: Combattre le racisme* [Progressive pedagogy manual: Combatting racism] (1982) and a series of documents pertaining to a tour done across Quebec on Black communities' histories.

Resisting Through Knowledge Production

Robinson writes that for some of the Black radicals Marxist thinkers of the early 20th century, words were one of their most vitalizing tools... their means of placement and signification, the implements for discovery and revelation. With words they might and did construct new meanings, new alternatives, new realities for themselves and others.

(2000, p. 183)

This was also the case for Haitian activists, including Marxists in the context of Montreal who wrote their resistance. Knowledge production was transversal to many of the activities undertaken and also served to denounce and counter false, prejudiced or racist information circulated about the community. In her work on Black serials in Quebec, Williams (2006) details the significant numbers of publications by Haitian groups in the 1970s. Over the years, members

of La Maison d'Haïti purposefully produced their own knowledge about their community and encouraged members to do the same.

Marjorie explained that to write projects that really took community needs into consideration, it was important to have a broad vision, analyze what was going on, be curious and read what had been written on the subject. In the first years of the organization, research was a common activity, to better understand the different realities of community members and organize services that spoke to varied needs. Efforts deployed towards that can be seen through research proposals, such as on Haitians' adaptation and integration to Montreal (Dehoux, Legros, & Thélusma, 1974) and on the professional distribution of Haitian workers in the Québec labour market (La Maison d'Haïti, 1984); questionnaires on demographics of Haitian workers (La Maison d'Haïti Inc., n.d.); reports on, amongst other themes, housing conditions of Haitians in Montreal-North (Bataille, 1984) and on Haitian women, which will be detailed in the following sections. In 1983 the organization conducted a wide investigation by contacting over 500 Haitian families in four neighbourhoods to determine the profile of potential adult literacy students (Toussaint, 1983). This was to identify people the organization wasn't reaching, and to re-orient content of courses and pedagogical material based on their needs. Jacquelin recalled that to prepare the radio show and other public speaking activities:

Il fallait vraiment faire de la	[You really had to do research, you
recherche, il fallait sillonner les	had to go through libraries, you had
bibliothèques, il fallait trouver les	to find the right resource people, you
bonnes personnes ressources, il	had to talk to the people who gave
fallait parler aux personnes qui vous	you the right information, even in the
donnait les informations en	background, ... not only did I have

background... non seulement j'avais à rédiger mais j'avais aussi à recueillir d'autres informations. to write but I also had to collect more information.]

In the early 1980s, the organization even created a position for what they called an information officer, which eventually developed into the community intervention and liaison officer (La Maison d'Haïti Inc., c. 1985). The initial role of the officer was to collect, analyze and disseminate information that was pertinent to the centre's activities and to wider community mobilization. That role eventually also involved producing and circulating information to the increasing numbers of Haitian organizations in the city to help to foster the search of collective and concerted solutions to problems faced in the community at large. The officer's work aimed to find ways to bring organizations working on similar issues or projects to pool together their knowledge and resources to ensure a level of coherence of action for more efficient and sustainable results and to ensure an active and knowledgeable presence in events that implicated Haitian community members (La Maison d'Haïti Inc., c. 1985). Producing and disseminating knowledge was a key strategy to actively address and resist some of the challenges and injustices faced by community members. In addition, as has been the case historically for Black diasporic activism, conferences were also important space of political connections, fostering encounters between activists, leading to debates and knowledge transmission.

Valuing people's knowledge and language was both a tool of resistance onto its own and a way to foster political participation to counter oppression and exploitation. According to Adeline the work to value Haitian creole and people's knowledge is intrinsic to political organizing since

le créole est resté toujours, pour moi,
comme un élément indispensable de
la Révolution haïtienne. ... si la
population n'a pas cette arme là, de
pouvoir penser, s'exprimer,
s'organiser dans sa langue, et bien
elle ne pourra pas participer.

[Creole has always remained, for me,
a crucial element of the Haitian
Revolution. ... if the population does
not have this weapon to be able to
think, express, and organize itself in
its own language, then the population
will not be able to participate.]

The literacy work done by the organization was anchored in the conviction that access to
knowledge is a fundamental right and that people, no matter who they are, whether they can read



Figure 5.6 Newsletter cover (Oct. 1988)

or write or not, are producers of knowledge
about their own realities and potential actors of
political change. The third iteration of the
newsletter focused on literacy learners and was
based on their written production (see Figure
5.6). While some content included written
exercises from their course, others were their
comments on politics and other events
happening in their lives. The newsletter was
done with the goal of providing a platform to
practice newly acquired skills as well as to value
learners' knowledge (La Maison d'Haïti, 1995,

October 26). In the early 1980s, Adeline was part of an emerging international network of
activists, scholars, and educators advocating for the recognition of Creoles from the Caribbean,

the Indian Ocean and the south of the United States; a network struggling against the international hierarchy of languages which over-values colonial/imperial languages. Correspondence, meeting minutes, and photos pertaining to this network's activity appear in the archive, including those from a conference in Louisiana, and another one in Ile de la Réunion. Lastly, there are also numerous folders of the International day of Creole, which La Maison

d'Haïti helped celebrate in Montreal.

Finally, the work to develop the organization's own pedagogical content and material –especially for the literacy classes (see Figure 5.7) and youth programs – based on learner's and community knowledge also stemmed from the conviction that this knowledge is as rich, as important, and as valid as any other source of knowledge. It had to be leveraged, valued, circulated and used as the basis of educational initiatives (La Maison d'Haïti, c. 1979-1980).



Figure 5.7 Cover, Pedagogical manual
Vwazen Vwazin (1982)

Resisting Erasures and Forgetting.

As Jara observes, “remembering is also a response to violence” (2016, p. 58), a way to contest it. By documenting movements and practices of resistance the archive also resists their erasure and forgetting. Chapter three explained how Duvalier's relentless attack on the left rendered the movement clandestine early on. Because of this clandestine aspect, part of its history will simply never be known, like in the case of South African resistance movements (see William & Wallach, 2011). Adeline noted that :

Chaque fois qu'on voit disparaître
quelqu'un, un camarade on se dit bon
voilà il y a une partie de l'histoire
qui a disparue parce qu'on en connaît
jamais qu'une petite partie.

[Every time we see someone
disappear, a comrade, we tell each
other that there is a part of the story
that disappeared because we only
ever know a small part of it.]

The few records in the archive pertaining to this history are therefore even more precious, though they truly only give small hints of the extent of the work and network of the Haitian left during the regime. The multiple connections of La Maison d'Haïti with countries such as Cuba, or with socialist networks, communist parties are nonetheless documented in the archive and highlight the political network of the international left in which the organization was embedded. This can be traced through the folders from trips taken by members on different occasions to Cuba, for example for festivals or conferences such as the youth who attended the XII Festival Internacional de la Juventud y los Estudiantes in 1984, and the women from Nègès Vanyan who went to the Third Continental Women's Meeting in Cuba as well in 1988. In the latter folder, an invitation directly addressed to Marjorie from Fidel Castro illustrates the strength of La Maison d'Haïti's political affiliations. Some folders with documentation from the PUCH also give insights into the party's debates about strategies of resistance to Duvalier and questions regarding the country's future. If some of the direct political connections have not necessarily continued, the politics of the organization remain somewhat anchored in its early political affiliations and locate part of the organization's roots in a tradition of Haitian Marxism. Alongside the various records in the archive, the community of memory constituted by activists who share memories of political events (see Jara, 2016; Ketelaar, 2008) help to resist part of the silences surrounding the history of the Haitian left. The memories of activists contextualize and

add a layer of meaning to the textual records that document the political activities of the Haitian left in exile. They also tie people to one another through the memories of shared political experiences.

A Haitian Women Activists' Archive

Black women have always been active in political movements. But their presence and work are often silenced, for instance, in the ways Black and women's movements are recounted (Andrews, 2018; Brown, 2014; Patterson & Kelley, 2000). This also applies to Haitian women (see Sanders, 2013; Chancy, 2012) though they have been involved in resistance movements inside and outside the country, from the Haitian Revolution to contemporary feminist and political movements (see Bell, 2001; Charles, 1995; Girard, 2009; Paul, 1992; Sanders, 2016). One of the ways in which Black women's activism is silenced is through the limited presence of records created by them in archives, even in those of Black diasporic organizations (see McDuffie, 2016). Unlike this, La Maison d'Haïti's archives is filled with records about and from activist women.

Women in Community Work, Community Work for Women

Women have and continue to play an active role in community work, often making up the majority of organizations' membership (Gouin 2009; Kruzynski, 2004; Naples, 1998). This also applies to Black women (see Bentley, 1982; Gilkes, 1994; Robnett, 1996, 1997; Williams, 1997) and to La Maison d'Haïti (Paul, 1992; Sanders, 2013, 2016). In the context of the United States, Gilkes (1994) speaks of African American women's creative role in sustaining institutions' organizing strategies and ethics by working simultaneously for their community's survival and for social change. Through this, women "work for the community that they themselves re-create and sustain, a mutually reinforcing process" (p. 230). This process is what happened through the

circulation of Black women between the constellation of institutions in Little Burgundy in the early 20th century. It also sustained the development of La Maison d'Haïti and the community of activists around it as women were present at all levels of the organization. This work, in turn, deeply influenced their personal lives.

If the photographs – which I will discuss further in the chapter – give us glimpses into their significant presence over the years, a look through the administrative documents such as annual and program reports, funding applications and correspondence allow us to understand the various roles women held over time, the actions they undertook, and the ways programs catered to their needs. Women have held almost every position in the organizational chart and have been involved in every realm of activity: whether as board members; directors; employees in different programs; guests for special activities; volunteers; participants in activities; mothers of participants; representatives of the organization in coalitions or other groups; spokespeople for causes and campaigns, and much more. This has also influenced the evolution of women's programs over the years, based on an evolving understanding of women's needs.

Collins (1991) refers to women activists involved in community work as 'community othermothers' while Naples (1992) speaks of 'activist mothering' to refer to the various actions undertaken by women to care for their children's and their community's needs as part of their broader activism. A variety of records allow us to see what needs and challenges women identified and attempted to tackle: from posters of activities and of information sessions; to program documents such as funding applications; activity calendars, and reports; promotional documents; correspondence with other groups; folders on documentation pertaining to legislation affecting women's lives etc. For example, the posters of the first information sessions done in collaboration with RAFA in the mid-70s show the different subjects discussed, which Adeline



Figure 5.8 Activity poster, RAFA (1975)

observed were often questions that preoccupied women. Subjects spanned from children's educational problems to the role of Haitian women in the economy, their struggle for freedom and the challenges they faced as immigrants. They also addressed the gendered nature of labour, such as in relation to tasks deemed to be 'feminine' (see Figure 5.8). Folders from RAFA (mid-1970s); and Nègès Vanyan (late 1970s), containing notes and meeting minutes; correspondence; reports of activities; promotional and informational

documents as well as publications show the overlap of the political and community work of women in these groups as well as the overlap of both groups with the organization. The extensive program documents from Fanm Vlé Palé and CAFAHM illustrate the evolution of both programs' activities over the years. Other women's programs were also created in the 1990s and 2000s and continued to be centred around women's needs, rights, education, socio-economic conditions, the challenges they and their families faced, gender-based violence, and so on. Some activities aimed to create a network of support around some of the most vulnerable women of the community, such as young mothers. Records also show how women advocated to ensure their voices were heard when issues related to immigrant and Black women were addressed by the government, and to raise issues specific to immigrant and Black women in wider women's movement.

Fostering Collaborations across Political Differences

Charles notes that “the gendering of state violence under the Duvalier regime ... and the construction of gender struggles with the massive migration ... to North America” led to the emergence of new forms of mobilizations by Haitian women in Haiti and abroad (1995, pp. 136-137). For women around La Maison d’Haïti, these mobilizations entailed a wide array of political collaboration through which women’s politics, including feminism, were articulated and evolved over time (see Sanders, 2013).

In her research on Haitian women’s transnational activism, Grace Sanders found that women who organized in and around La Maison d’Haïti “negotiated their women-centred consciousness and transnational feminism” through their collective work (2016, p. 373). They embodied and adhered to different political and ideological positions. Though one of the main points of convergence between Haitian women activists in the city was the anti-Duvalier struggle, the priorities, visions and strategies varied. Some were more focused on the challenges faced by Haitian women in Montreal and were very critical of the sexism encountered in anti-Duvalier groups (see Sanders, 2013; Rateau, 2009; Mills, 2016) while others saw the struggle against Duvalier as the way to eventually change gender-relations as captured by Adeline’s comment

Les femmes ici [...] qui se
définissaient comme féministes, les
femmes haïtiennes ...elles n’étaient
pas tout à fait sur nos positions parce
qu’elles disaient que même quand
quelqu’un se prétend révolutionnaire

[The women here [...] who defined
themselves as feminists, Haitian
women ... they were not entirely on
our positions because they said that
even when someone claims to be
revolutionary or socialist or is a

ou socialiste ou est communiste ...ce n'est pas un brevet ... pour n'être pas machiste [...] elles mettaient un très fort accent sur les relations interpersonnelles [...] maintenant je suis plus, je suis féministe, mais ... à cette époque-là, on voyait véritablement la dictature comme un obstacle [...] et on pensait que la lutte des femmes n'avancerait pas dans ces conditions, donc c'était deux éclairages différents, deux priorités différentes [...] personnellement je suis arrivée à m'intéresser à la question des luttes de femmes par le biais de la lutte démocratique, la lutte pour le changement des, de régime.

communist ... it is not is not a proof... for not being a macho [...] they put a very strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships [...] now I am more, I am a feminist, but... at that time, we really saw the dictatorship as an obstacle [...] and we thought that the struggle of women would not advance under these conditions, so it was two different angles, two different priorities [...] personally I got to be interested in the question of the struggles for women through the democratic struggle, the struggle to change the regime.]

Different positions did not stop women from collaborating together for special occasions – though it certainly resulted in tensions, disagreements and conflicts sometimes – nor with other women's groups, which in turn influenced activists' politics and feminism. Collaborations happened for activities, projects, conferences, specific causes or campaigns. For example, groups collaborated for two conferences by, for, and on Haitian women entitled *Colloque des Femmes*

Haïtiennes in 1983 and 1984, as can be seen in folders with the conference programs and promotion documents. Though memberships overlapped, La Maison d'Haïti officially collaborated for special activities for women with RAFA and then Nègès Vanyan. This formal 'separation' of entities comes from organizing strategies that rely on various groups which can then put forth different priorities and play different roles, as Adeline explained in her interview. Part of the working folders of Nègès Vanyan are nonetheless in La Maison d'Haïti's archive and contain meeting minutes, internal notes, posters and summaries of activities (including those developed with La Maison d'Haïti and those organized independently), correspondence, etc.

Adeline also noted that because of the importance of solidarity work with other women, since the beginning of the organization this work "avait déjà beaucoup de tentacules dans le milieu," activism related to women had a lot of 'tentacles' in various activist circles. For Sanders (2013), the attempts of Montreal Haitian women activists to insert themselves in as many groups as possible to further the anti-Duvalier struggles was core to their Haitian feminism. The tentacles Adeline refers to are in essence the connections to women's groups or movements such as Black women's organization like the National Congress of Black women; Quebec women's groups like the Fédération des femmes du Québec; other Haitian women groups in Montreal such as Point de Ralliement des Femmes Haïtiennes and RIIAH; Anti-Duvalier women's groups and committees such as the Comité de Femmes Haïtiennes pour la défense de Marie-France Claude which advocated for the release of political prisoners in Haiti; immigrant women's groups such as the Collectif des femmes immigrantes de Montréal and the Comité Femme de Saint-Michel; women's group in Haiti such as Fanm Ayisien En Nou Maché; international women's organization such as the Fédération démocratique internationale des femmes and much more. Records show the actions undertaken whether sporadic or for more long-term organizing.

Black Women's Writing

Though the participation of Black women activists and thinkers was important in the publications by Montreal Black groups in the 1960s and 1970s, “one often has to look beyond the front page and the editorial section to find their voices in print” (Hébert, 2015, p. 28). If one starts to look into different types of written documents in community groups, I suspect women’s writing is easier to trace. Records in La Maison d’Haïti archives show that alongside women’s labour and politics, their written words were essential to the knowledge produced by the organization. As Adeline remarked, women write life, “Les femmes écrivent la vie!” and through their activism, they wrote across formats and subjects. Their contributions can be read in formal publications such as the newsletters; public inquiry briefs, public statements, or booklets like *Femmes Haïtiennes* and *Fanm Poto Mitan* (see Figures 5.9 and 5.10).

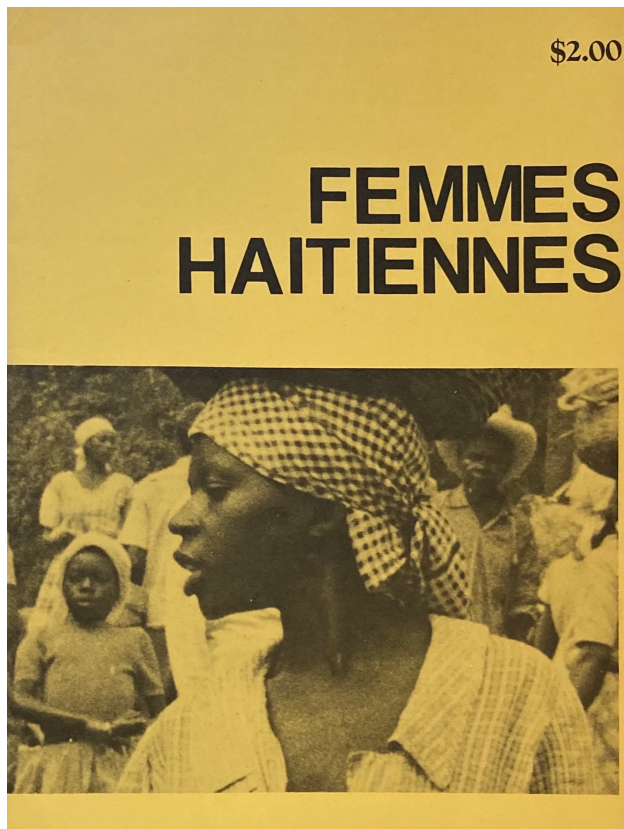


Figure 5.9 Booklet cover, *Femmes Haïtiennes* (1976)

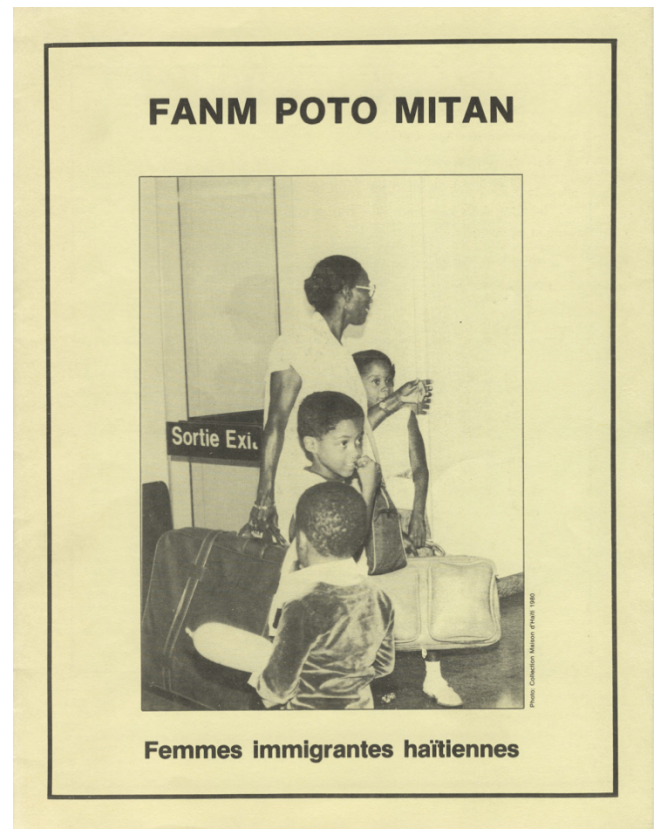


Figure 5.10 Booklet cover, *Fanm Poto Mitan* (1982)

Femmes Haïtiennes contains articles about Haitian women's struggles, their lived conditions in Haiti and abroad. Adeline mainly coordinated the preparation of the publication and to do so:

Je me suis adressée à des gens aussi
compétents... qui pouvaient aider
vraiment à faire un dossier sur Haïti
mais l'orientation était... femme et
démocratie ... la lutte pour la
démocratie, la lutte contre la
dictature. Mais sans insister sur telle,
telle idéologie seulement c'était clair
que la première rencontre à Berlin,
était une rencontre organisée par le
camp socialiste.

[I approached people that were
competent ... who could really help
to produce a file on Haiti. The
orientation was ... woman and
democracy ... the fight for
democracy, the fight against the
dictatorship. But without insisting on
this or that ideology, though it was
clear that the first meeting in Berlin
was a meeting organized by the
socialist camp.]

Though the publication was first produced for the socialist meeting in Berlin, not all authors were necessarily part of Haitian left parties but they collaborated nonetheless. Pedagogical materials were also mainly authored collectively by women. Literacy manuals and publications like *Ti Pye Zoranj*, *Femmes Haïtiennes* and *Fanm Poto Mitan* are particularly important because in addition to containing Black women's writing, they also showcase the extent of their collective work. Feminist and women's organizing is often about sharing voice and power (Naples, 1998), creating a dialogue, something all the women activists interviewed mentioned as important for their work. Documents like *Fanm Poto Mitan* as well as a study on illiterate women's learning abilities explicitly favour giving voice as part of a wider dialogue between

women (La Maison d'Haïti, n.d.). The latter is part of various studies done over the years, about and by Haitian women. In 1982 another study was produced on violence against Haitian women (Dugé, 1982). This dialogue is also demonstrated through the presence of correspondence with and writings from activists and groups in the diaspora and in Haiti such as with Kay Fanm, a grassroots women's organization, illustrating the transnational circulation of knowledge between Haitian women activists.

The Archive of a Black Diasporic Community

In addition to giving us insights into Black diasporic activism, part of what emerges from the analysis of the archive is that this activism *is* ultimately what made this community.

Patterson and Kelley (2000) remind us that beyond a metaphor, diaspora is a lived condition, which is experienced within a global system of racialized and gendered hierarchies. Those hierarchies are constituted differently within national boundaries and along legal, cultural, economic, and social lines as well as imperial lines related to international and transnational modes of production. They impact members of diasporic communities in different ways, leading to connections and disconnections, similarities and differences, between community members. These are constantly negotiated and articulated, something that also shapes collectivities. Through these negotiations, diaspora is constantly made and remade, mutable and evolving. It is a process unto its own. For Edwards (2009), the relations and practices of Black diasporic communities make them and allow the negotiations of distinctions and resemblances. Black diasporic relations and identities are built through shared practices. He found that Black writers during the 1920s and 1930s forged a Black diasporic community across the Atlantic by reading each other, translating each other's work, and corresponding. Black artists weaved relations and community through their literary practice. Alain Saint-Victor (2017) also found that a broad

sense of community emerged between different groups of Haitian immigrants over time in Quebec through the struggles they waged.

Through the Haitian living cultural archive, the transnational archive, the archive of resistance, and the Haitian women activists' archive, the community of records illuminates how the shared praxis of activism forged a Black diasporic community around La Maison d'Haïti in five ways.

1. Activism was a complex, and at times messy and conflictive *collective process* underlined by practices that were also influenced by dynamics of power.
2. Through the constant adjustments and readjustments it demanded, the *politics* and *identities* of the community were constantly *negotiated and evolving*.
3. Activism directly stemmed from and addressed the social, political and material *conditions* of people's lives.
4. Activism forged and sustained the *set of relations* at the heart of the community.
5. Ultimately, it was also how the project of *diasporic homemaking* was realized.

A Complex Collective Process: Practices and Power

Activism is imperfect. It is, after all a human practice, a fluid process that is always in the making. It can be a source of joy as much as a source of conflicts and challenges, as various documents of the archive shed light on.

Williams and Wallach (2011) observed of the African National Congress [ANC] archives in South Africa, that while they showcased a monumental struggle and victory against adversity, and a vision for political freedom, they also showcased the mundane, daily administrative tasks, alongside the “minutia of polemics” and internal conflicts that are part of every collective effort (p. 328). La Maison d'Haïti's archives also reveal failures, tensions, conflicts, and obstacles that

emerge from organizing. For instance, in internal documents and correspondence conflicts of different nature such as interpersonal and work-related, can be read such as in the Nègès Vanyan and CAFHAM folders, in correspondence folders, in internal staff documents and meeting minutes, and so on. Over time, conflicts and tensions arose because of multiple reasons, inside the centre as well as with other groups.

People and groups disagreed on strategies to adopt such as in the case of the anti-Duvalier struggles or when groups came together to address specific causes. People's politics and political affiliations were also causes of disagreements. Though they collaborated in multiple instances and even founded the CHOIS together, members the BCHM and La Maison d'Haïti didn't always agree on political orientations nor how to go about collective actions. At La Maison d'Haïti itself, the fact that many people involved part of the PUCH might have deterred others to get involved. Though many inside the center were similarly politically inclined, not all were: some even made it a point in the interviews to reaffirm that they were not affiliated to any political parties nor political ideologies. In the mid 1980s, the increasing number of Haitian community organizations and groups in Montreal also meant that there were increasingly diverse views, orientations and ways of doing, which sometimes created obstacles to collective actions and concertation (La Maison d'Haïti Inc., c. 1985). Organizations and individuals at times even retracted from collective efforts to affirm their divergence of opinions (Gresseau, 1985, September 30). For instance, in the early 1980s, Radio Centre-Ville requested that the La Voix d'Haïti and Combo radio show be detached from La Maison d'Haïti and be managed by a wider committee involving different Haitian groups; decision with which the organization agreed. In the mid-1980s, however multiple tensions related to, amongst other reasons, the leadership, orientations and content of the shows, and to the attempt by some team members to dismiss and

take over the youth radio show Combo, erupted. This led to a tense situation that lasted for months and caused the youth team to resign because they felt the integrity and autonomy of their work was being compromised. The dissolution of committees, the departure of employees or the failed attempts at organizing certain projects or events also speak to the challenges or even sometimes of the impossibility of reaching compromises.

In certain cases, personal motivations and interests varied as well. This prompted, at one point, the board's president to denounce people who he deemed had gotten involved in the organization in the past to take advantage of community work for personal and career advancement, cultivating what he called their 'parasitism' and 'laziness', and gain access to government officials providing grants (La Maison d'Haïti, 1985, Janvier). However founded the critique was, it does speak to the different motivations and interests that can drive even activists and community workers. Personality conflicts also occurred, with some people taking up more space and making their voices and opinions heard over others. Céradiou recalled that though he and Ernst Gresseau were very good friends, they often argued while talking about strategies to adopt: Gresseau was a tremendous and devoted organizer, with a strong personality. Personal ambitions also led to tensions around formal leadership, again between individuals or groups, inside and outside La Maison d'Haïti. While some activists prefer remaining in the background, others embrace the positions of 'community spokesperson,' though it rarely goes unchallenged. In some cases, tensions related to questions of representation arose, especially with regards to inter-group collaborations: who could speak on behalf of the 'community,' under what circumstances and on what subjects. This played out slightly differently inside La Maison d'Haïti because unlike for other centers, there was no specific official spokesperson for the center. However, as the programs and projects evolved and formalized, especially as they received

funding, they increasingly had to have an official ‘leader’ which created more potential for tensions around such questions in a group that valued collective work over individual one.

Over time, conflicts also resulted from misunderstandings, misperceptions or misinformation. For instance, at one point La Maison d’Haïti emitted a public statement demanding retraction from another community publication which had announced that the organization had received funding in the amount of a million dollars, implying that the money was misused, whereas the actual grant they referred to totalled 1383.00\$ (c. 1981). Sometimes, the lack of circulation or of documentation of information led to tense situations and misunderstandings. During the mobilization around the taxi industry crisis, some meeting minutes and summaries of activities of the coalition of Haitian organizations working with the Haitian taxi driver association, the Association haïtienne des travailleurs du taxi, omitted the participation of La Maison d’Haïti to certain collective actions and to an ad hoc committee put in place. This prompted an inquiry from La Maison d’Haïti’s board’s president to the association, asking if the omission actually had been purposeful (Gresseau, 1982, July 20), to which the association answered that it hadn’t but that it instead illustrated some of the administrative challenges of organizing with multiple groups (Jean-Baptiste, 1982, July 26). The allocation of funding and resources, and even the *perceived* allocation of funding became a source of clashes on occasions. For instance, while they organized together under the umbrella of the CHOIS, a controversy arose in the early 1980s around the nomination of an employee of La Maison d’Haïti to a position in relation to elementary schools in Saint-Michel. Because the mission of the CHOIS was focused on addressing school related issues, some members deemed that the nomination should have gone through it to put forth the umbrella organization versus a single organization. Some members also feared that this nomination would short-circuit attempts of the

CHOIS at obtaining more funding. But in addition, what was partly at stake was the fear that this could undermine the perception of community unity, of common front, that the CHOIS wanted to put forth when facing school and governmental authorities. Though the disagreement on the nomination persisted, all parties involved nonetheless agreed that the perception of unity had to remain to advance the cause they all believed in. Within the centre, intergenerational divergences and interests also sometimes led to difficulties.

All these examples highlight that finding common ground doesn't always happen even when people are committed to same causes and that power impacts communities. The practices that make communities are always negotiated and power often influences the terms and outcomes of the negotiations. Whether it was power through access to resources, power of authority because of formal position or affiliations, power because of interpersonal relations and factors (including things as social class in Haiti and affective and intimate factors), power because of the capacity to make one's voice heard louder (because of personality), and so on, power was both affirmed and contested *through* activism. This also influenced the process of community building, thus shaping the community itself.

On the other hand, the folders of working documents and proceedings of strategic planning meetings over time illustrate the collective attempts to address challenges and orient efforts to make things better, to address some of the conflicts, failures, and obstacles. In the various annual and program reports, board and staff meetings minutes, and internal notes, there are numerous mentions of organizational and managerial shortcomings to be improved. Though the initiation and autonomy of programs was encouraged, it led over time to difficulties in the coordination and articulation of activities, something that was reiterated in various reports. These led to challenges for the management and development of programs as well. For their 10th year

anniversary, the organization conducted an assessment of shortcomings to be addressed and planned a ‘mini-congress’ to determine strategic actions and orientations (La Maison d’Haïti, 1982). It was noted that though the management and administration methods had been improved in the prior year, it still was necessary to completely revise them to ensure a more thorough and detailed planning of activities. A new coordination system was also needed as well as the establishment of special intervention committees on the main areas of activities and advocacy. Planning and programming had to better grasp and prioritize the most urgent needs of the community and continue to attempt engaging the broadest numbers possible. The recruitment of new members was once again reiterated, highlighting the challenges of widening the base of activists involved. Once again, this shows the evolution and transformation of practice which parallels that of the community itself.

Negotiating Divergences and Similarities: Community Identities and Politics

Collaborations with Black and other groups were important for La Maison d’Haïti since its inception. It was in line with a Black political project going back to the Haitian Revolution. But the similarities and differences between the realities of Black communities – Edwards’ *décalage* – were nonetheless always recognized and were negotiated, challenged, confirmed, and sometimes refuted through activism. As early as 1973 the organization cautioned that

Étant donné nos problèmes communs	[Given our common problems of a
de nature très complexe et profonde	very complex and profound nature
(politiques, sociaux, économiques et	(political, social, economic and
culturels) nous ne pouvons pas	cultural) we cannot subscribe to a
souscrire à une collaboration	purely “performative” collaboration,
purement “folklorique,” persuadé	convinced that we are that the

que nous sommes que la “belle époque” du simple “Black is beautiful” est dépassé, d’autant plus que toute démarche basé presque exclusivement sur la couleur ne saurait être durable et se ferait nécessairement aux dépens des groupes que nous prétendons représenter de part et d’autre.

(Maison d’Haïti, 1973, September, p. 8).

“golden era” of the simple “Black is beautiful” is out of date, especially since any approach based almost exclusively on skin colour cannot be sustainable and would necessarily be at the expense of the groups we claim to represent from all sides.]

Blackness was to be a common political project based on similar experiences, but never based on a reified and essentialized identity based solely on phenotypic traits. Blackness was not to be just a shared racial identity but a much more complex political identity, encompassing and taking into account a variety of national, linguistic, historical, cultural differences and so on. Collective actions were ways to connect to other Black groups to move forward on common issues often related to racial discrimination, as well as to assert different Black identities. Labelle and Therrien (1992) noted for instance, that though Black francophone and anglophone groups did come together to advocate for their rights based on a shared ‘racialized identity associated with an ideology of resistance’, contradictions sometimes erupted due to these communities’ different linguistic practices and *experiences* in the context of broader political tensions related to language in the province. Activism was thus a medium through which Blackness was asserted, but also negotiated and complexified.

Divergences also existed within the Haitian community: though on one hand national identity bounded people, on the other hand political or religious identities and orientations, and socioeconomic and class backgrounds – amongst others – often led to differing perspectives on how to apprehend and tackle the challenges faced by community members which caused some of the conflicts explained above. It also led to different political identities. In studies on Haitian community leaders (Labelle & Therrien, 1992) and on the Haitian community sector in Quebec (Boucard, 2001) researchers found that even though groups all asserted a strong sense of shared national identity and often identified and addressed similar themes, their approaches and politics varied, and sometimes even contradicted one another. The sense of identification and affiliation with other Black communities also varied between groups. For Jadotte (1977) class differences amongst activists and amongst community members were the main cause of divergences and contradictions. Sometimes, through the work done to address certain issues, differences were also unwittingly reinforced. For instance, while Black community groups systematically denounced the profiling and stigmatization of young Black men and their association with delinquency in public discourses, this association was sometimes also reproduced by adult activists themselves through their attempts to organize around youth. The perception of youths by older generations as potential agitators or potential delinquents, at risk of developing deviant behavior is a phenomenon that exists beyond Black communities (see Boudreau, Liguori & Seguin-Manere, 2015; Jordan, 2017) as was also noted by a committee of Black community workers of which La Maison d'Haïti was a part of (Comité ad hoc: Jeunesse, c. 1989), and speaks more broadly to the intergenerational negotiation of collective identities.

Politics also evolve through time, as they are articulated in relation to other factors and through activist work. As explained before, the women's programs' documents attest to a

commitment to women's needs, rights and well-being since the mid-1970s. They also trace the evolution of the feminist values and practices inside the centre over the years and through the work women did. In the interviews, Marjorie, Adeline and Elizabeth explicitly referred to themselves or their work as feminist but the mention of feminism is not necessarily present in the first documents produced by the organization nor the programs. It emerges over the years, paralleling women's emergent feminist consciousness (see Sanders 2013), described by Adeline's comments earlier. Feminist politics and organizing should be understood as plural, dynamic and nuanced (Mizrahi, & Greenawalt, 2017). Though they might be read as feminist, not all Black women's activism is understood by the women themselves as such (Hampton & Rochat, 2019) and not all women's activism is about gender equality. Writing about feminism in the community context always runs the risk of labeling actions or convictions with words that people themselves might not have used to describe their own actions (Gluck, Blackwell, Cotrell, & Harper, 1998). I thus find it fruitful to approach women's and feminist activism through their practices understanding that feminist practices encompass "women's leadership, community building, political organizing or any other activity used to better their lives and that of those around them" (Ricci, 2016, p. 7). The group's feminism was also grounded in a *Haitian* feminist and activist legacy as illustrated by the folders of documents on the Haitian feminist movement, on historical struggles waged by Haitian women, and copies of publications by Haitian women such as a copy of a book published by the Ligue féminine d'action sociale (1953). Though the women activists from the 1970s critiqued the Ligue as bourgeois charity and distanced themselves from their work, the presence of a copy of the book nonetheless shows awareness of the history of Haitian women organizing. As women assumed formal leadership in the

organization and became more explicitly feminist, so did the institution. This had implications even for management, as Marjorie explains:

C'est une maison qui est gérée par des femmes depuis des années et cette façon féministe de gérer, qui est complètement différente de la manière que les hommes ont de gérer un organisme, et j'y tiens... vous pouvez penser ce que vous voulez de ma façon de gérer...elle est féministe... C'est pas évident parce que ... l'attitude que tu as face à l'autorité, face à ceci, face à cela, les gens peuvent le prendre pour de la faiblesse, ou pour de l'incompétence ou je ne sais quoi mais c'est toi qui a décidé d'être comme ça, parce que t'es une féministe parce que c'est comme ça que tu veux le gérer, comme une femme.

[This is a house which has been run by women for years and this feminist way of running it, which is completely different from the way men run an organization, well I hold on to it... you can think what you want of my way of managing ...its feminist... It's not easy because ... the attitude you have towards authority, facing this, facing that, people can take it for weakness, or for incompetence or I don't know what, but it was you who decided to be like this, because you're a feminist, because that's how you want to manage it, like a woman.]

Her choice of words to refer to 'this house' is also not coincidental: women around La Maison d'Haïti, alongside other activists aimed to build a community home, something I will go back to. It is thus through collaborations with different groups, building on knowledge from other

feminists and because of a commitment to better the lives of women, that the feminist politics and identities of activists at La Maison d'Haïti were articulated over time.

Lived Conditions of a Diaspora.

The importance of the extent of the archive of resistance is no coincidence. The resistance to racism, sexism, state violence and exploitation waged by members of La Maison d'Haïti stems from their lived experiences, and those of their fellow community members. They stem from the lived conditions of diaspora.

“Exposure to racism and discrimination is part of the everyday life of many immigrants” (Falicov, 2007, p. 166). Though it is a delicate topic I cannot do justice to it here, something is to be said about the accumulation of collective trauma, pain and struggles that inhabit this archive and, most importantly, this diasporic community. Other scholars have explored the intimate and difficult relationships between trauma and violence documented in archives and their impact on collective memories and justice (see Cvetkovich, 2003; Solis, 2018; Strauss, 2015; Sutherland, 2017; Weld, 2014). Multiple records document the racist violence perpetrated against many members of the community and against La Maison d'Haïti itself. During the mid-1980s, the organization was victim of repeated acts of vandalism following a series of racist phone threats (Gresseau, 1986, June 11; Gresseau, 1986, July 11). In 1984 and 1985 the organization, alongside other groups in the Saint-Michel area, waged a campaign against anti-Haitian racist graffiti that had been done in bus stops and in front of Haitian-owned businesses (La Maison d'Haïti, 1985) and in the mid-1990s, they intervened in a public housing complex to address the racism faced by Haitian elders living there (La Maison d'Haïti, 1995, October 26). The profiling and criminalization of Black youth, which was often condemned by community groups, illustrates the burden of the stigmatization they lived both as youth *and* as Black community

members (Comité ad hoc: Jeuness, c. 1989). All this shows the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism and anti-Haitian racism in the lives of all community members.

Duvalier's relentless attacks and tactics to silence people and political opposition had pervasive effects on people's living conditions, whether in Haiti or abroad. The following quotes by Jacquelin and Marie-Andrée show how the regime even silenced people's mere existence:

Quand tu es en prison pour activités politiques et surtout accusé de communiste, en Haïti [sous Duvalier] tu es quelqu'un de mort. On n'a même pas le droit de demander pour toi. (Jacquelin)	[When you are in prison for political activities and especially accused of being a communist in Haiti [under Duvalier] you are dead. We can't even ask about you.]
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On avait perdu contact de Céradieu. ...on a appris qu'il était en prison puis là maintenant, tu sais c'est quoi, Haïti du... temps de Duvalier, on pourrait même pas citer le nom de Céradieu à la maison. (Marie-Andrée).	[We had lost contact with Céradieu. When my mother asked for Céradieu and we learned that he was in prison, now you know how Haiti was during Duvalier's time, we could not even mention the name of Céradieu at home.]
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Adeline recalled that in Haiti, as she witnessed hints of her husband's clandestine activities, she quickly forced herself to forget as a way to shield herself and her family. To protect themselves, their families, acquaintances and other activists, people remained silent about their activities during, and even after the regime, in Haiti and abroad. This bears similarities to what Daniel

Wilkinson (2004) found in Guatemala where people lived 36 years of military dictatorship: people's denial or silencing of the violence that had been endured by them, their families and communities was not a way to refute its existence but a way to survive it. Denials and silences during the war had allowed people to live through the terror that had been unleashed upon them, through the fear that they experienced. These denials and silences continued after the dictatorial regime ended, what he perceived as a way to cope with the memories of violence people still lived with. Duvalier's violence directly affected people's lives in Montreal, impacting what people could or could not do even in exile. The stigma attached to the left in Haiti remained and people involved at La Maison d'Haïti could not always speak openly about their political affiliations even in Quebec, though in the province Marxist activists were active and visible during that period, and Marxist politics permeated community organizing (see Doré & Plamondon, 1980; Lagüe, 1979; Lamoureux, 2008; Warren, 2007). Suzie remembers that they encountered problems precisely because

certaines personnes qui étaient dans	[some people who were in another
une autre branche qui disaient 'on	branch said 'we have nothing to do
n'a rien à voir avec les gens de La	with the people of La Maison d'Haïti
Maison d'Haïti c'est des	they are 'coooooomuuuuuunists'!']...
'commiiiiinistes'!	

Céradiou remembered that though many activists affiliated to left parties and groups were present at La Maison d'Haïti, they organized 'in the background' so that the organization would not be labelled as 'communist' by other Haitian community members. This self-imposed withdrawal was due to surveillance by the regime which served to instil terror in Canada because people feared reprisals on family members still living in Haiti. Jacquelin remembers that

le pouvoir duvaliériste ... nous avait
à l'œil, c'est-à-dire qu'il y avait des
gens qui probablement avait la tâche
d'écouter [l'émission de radio la
Voix d'Haïti] et puis de rapporter.

[the Duvalierists ... kept an eye on
us, there were probably people who
were tasked with listening to [the
Voix d'Haïti radio show] and report
back on it.]

Though this didn't stop people from speaking out, they often did so anonymously, whether on the radio or for written publications, prompting Williams to qualify some of the latter as underground publications (2006, p. 8). This also explains why many authors of the archival records remain unidentifiable.

Surveillance was, however, not the monopoly of the regime. Life in Canada also brought on its own forms of state repression, including through surveillance, stigmatisation and discrimination as I've explained above. State policing and surveillance of dissent, including of Black community members in Canada (see Austin, 2013; Maynard, 2017), has a long history (see Choudry, 2019) and it also affected activists at La Maison d'Haïti. As Jacquelin observed about working for justice and international solidarity through the MQCR, when

on travaille sur des questions comme
ça ici, automatiquement ... tu es dans
le viseur, ou bien de la GRC ou bien
des Renseignements Canadiens pour
toute sorte de raisons.

[you work on issues like that here,
automatically... you are targeted,
either by the RCMP or Canadian
intelligence for all kinds of reasons.]

For instance, he believes the MQRC's work with South Africa's ANC – then labeled by some states as a terrorist group – caused activists to be under surveillance. Adeline is certain that the failed attempts to regularize her family's status for 17 years were due to her husband's political

involvement and communist affiliations, which probably led to his identification by Canadian and U.S. authorities.

Finally, lived conditions of community members also varied depending on the legal status – or lack thereof – of community members. This also has an impact on the archive, especially as it relates to who is formally ‘documented’ in it or not. The destruction of confidential documents of some participants for their own protection makes it that their presence at the centre is not as easily traceable as that of some of the activists, employees or other participants. It does not mean however that their existence or lives are ‘undocumented’: they simply exist in different archives, for instance family archives. It also doesn’t mean that they didn’t struggle to better their living conditions and address the injustices they faced. Certain forms of activism are more visible than others, more easily documented than others. Though they might be absent from the community archive, their actions and experiences are no less part of what forged the community. It is a reminder that lived conditions also influence how people’s lives, actions and knowledge are documented and preserved, pushing us to truly reflect on the biases of all archives, even community-based ones.

Forging and Sustaining Relationships

“[M]uch of community organizing ... is the arduous process of building relationships one at a time” (O Donnell, 1995, p. 12). The transnational archive and the Haitian women activists’ archive give glimpses into the set of relations that make up this diasporic community and that were built through diasporic activism.

Building a community fabric. Chamberlain (2009) observes that in the Caribbean, families are constituted by complex and complicated networks of kinship which extend blood lineage. The recreation of an extended community network as an alternative extended kinship

and family structure in Montreal was at the heart of organizing at La Maison d'Haïti, as it is for other Caribbean diasporic communities (see Camp, 2009, 2012). Documents from programs like TPZM and NGPT highlight the network's intergenerational nature: names of organizers and members come up over time in the different administrative documents alongside their children's names, for example in attendance lists. NGPT itself explicitly aimed to foster connections and relationships between youth, and with organizers (La Maison d'Haïti, 1976, Nov.). The efforts to build community around newcomers can also be seen in minute details. For instance, in a folder containing the activity report presented to the executive committee in 1978, a draft calendar of monthly activities shows the inscription "Bienvenue Famille Victomé" for October 22, referring to an activity to welcome the family reaching Montreal. As Jacquelin explained to me, the family came from a place called Cazale a region which was brutally repressed and attacked by the Duvalier regime in 1969. The Victomé family was one of the victims of that repression. Knowledge of the family's arrival, of the hardships they had endured in Haiti, and the welcome celebration planned for them shows the energies deployed to weave a community fabric around them. The newsletter for literacy learners in the late 1980s also included welcome messages to new learners, birthday wishes, condolences etc., illustrating the active process of relationship building.

One of the main goals of community organizing is to forge relationships and consequently, to build interpersonal constellations. These are not only important outcomes, but they also entice and fuel diasporic activism. There is a reciprocity between the community fabric woven through people's relationships and activism since being strongly embedded in a group, in turn, entices activism (Klandermans, Van der Toorn, Van Stekelenburg, 2008). As Marjorie recalled, being involved in the organization eventually strengthened the bonds people had as

acquaintances, friends, neighbours, comrades or extended family. Transnational extended family structures are core to Haitian diasporic communities (Laguerre, 1998; Larose, 1984; Pierre-Louis, 2002). Friendships can play a role in inciting community organizing (Kruzynski, 2004). It is then logical that people's personal transnational networks also influenced their activism and vice versa. The prior connections some people had in Haiti certainly helped them get involved at La Maison d'Haïti. For instance, networks of the PUCH welcomed people to Canada and introduced them to new activists who got them involved in community organizing here. But activists can also foster those connections through their work, such as Adeline who was identified by many as someone who enabled personal encounters and helped build relationships. Many scholars have observed that women often bridge organizations and constituents (Kruzynski, 2004; Mizrahi, 2007) what Robnett (1996, 1997) has called "centre-women" or "bridge leaders." Such was the case in, and between, the first Black community institutions in Montreal. Collaboration stemming from connections between African American and Haitian women was also important for mobilizations against the U.S. occupation of Haiti (see Plummer, 1982; Sanders, 2013). When people bond to others, they are more likely to engage in activism, and Black women frequently instigate and facilitate these bonds. The community fabric was thus woven through activism and invigorated it.

When we recount social or political movements, we often downplay the emotions people felt as they organized. But part of what binds people and even helps them overcome the challenges of organizing, is also the pleasure they derive from doing it collectively. Political views and involvement can also be about affect and love (Kelley, 2002) as well as pleasure and joy (Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012; Kruzynski, 2004; Thomas & Louis, 2013). These are part of the interpersonal relations that activists build through their work and for which community events

such as celebrations and outings are so important. Céradiou remembers that “Tout le monde était content de faire le travail, on aimait ce qu’on faisait” [Everyone was happy to do the work, we liked what we were doing]. His love of seeing people get together and learn together is what initially brought him to organizing. For Jacquelin, pleasure went hand in hand with his sense of commitment. A great sense of appreciation for people emanated from the interviews, whether they expressed it as a love of helping, a love of the human side of activism, of seeing people grow, learn, gain their autonomy, and achieve things, or of seeing people have fun together. This sustained long-term involvement:

Quand tu travailles dans un centre	[When you work in a community
communautaire il faut l’aimer pour le	centre, you have to love it to do it, I
faire, j’ai toujours dit ça, moi j’aime	always said that: I like it, I like
ça, j’aime travailler avec ces gens-là,	working with these people, I like to
j’aime ça aider, donc ça m’encourage	help, so it encourages me to stay.]
à rester. (Marie-Andrée)	

Even in the face of loss, exile, sacrifice, hurt, failures, conflicts and obstacles, pleasure, joy and love remained important part of activism, part of what bounded people to each other.

Photo as a social practice. One of the most beautiful set of records of the archive are the photographs. Their importance obviously rests in making visible this Black diasporic community, showing the life, activities, and members of the centre, but photography, in this case, is also a social diasporic practice unto itself which served to depict and sustain relationships.

The photos of the archive make visible the “invisible forms of labor — family labor, semiotic labor, individual and community labor” that are “necessary and essential practices of diasporic formation” (Campt, 2009, p. 83). For Raiford (2009, 2006), photography is a social

practice, essential for critical Black memory and the visualization of Blackness. Campt (2012) proposes that to analyze the photographic practices of Black diasporic communities and assess their historical significance, we must reflect on why photographs are taken; what they show beyond the visual aspect; how they register for the viewer on different levels; and how and for what purpose they are used.

La Maison d'Haïti's photos were taken by community members, for themselves. Like family photographs, they document and illustrate the connections people have to one another (see Campt, 2009, 2012). They render visible the construction of a community over time. Because of the presence of certain members over the years, we can see people grow together. Marjorie, Mireille, Elizabeth, Adeline, Céradieu, Marie-Andrée, Alix, Suzie (amongst others) can all be seen at different points in time in pictures, highlighting their presence in each other's lives over time. For example, Marjorie appears as a young mother, and animator in TPZM in the 1970s. Then as director of the programs, she can be seen in pictures with the literacy teachers and students in the 1980s. In the 1990s, she can be seen in the pictures marking the organization's 20th anniversary and in conferences organized at the centre. In the 2000s, she is still present whether in celebrations with the members and staff or activities such as press conferences. The folders and photographs of the tribute events for people who left the organization or passed away, and the children's birthday celebrations photos, reflect the collective celebrations of milestones. The photos tap into the social and affective registers of the community. One can see the pride of adults learning to read and write, taking class photos with words they wrote on the boards behind them. One can relate to the sadness expressed when lost loved ones are remembered in community events. Again, as for family photography, here photography "also functions as an expressive practice that creates the linkages and attachments it

depicts by visually and affectively suturing individuals to one another” (Campt, 2012, p. 48). The photos not only show community but are part of its making. Connected to shared memories and references, they are part of its community of records. The ‘affective sutures’ were evident during the collective interview, when the group went through the folders of images, and remembered events, moments, and people *together*. The photos also tell us about the diasporic community’s aspirations to create a space for itself through collective activities; to assert its rights through protests; to care for its children through programs and activities; to surround its elders who are present at community celebrations; and to support its adult learners, pictured in graduation celebrations.

The photos also fed into the diasporic activist practice in various ways. Photography “provides a means of challenging negative stereotypes and assumptions about Black people in ways that create a counterimage of who they are, as well as who they might be or become.” (Campt, 2012, p. 5). By producing and using its own visuals, the community asserted its right to self-representation, another way to produce its own knowledge about itself and resist racism. The photos served to reinforce a sense of collectivity and of history, allowing the community to picture and show itself as it desired. They were often used in different publications such as the newsletter or pedagogical material. They were displayed in events: in the photos of the centre’s 10th year celebrations, we can see boards of pictures retracing its first decade of activities.

Finally, as is the case with other types of photographs in Black diasporic communities, they display the ways people create relational networks across time, space and borders (Campt, 2012). Looking at all the different photos relationally we start to see the importance of circulation of the photos themselves and of people on those photos. Images depict, and are from, different places such as Haiti, the United States, and from Montreal. Some negatives of pictures

taken in Haiti were sent to be reprinted in Montreal and can be found in the archive. Some photos, such as children's school pictures, were also given to La Maison d'Haïti, and speak to the emotional bonds people made with one another and with the institution: you do not give photos of your children to just anyone. You share them with those you are close with, those you know also love your children. Their presence illustrates the sense of connectedness people felt. The production, circulation and preservation of photos was thus "a practice that facilitated linkage, affiliation, and intense affective attachments" (Campt, 2012, p. 179).

Women's friendships. If women's presence was key to community work, this work also had an important influence on various aspects of their lives, especially their relations to one another. Black women often view their personal, familial and community interests as compatible and integrated (Gilkes, 1994; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994). Relationship building is central to feminist organizing (Mizrahi & Greenawalt, 2017) and those relationships and the networks they create, in turn, are crucial for women's political work in general (Naples, 1998). As is the case with other Black women (see Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994; Mele, 2000) and other women activists (Kruzynski, 2004), connections and friendships developed through activism and provided ties and networks from which women drew support. While some knew each other before starting to organize together, one thing that emerges from the oral history records and certain documents, is the strength of the lasting bonds that women developed through working together. The ways women of La Maison d'Haïti talk about one another in the interviews and recount important milestones they passed through together paints a picture of intimacy and camaraderie. Marie-Andrée remembers spending the last hours before giving birth to her fourth daughter in the company of Marjorie and the then-director Célitard, at La Maison d'Haïti. Many women have seen each other children's grow up over the years and participated in what Suzie described as

true community education with regards to children's collective upbringing. Other milestones are also in the records, such as the celebrations of women's departure or retirement and the remembrance of fellow women activists who passed away.

Diasporic Community Homemaking

Campt (2009) speaks of diasporic homemaking, reminding us that diaspora is not an endless movement but also entails "modes of homing and dwelling" (p. 54). For Jara (2016), aesthetic plays a role in fashioning a place that feels like home for exile communities through things such as the sharing of food, celebration of cultural events, music, collective remembering, and political discussions. hooks (1990) observes that African Americans, historically,

believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension ...it was about the construction of a safe place where Black people could affirm one another and by doing so heal many of the wounds inflicted by racist domination. (p. 384)

Similarly, Andrews (2018) affirms that global struggles for Black liberation start at the local levels, in institutions and homes. Maroon communities were a form of diasporic homemaking.



Figure 5.11 La Maison d'Haïti, 7714 Lajeunesse St. (c. 1980)

The creation of a community home is an important outcome of diasporic activism. These community homes are what I call Black diasporic nodes. Illustrating the importance of homemaking is La Maison d'Haïti's name, which is not unintentional.

Maison in French is a house or a home.

In this case, it refers to a home. Like the NCC before it, or institutions founded by African and West Indian immigrants in London during the mid-20th century (see Matera, 2008), La Maison d’Haïti was a ‘home away from home’, centered around the sharing of culture, intellectual and political debates, and the recreation of a community fabric even before it had its own space. The Haitian living cultural archive, the transnational archive and the Haitian women activists’ archive illustrate that in various ways. Sanders (2013) observed of the women activists of La Maison d’Haïti that the creation of a home space that was safe for them and their children was key to their activism. For her, this “practice of preparing a communal gathering place was deeply rooted in the women’s history and sociocultural upbringing” (p. 372). Women aimed to create what she called a ‘diasporic lakou.’ In Haïti, a lakou is a shared community or family land, collectively owned and exploited to sustain the community. The photos and promotion documents of the various celebrations of La Maison d’Haïti itself – such as its 10th, 15th and 20th anniversaries – record how this Black diasporic home rooted itself and grew over time (see Figure 5.12).

Documents produced for each occasion retrace the centre’s history and activities, highlighting



how this Black home was built over time by becoming a place where people gathered, celebrated each other, and rallied forces when they had to struggle against hardships faced. Over the years, the organization also produced historical chronologies of its activities for its members, reminders of the history made collectively.

Figure 5.12 Pamphlet cover, 15-year celebration document (1987)

Diasporic memories. Memory is central to the experience of migration (Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004; Falicov, 2007) and to the forging of communities. As Campt observes

memory plays a central role in constituting diasporic identity and community....memory provides the source of the defining tension of diaspora and diasporic identity: the dynamic play of originary and imaginary homes, and the complex networks of relation forged across national, spatial, and temporal boundaries.” (2009, p. 101)

Multiple layers of memory form part of the community of records of La Maison d’Haïti: the memories that people brought with them from Haiti, and the ones that were created as this diasporic community was forged in Montreal.

Diasporic memories provide a sense of continuity through movement, through time, through different experiences and hardships and help disseminate senses of kinship and lineage that link Black experiences. Memories are integral to the narratives of diasporic communities (Bastian, 2014) and allow people to connect. For instance, as people organized carnivals, celebrations of Independence Day, plays for children based on folktales they had heard as children, their memories of Haiti fed their collective actions, providing people with a sense of home, of familiarity and of belonging. Memories were artifacts of knowledge of their own – intangible archival records – through which Haiti and senses of community and filiation were transmitted. These memories also entailed shared memories of political violence, as explained before. In this context, as in others (see Jara, 2016) collective memories strengthened the connections people had to one another. Jacquelin noted that even now, after decades, he sometimes meets people who recall how being welcomed by him in the organization made a difference for them:

Le fait de les recevoir ou bien d'être
reçu dans un centre où il y avait des
Haïtiens c'était déjà quelque chose
pour eux, tu vois.

[The fact of receiving them or them
being received in a centre where
there were Haitians was something
important for them, you see.]

Jacquelin's comments highlights the importance that shared knowledge and memories played for people who came to seek refuge at La Maison d'Haïti because precisely because they knew others there shared their knowledge and memories. But Jacquelin's story also speaks to another layer of diasporic memory that is integral to La Maison d'Haïti's community of records: those that were *made* in the context of Montreal and pertain to the formation of the community through activism. What people express to him when he meets them now, are the memories made in Montreal and not just those related to Haiti. Mary Chamberlain (2009) maintains that the collective and shared memories that sustain the Caribbean diaspora also relate to the "processes, adjustments, and negotiations of migrants, of the mobile and liminal worlds they inhabit, of the connections with and the longings for home" (p. 186). These layers of memories play a similar function than, for instance, the newsletter which back then transmitted information about Haiti and documented activism as it happened, and now provides an archival record of this activism. Memories helped connect people here after transnational migration by circulating knowledge from Haiti, and now create a connection through a common past outside of Haiti by circulating historical knowledge about migration.

Conclusion

La Maison d'Haïti's archives narrate the intricate work behind "the creation of psychic, symbolic, and material [diasporic] communities and home(s) in the sites of settlement" (Camp, 2009, p. 96). The Haitian living cultural archive, the transnational archive, the archive of

resistance and the Haitian women activists' archive show the makings of a community that was shaped by its activism. The ongoing process of collective actions; the negotiations of politics, practices and identities; the resistance to lived experiences of oppression and exploitation; the forging of relationships; and the creation of a diasporic home formed the diasporic community, and all happened because of the group's shared praxis. This praxis that brought people to La Maison d'Haïti, evolved over time and gave them a sense of collectivity, of common purposes as will now be explained.

Chapter 6. Building a Diasporic Community of Activists: Evolution of a Shared Praxis

Though a common Haitian identity certainly brought people together, as expressed in the following collective discussion excerpt, what really makes the group is their shared identity as Haitian *activists*. What makes them activists in the first place is that their convictions translated into concrete actions. It is in essence, their collective praxis. As all other praxes that form the Black radical tradition, this one was forged over time as this chapter retraces. Learning and community education were key in that process. The chapter first looks at how learning anchored in people's personal lives and experiences politicized them individually. The second section then explains the role that community education played for the group. Finally, the last section explores the main convictions that drove collective actions. Records of their own, the longer excerpts of the discussion weaved throughout the text illustrate the collective knowledge and memories that tie this community of memory together.

“We are activists”

Marjorie : Mais ce que je trouve, tu sais, comme tu dresses un portrait de nous comme étant des éducateurs, mais on est des militants.

Elizabeth : Oui! Là je me sens bien vraiment!!

Marjorie : On est des militants et c'est pour ça qu'on fait tout ça, mais ce qui nous a tenu ensemble, ce qui nous tient encore ensemble c'est nos convictions et le fait qu'on est des militants.

[Marjorie: But what I find, you know, you paint a picture of us as educators, but we are activists.

Elizabeth: Yes! There it is, now that's how I really feel !!

Marjorie: We are activists and that's why we do all that we do. But what kept us together, what still keeps us together are our convictions, and the fact that we are activists.

Mireille : Ce que tu as dit en, au début, début avant quand Marjorie n'était pas là, quand tu avais parlé de ce côté militantisme que nous avons. Et c'est ça.

Marjorie : Et c'est ça qui nous tient ensemble, parce que ça c'est plus fort que...

Elizabeth : Que tout!

Marjorie : Que tout, oui, oui.

Mireille : Parce que le côté, au point de vue de la justice, quand tu dis de justice, c'est parce que lié à ce côté militant chez nous.

Elizabeth : Il y a une question de convictions...

Marjorie : Et tu sais, tu peux avoir un désir de justice mais tu ne mets pas en action. La raison pour laquelle nous on est des militants c'est parce que ce désir là est pas resté théorique, il est dans l'action, oui on est dans l'action. Mais c'est ça que je dirais, en dehors du fait qu'on est des éducateurs, on est tout ça mais, et le miracle aussi d'être encore là!

Céradiou : Ah oui il y a ça aussi!

Elizabeth : Il y a ça aussi !!! C'est le miracle effectivement.

Marjorie : Non mais ce que je veux te dire c'est que on aurait pu ne plus se voir, les choses tu sais, au bout de 40 ans, 50 ans, bon ben on ne se

Mireille: What you said, earlier, when Marjorie was not there, when you talked about that side of us, this militancy that we have. That's it.

Marjorie: And that's what keeps us together, because that's stronger than ...

Elizabeth: Than everything!

Marjorie: Than everything, yes, yes.

Mireille: Because this aspect, from the point of view of justice, when you say justice it is because it is related to this activist side that we have.

Elizabeth: There is also a question of convictions ...

Marjorie: And you know, you can have a desire for justice but you do not put it into action. The reason we are activists is because this desire did not stay theoretical, it is put into action, yes, we are in action. So that's what I would say, apart from the fact that we are educators, we are all of that. And the miracle is also that we are still here!

Céradiou: Ah yes! There is that too!

Elizabeth: There is that too!!! It is a miracle actually.

Marjorie: what I mean to say is that we could not see each other anymore, you know, after 40

voit plus...

Mireille : On a fait notre, on a donné, on peut dire on a assez donner mais on est là!

Marjorie : Mais on est toujours là autour de La Maison d'Haïti, est-ce que tu comprends?

Céradiou : C'est vrai hein, on est toujours là

Marjorie : Autour de la Maison d'Haïti.

Toujours. C'est incroyable!

Mireille : *Me zanmi, nou se on band sanwont!!*

[Rires]

Marjorie : Oui, oui, oui.

[...]

Mireille : Militant pour moi avant c'était un terme politique, c'est-à-dire « j'étais militant » c'était une position politique tandis que là j'ai appris que je peux être militant au niveau de la justice, je peux être militant au niveau de l'art...

Marjorie : De l'environnement...

Mireille : De l'environnement, tu vois, mais pour nous, dans ces années là c'était politique le mot militant, si tu disais militant c'était même, des fois pour d'autres personnes c'était mal vu "*oh militan, m'pap mach avek yo!*" c'était politique, c'est vrai!

Elizabeth : Ouais, c'est vrai.

years, 50 years, well, we could not see each other anymore ...

Mireille: Because we did it, we gave, we could say we gave enough, but here we still are!

Marjorie: We are all still around La Maison d'Haïti, do you understand?

Céradiou: That's right, we're still here.

Marjorie: Around La Maison d'Haïti, still. It's amazing!

Mireille: My god, we are shameless!!!

[Laughters]

Marjorie: Yes, yes, yes.

[...]

Mireille: For me before, activist was a political term, meaning, "being an activist" was a political position. And then I learned that I can be an activist for justice, I can be an activist for the arts ...

Marjorie: ...the environment ...

Mireille: ... the environment, you see? But for us, in those years, activist, was a political term. If you said activist it was even, sometimes others looked down "oh activists, you won't see me them!" It was political, it's true!

Elizabeth: Yeah, that's right.

[...]

Alix : et effectivement comme Marjorie le dit c'est effectivement ça cette conviction là et puis qui va nous amener à différentes choses à travers le temps mais c'est ça. C'est ça, le militantisme c'est de voir à, à lutter, à travailler pour justement arriver à quelque chose de meilleur ou bien ce qu'on pense qui devrait être la justice ou l'égalité.

[...]

Elizabeth : Ok, donc ça m'a formé et là moi, je vais te dire sincèrement, et le militantisme, la lutte pour la justice sociale pour les droits surtout, les droits fondamentaux, et bien, avec mes 70 ans tout ça colle dans mes os, ça coule dans mes veines, etcetera! Donc pour te montrer la portée de ce que c'est le militantisme. Tu vois, et tu vois en même temps le mot conviction hein?

Section 1. Learning and Politicization

Political socialization and politicization refer to people's acquisition of political knowledge and orientation, and participation in politics. While the former usually refers to formal politics (German, 2014; Sapiro, 2004) and the latter includes formal and informal politics (Mele, 2000), the two processes overlap. At their core is how and what people learn about politics, how they gain a political consciousness and, in some cases, act upon it (Mele, 2000),

[...]

Alix: [...] indeed, as Marjorie says it's actually this conviction that brought us towards different things over time, that's it. That's what activism is, it's about seeing, struggling, working to achieve something better, or what we think should be justice or equality.

[...]

Elizabeth: Ok, it taught me, I'll tell you sincerely, activism, the fight for social justice for rights especially, for fundamental rights, well, with my 70 years all of that sticks to my bones, it flows in my veins! To show you the reach of what activism is. You see at the same time the word conviction, right?]

(Collective interview; November 28th, 2018)

what I refer to as learning politics. Learning politics encompasses gaining political knowledge, consciousness, orientation, and skills. Politicization is partly influenced by people's social location and the sources of their socialization (Zaytoun, 2016). These can include families, schools, communication media, living context, religious orientation, life cycle and generations as well as political and public institutions (see Pfaff, 2009; Sapiro, 2004; German, 2014). For the activists interviewed, the main sources were the people around them; readings and discussions; lived experiences; and hands-on learning.

Learning from People

Families. Being part of a network is crucial to politicization (Passy, 2001). Families are the first networks people are embedded in, the first space of socialization and learning. They can have a strong effect on future political activities (German, 2014). They pass on knowledge, both current and historical (Jara, 2016), as well as provide an entry point into collective memory, also crucial to political socialization (Sapiro, 2004). How children experience social-historical events is mediated by their family experiences making some more affected and influenced by events than others (Stewart & Healy, 1989). Marjorie, Elizabeth and Mireille all mentioned their families' explicit politics as integral to constructing their own. Marjorie recalls being raised in a very politicized environment, where political discussions always happened, as in other Haitian families, "On parlait de politique tout le temps, en fait comme dans toutes les familles haïtiennes." Through their families, people learnt about Duvalier's dictatorship as well as about resistance to it, something that was crucial in the politicization of many other Haitian community workers and activists (see Labelle & Therrien, 1992). In cases like Elizabeth and Adeline, their life partners' political engagement was also influential. Her partner reinforced what Elizabeth had already gotten from her family:

Comme il était déjà cuit dans un parti	[Since he was already ‘cooked’ in a
... c’est lui qui m’a formé	party, he’s the one who trained me
politiquement. ... à la maison on	politically. ... at home we often
entendait parler de politique souvent	heard about politics [...] from the get-
... avant de rentrer dans un parti	go, even before entering a political
politique, j’avais déjà une	party, I already had a knowledge of
connaissance de la politique et j’étais	politics and from the start, I was an
d’emblée formée anti-Duvalériste.	anti-Duvalierist.]

What happened in the Haitian context echoes what happened in families who opposed Augusto Pinochet’s regime in Chile, where “speaking at home became a practice of resistance to the dictatorship” which allowed for family political identities to be transmitted to younger generations, leading to the creation of family cultures of resistance (Jara, 2016).

Student groups. Encounters and exchanges with others are an important part of many activists’ learning (Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012). The discussions and dialogue that happen within groups can bring people to see themselves as political actors and drive them to collective actions (Thomas & Louis, 2013). Student groups have been important political actors over time, for instance in the 1946 revolution in Haiti and the events in Montreal in 1968 and 1969. For many of those interviewed, fellow students provided possibilities for stimulating intellectual exchanges about political movements, helping refine political ideologies and positions. Students shared ideas and taught one another through reflection and discussion, and through group activities, which I will return to later. Jacquelin remembers that growing up in Cap Haïtien in the 1960s, youths could not escape the various circles of reflections and debates. University students’ organizing often feeds political movements (Choudry & Vally, 2020) and the networks they

create are important for students' politicization (Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012). Whether as a young teenager in Haiti or a university student in Montreal as for Jacquelin, or for Marjorie in CEGEP, fellow students helped people understand their political potential.

Activists. Finally, activists fostered other people's political consciousness in different ways, as has been shown to happen in other contexts (see Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012; Passy, 2001). Some provided examples of the pragmatics of political action, created spaces where learning was facilitated or offered ideological mentorship. For instance, Carl Whitaker, an organizer in the Anglophone Black community, marked Alix's path. Alix "gobbled down everything that he was doing to see how you can do it" (Jean, 2014, November 13), which furthered his impetus for community work. Significantly, even activists with whom people were not in direct contact with had an impact. Alix, Mireille and Marjorie's connections to New York made them aware of the Black Panthers and the Black Power movement, which they all mentioned as an important influence, as did the founders of La Maison d'Haïti (Céliné et al. 2016). As a young teenager with budding convictions, in Quebec but isolated from the Haitian community during her stay in boarding school in her first years here, Marjorie

cherche des modèles qui me	[was looking for models that look
ressemble et qu'est-ce que je trouve?	like me and who do I find? I find
Je trouve Angela Davis et les Black	Angela Davis and the Black Panthers
Panthers ... Malcolm X et tout ce	... Malcom X, all these beautiful
beau monde c'était mes héros.	people were my heroes.]

By looking up to activists, people acquired behavioural models through processes of vicarious learning, where one learns through observation (Bandura, 1965).

Learning from Reading

Whether it was fiction, activist or political party literature, written material also helped people develop their ideas and discover new information. In her research on community organizers in the Chicago area, O'Donnell found that for around half of those she surveyed, education and reading, what she called "book learning," was an incentive to pursue community organizing as a career (1995, p.8). Mireille, Marjorie, Jacquelin, Adeline, and C radieu all mentioned the importance of reading as youth and young adults. Interestingly, reading was both a private and a social act: the experience of exchanging and discussing written material from and with others was often as important as the reading itself. This aligns with Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo's affirmation that reading, dialogue and reflection are necessary to gain a critical understanding of one's historical, cultural and political context and engage in action (Freire & Macedo, 1987). It also shows how the circulation of knowledge shapes the path *towards* activism. People better understood their realities, discovered others' lived conditions, world history, political and resistance movements and ideologies through literature. Books and other forms of publications became prompts for discussions and analysis. They were often given by people who became important interlocutors. C radieu, who loved to read as a youth, was later given books by a young lawyer involved in political resistance against Duvalier:

En lisant ces livres l  ... on dirait que
j'ai trouv  ma vraie voie, la voie que
je cherchais, pourquoi je veux lutter
...pourquoi je suis all  en dehors de
la ville pour aider les paysans  
s'organiser pour lutter contre

[By reading these books ...it's like I
found my true path, the path that I
was looking for, why I wanted to
fight... why I went outside the city
to help peasants organize themselves
to fight the exploitation from city

l'exploitation ... des grands-dons qui
viennent de la ville... j'ai appris tout
ça dans ces livres. J'ai dit « ben là,
c'est ça là, je dois suivre ce courant
là » ... mais lui il était plus engagé
que moi, ... avec lui je découvrais
autre chose et de là, je suis rentré
d'emblée dans l'affaire de la
politique. (Céradiou)

owners. I learned all of this in these
books, then I said “here it is, that’s it,
I have to follow this path here”...he
was more involved than me... he
made me discover something else
and from there, I went straight into
political things.]

Adeline also remembers reading and exchanging with life partner Max since the beginning of their relationship. Reading and discussing African American authors with a fellow student who first guided her to James Baldwin’s *The Fire Next Time* (1963) also deepened her understanding of racism and taught her about Black struggles outside of Haiti. Reading circles were important in Haiti and Montreal, for youth and adults. For instance, in Cap Haïtien, Jacquelin was part of small reflection groups through which he made his ‘first contact’ with politics in sixth grade and in Montreal, Adeline was part of the reading circle which formed after the protest against the assassination of Martin Luther King and from which the 1968 Congress of Black writers emerged, where she fully immersed herself in Marxism.

Learning from Lived Experiences

What people live and where they live it affects their learning in various ways (Foley, 1998, 1999; German, 2014; Gouin, 2009). In turn “experience is always embedded within thinking and being” (Carpenter et al., 2013, p. 6). Activists have been shown to often give more salience and personal meaning to political situations even when not directly affected by them (Duncan,

1999; Duncan & Stewart, 2007; Curtin, Stewart, & Duncan, 2010). Through their experiences and thinking, people also better understand the social relations they are embedded in (Carpenter et al., 2013). For instance, being young Black immigrants from Haiti, in predominantly White French Quebecer environments, or meeting Black anglophones in the US or Canada made people aware of racism as well as of common and divergent realities between Black communities. In the case of the group, the dictatorial political regime in Haiti and the mobility of their lives were also particularly influential.

Living under Duvalier's regime: Learning state power and resistance. The brutality of Duvalier's regime brought knowledge of the structure and mechanisms of state power but also allowed people to witness and learn resistance. This experience and knowledge of violence politicized many Haitian activists over time (Labelle & Therrien, 1992). Encountering and resisting state violence through experiences like surveillance, harassment, violence, intimidation, and arrest can help people learn about and analyze the workings of state power and capitalism (Choudry, 2015). Political regime changes affect people's understanding of political norms, systems and practices (Sapiro, 2004) and so do important political events that happen in the crucial period of socialization between 10 and 20 years old (German, 2014). Although state violence had been experienced in Haiti, the omnipresent and systematic violence of Duvalier's totalitarian regime was unlike anything else before it. Jacquelin was profoundly marked by "l'histoire qui se déroulait sous nos yeux avec Duvalier père" [the history that was unfolding right in front of our eyes with Duvalier's regime]. Jara writes that "to experience state violence does not require physical exposure to it and that violence does not necessarily consist of torture" (2016, pp. 43-44). Curfews, trucks filled with Macoutes and barricades created a sense of

constant fear and surveillance that even children were conscious of. Marjorie remembers that as a child she felt

la peur, la terreur, la peur, la terreur.	[fear, terror, fear, terror. We were
On avait peur tout le temps, on avait	scared all the time, we were afraid to
peur de regarder les gens,	look at people ... we were afraid of
... on avait peur des macoutes. ... il	the macoutes...you always had to
fallait toujours faire attention à qui tu	pay attention who you spoke to.]
parlais.	

Mireille also understood the threat that the Macoutes posed as a child because of the curfew and seeing people hide when trucks filled with Macoutes would pass by. Forced disappearances, arrests, imprisonments, and assassinations, whether it was of close or extended family members, acquaintances, schoolteachers, classmates, or students, rendered state repression tangible. Those who were part of political opposition, like Adeline, Céradieu and Elizabeth, were directly targeted by government authorities. Elizabeth considers her imprisonment part of what she called the university of her life. Witnessing what she named the dehumanization of people in jail

ça m'a permis aussi...de réfléchir, de	[it allowed me as well... to think, to
comprendre. ...si tu as des idées, des	understand...if you have ideas,
objectifs pour un pays, on ne joue	objectives for a country, you don't
pas avec ça, il faut bien, bien	play with that, you have to think
réfléchir là-dessus.	really, really well about this.]

As explained before, some of the groups Duvalier's regime framed as a national threat were those associated with the left. Adeline mentioned how communists were vilified in Haiti. This

stigmatization gave people insights into how the government constructed specific groups as public enemies to attempt to silence, monitor and eliminate opposition.

The strategic use of violence against women by the Duvalier regime also made many of them aware of the potential gendered nature of violence (Charles 1995; Sanders, 2013). For Marjorie, it was clear that being a young adolescent girl in Haiti during the regime meant that you were a prey for Macoutes. Even Marie-Andrée who does not otherwise recall fearing the regime recognized that

Je ne peux pas dire que j’aurais pas	[I cannot say that I would not have
de problèmes en Haïti, parce que	had problems in Haiti, ... I had three
...j’avais trois filles superbes...	superb daughters ...Maybe a rogue
Peut-être qu’un vagabond viendrait	man would come around them and I
les côtoyer que moi j’aurais pas	would not have accepted that, and
accepté ça, peut-être que ce	maybe that man would have killed
vagabond-là allait me tuer.	me.]

Though Marie-Andrée asserts that while in Haiti “même la première lettre du mot politique que je ne savais pas” [even the first letter of the word politic I didn’t know], alluding to her lack of engagement with and knowledge of formal politics, her understanding of the dangers faced by her daughters point to her broader understanding of gendered violence in that context. At individual and collective levels, this knowledge of the potential uses of violence eventually influenced some women’s consciousness and approaches to organizing (Charles, 1995).

By witnessing other people oppose the regime, people also learned the possibilities of political resistance, which fueled emergent politicization. Marjorie remembers that her parents had heroic gestures even if they weren’t officially involved in resistance movements. They hid,

and transported people in their car, sometimes even through barricades to attempt to save them. Mireille understood social and political injustice as well as the need to struggle for justice because she saw that her grandmother always waged that struggle. Jacquelin said that

ce qui m'a formé ce sont les	[what made me were the
circonstances, ... il n'y a personne	circumstances... no one told me
qui m'a dit quoi faire mais à un	what to do but at some point I took
moment donné j'ai pris des risques	risks... to try to protect.]
... pour essayer de protéger.	

As Céradiou affirmed, resisting and struggling for change, is not something one learns in one morning or one afternoon. Resistance is learned

dans ton travail de militant [...] plus	[in your activist work [...] the more
tu affrontes le danger de tous les	you work, the more you face daily
jours, plus tu es résistant.	danger, the more resistant you
	become.]

Mobile lives. Changes in people's individual lives can influence their sense of politics (Sapiro, 2004). The high mobility experienced by everyone whether it was migration inside or outside Haiti influenced their political perspectives, as is the case with many Haitian immigrants of that era (see Laguerre, 1998; Larose, 1984; Paul, 1992; Wah & Pierre-Louis, 2004). It also enhanced their understandings of the challenges others face when they migrate.

As the transnational archive reveals, amongst the group, reasons for migration varied: some were exiled; sent out of the country as youth or young adults by parents to protect them; left for professional reasons; left as youth with their families; or travelled to see family and then facilitated their families' migration. Migration to Canada was, however, often only one of the

many movements in their lives. At least four people had moved internally in Haiti, between the rural and urban areas, or between major cities before leaving the country. Before the age of 15, Alix had lived in New York, Gonaïves, New York again, then Montreal. These movements continued after settling in Montreal, demonstrating the importance of people's circulation, crucial as well to their activism. Many spoke of travelling to see family members or other Haitians communities in the United States, the Caribbean and Europe. Adeline, Marjorie, Alix, and Jacquelin also all went back to live and work in Haiti at some point, and Mireille and Suzie both went for short contracts and conference presentations. This mobile state likely influenced people's relationship to questions of rights and citizenship, as is the case for other immigrants involved in community organizing (Lamoureux, 2001). It also influenced their understanding of the connections between local and international politics. Elizabeth's passage through Chile and her six year stay in Cuba broadened her political knowledge:

J'ai beaucoup appris et justement	[I learned a lot and since as I was
comme je militais pour une Haïti	campaigning for a more democratic
démocratique ... puisque j'étais dans	Haiti ...since I was in the same line
la même ligne de pensée que ... la	of thought ... as the Cuban
révolution cubaine, ça m'a permis de	revolution, it allowed me to
comprendre qu'est-ce que c'est une	understand what a revolution is ... to
révolution pour changer...la	change the socio-economic
structure socio-économique.	structure.]

Migration also impacts family dynamics on multiple levels (Falicov, 2007). It leads to the interconnections of family members across national borders, what Falicov (2007) calls transnational families. As with many other Haitian families, people's mobile lives led to being

separated from family members for extended periods of time (see Larose, 1984; Paul, 1992; Sanders, 2016). It is easy to write and read about certain events without weighing their actual emotional impact. Here, I ask the reader to take a moment and grasp what it means for children to be separated from their parents, and vice versa. This was due in some cases to the unavailability of educational opportunities in certain areas, leading to Suzie, Marie-Andrée and Céradiou being sent as children to pursue studies in different cities. To protect them from the dictatorship's violence, others like Marjorie and Jacquelin, were even sent outside of the country:

J'ai pris plus de trente ans avant de	[It took me more than thirty years to
pouvoir dire que j'étais une réfugiée	be able to say that I was an
mineure non-accompagnée, ...	unaccompanied minor refugee ... for
pendant longtemps c'était « mes	a long time it was: "my parents sent
parents m'ont envoyé étudier au	me to study in Canada." But no, I
Canada » Mais en fait non, j'étais	was a refugee because my parents
réfugiée parce que mes parents ne	did not want me to stay there.]
voulaient plus que je reste là.	
(Marjorie).	

Elizabeth, Marie-Andrée and Adeline were separated from their children respectively because of imprisonment, leaving the country and having to go into hiding from the Duvalier regime. These experiences helped people connect the intimate sphere of family life to the wider political context. It also made them empathetic to others' experiences:

Quand quelqu'un me dit que t'as	[When someone tells me that they
laissé tes enfants en Haïti, tu vis dans	left their children in Haiti and that
un autre pays sans tes enfants ... je	they live in another country without

sais c'est quoi parce que je suis
passée par là. C'est très dur.
(Marie-Andrée).

their children ... I know what it is
because I've been there. It's very
hard.]

Learning by Doing: Experiential Learning

Finally, experiential learning was, above all, the most important form of learning which influenced people's politicization. Debates on experiential learning go beyond the scope of this section (See Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2000). For our purpose, it is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). It connects concrete experience, abstract conceptualization, reflective observation and active experimentation (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2000), which echoes the relationship between practice and theorizing explained in Chapter two.

Participating in youth and student groups. Youth and student groups are a crucial source of learning and at the root of many political mobilizations (see Choudry & Vally, 2020; Crossley, 2008; Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012). While there are disagreements as to the type of long-term impact of youth groups depending on the kind of activities they favour (see Pfaff, 2009), they can definitely socialize youth into politics (Sapiro, 2004), teach them new abilities (Glanville, 1999; Terriquez, 2015), embed them in networks that facilitate learning (Glanville, 1999). By planning and executing activities and summer projects with other youth, Alix, Jacquelin, Mireille, and Céradieu had their first experiences of collective organizing, which led to the development of new abilities. Participating in Samba and in La Maison d'Haïti's youth programs, taught youngsters a sense of responsibility according to Mireille. Alix recalled that receiving funding for the Dessalines summer camp in 1974 was a key moment for him and others as they were able to see the fruit of their collective labour when they did the project they had

envisioned. This allowed them to acquire skills necessary for community work, which further encouraged them to continue organizing collectively. The sense of accomplishment was itself a source of knowledge, as Jacquelin recollected about planning group outings with other youth in Haiti.

While youth groups with an explicit political focus on inequalities enhance political awareness and foster engagement (Terriquez, 2015), in this case cultural, artistic and leisure groups also served as a first step towards political participation. In Haiti, as noted by Elizabeth:

Avant de rentrer d'emblée dans une	[Before entering into a political
organisation politique il y avait aussi	organization, there were also cultural
des organisations ... culturelles ... là	organizations. ... they would teach
on t'apprend tout ce qui est l'histoire	you everything, meaning the history
du pays, etcetera, la culture, c'est une	of the country, etcetera, culture, but
base pour te former vers une	it was a base to train you into
implication politique.	political involvement.]

Cultural activities – such as learning revolutionary songs, discussions and workshops on Haitian politics and history, facilitated the intergenerational transmission of knowledge. In Samba, youth gained a political consciousness against the Duvalier regime as well as about African American struggles from elders. Alix recalled that through Kanpe, another youth group connected to Samba and La Maison d'Haïti, he met members of the PUCH, and other Haitian scholars, who he listened to but also challenged on certain positions. By exposing youth to new ideas (Glanville, 1999), providing a space for discussion, learning and collective identification (Pfaff, 2009), youth groups encourage interest in political subjects, and can help participants develop informed and critical opinions and respect for differing positions (Van Stekelenburg,

Klandermans, & Akkerman, 2016). Certain youth subcultures also foster collective and individual politicization (Pfaff, 2009). The international political context of student mobilization of the late 1960s galvanized political consciousness, including in Quebec. Marjorie recalled the period

c'était très politisé et là j'étais déjà	[was very politicized and I was
dans plein de groupes politiques de	already in lots of leftist political
gauche, ah ouais... j'étais	groups, oh yeah, I was, I was
communiste!	communist!]

Terriquez (2015) observes that engaging in political activism young can influence people's political participation as adults. Céradieu also drew that connection:

Mon implication politique vient ...	[My political engagement comes
que j'aime ça être dans des groupes,	from the fact that I like being in
et quand je retourne dans mon	groups, and when I would return to
village en période d'été ... j'organise	my village during the summer
aussi des affaires avec des jeunes de	holidays, I also organized things with
mon village ... on a fait aussi des	young people from my village ... we
associations ... on avait peut-être	also made associations ... we were
seize, quinze – seize - dix-sept ans,	maybe sixteen, fifteen - sixteen –
ces petites associations-là ont fini par	seventeen years old, but these small
de grosses affaires.	associations ended up turning into
(Céradieu)	pretty big things.]

Doing activism. As they mobilize and organize in political and social movements, and in community organizations, people learn constantly (Choudry, 2015; Foley, 1999, Kruzynski,

2004), what John Holst (2002) refers to as the pedagogy of mobilization. In her research on community organizers in Chicago, O'Donnell (1995) found that experience was the main, and in certain cases the only, source of education they had with regards to organizing. June Bertley (1982) also found similar patterns amongst Black community workers involved in Montreal's first Black community organizations. As explained previously, people learned from other activists. But they also learned about politics and social movements and developed specific skills through *doing* activism. It further fueled their political imaginaries, to use Marjorie's words.

Activists are often involved and acquainted with different approaches and traditions of organizing, learning from them as well (Brady & O'Connor, 2014). As in the case of youth groups, the different constellations people navigated opened them to different perspectives. By being engaged in various movements, people develop their political interests, the disposition to act, and are often transformed by their engagement (Mele, 2000). Community organizing requires a variety of skills, such as interpersonal, management, and analytical skills that are developed and perfected on the ground (Kruzynski, 2004; Louis, Amiot, Thomas, & Blackwood, 2016; O'Donnell, 1995). For Alix, the various experiences he had—whether for a long or short period—allowed him to do and learn a variety of things. Having learned organizing strategies with Carl Whitaker later allowed him to set up different organizations. Jacquelin noted that activism allowed for learning that went beyond schooling:

C'est une chose d'aller à l'université,	[It's one thing to go to university, but
puis c'est autre chose que d'être sur	it's a different one to be on the
le terrain puis de toucher du doigt les	ground and then to touch the real
problèmes concrets que vivent les	problems compatriots are
compatriotes [...] il fallait vraiment	experiencing ... you really had to be

être sur le terrain pour comprendre
certaines choses.

on the ground to understand certain
things.]

As happened for young activists involved in the civil rights movements, for Haitians who participated in youth groups in Haiti and Montreal, “[p]olitics became a central organizing force” partly because of the learning they did and the identities they developed early on (Terriquez, 2015). In addition, through their engagement in communist party cells, some like Céradiou and Bela received ideological training to understand class formation as well as political structures. Adeline explained that Marxism provided her explanations from which she found serenity to work and struggle.

Learning Politics

These various learning experiences ultimately got people to acquire political knowledge, gain consciousness, form a political orientation, and acquire skills; it got them to ‘learn politics’. Political knowledge entailed, amongst other information, understandings of formal political apparatuses, as well as political ideologies. This meant learning the workings of state power through living state violence and organizing resistance as well as gaining insights into political structures because of living in different contexts. Political consciousness and awareness emerged from grasping and becoming critical of different realms of politics. Looking to other activists and participating in youth groups made many aware of their alignment with certain political movements and conscious of their potential as agents of change. Political orientation encompassed the wider political objectives people strove for, and it related to their convictions which will be detailed further. While for some this political orientation was anchored in formal political theories and ideologies, for others it was based in their own beliefs and principles. Suzie, for instance, didn’t adhere to ideologies. What drove her politics was the “développement

du bien-être d'un groupe" [the development of the collective good]. Finally, the practical abilities people drew from organizing also shaped their politicization. Whether it was resistance and struggle strategies from anti-Duvalier activism, or the abilities learned through youth groups, gaining skills furthered people's understanding of politics and political actions.

Though they learned politics through different ways and experiences, for everyone in the group, their politicization was eventually greatly influenced by their work at La Maison d'Haïti. It is there, through collective learning that the *shared* quality of their praxis emerged.

Section 2. La Maison d'Haïti as a University: The Role of Community Education

"The university"

Désirée : Si vous deviez chacun de vous choisir un mot pour décrire La Maison d'Haïti ce serait quoi?

Elizabeth : Éducation des femmes!

Céradiou : La Maison d'Haïti? Université, université, c'est ça, on apprend tout!

Marie-Andrée : Mais la Maison d'Haïti c'est vrai c'est vraiment une université!

Marjorie : Adeline le disait!

Mireille : Adeline le dit toujours.

Céradiou : Ah oui c'est vrai.

Marjorie : *Si ou an tre la*, si tu rentres à La Maison d'Haïti tu vas sortir de là différent.

Marie-Andrée : Oui !!

Mireille : *Si ou pa soti diferan se paske ou pa vle!!*

[Désirée: If you each had to choose a word to describe La Maison d'Haïti what would it be?

Elizabeth: Women's education!

Céradiou: La Maison d'Haïti? University, university, that's it! We learn everything!

Marie-Andrée: But it's true, La Maison d'Haïti is really a university!

Marjorie: Adeline said it!

Mireille: Adeline still says it.

Céradiou: Oh yes, that's right.

Marjorie: If you get in, if you come to La Maison d'Haïti you'll get out of there different.

Marie-Andrée: Yes !!

Mireille: If you don't come out of it different it's cause you don't want to.

Elizabeth : Et bien c'est toujours, Adeline elle disait l'éducation aux droits et surtout la question de la lutte des femmes, écoutes hein c'est pour cela j'ai dit éducation femme! Et quant à l'éducation hein, sur tous, dans tous les niveaux.

Mireille : Tous les niveaux.

Elizabeth : Dans toutes les sphères.

Marie-Andrée : Quelqu'un travaille à la Maison d'Haïti qui n'apprend pas, n'apprendra jamais!

[Rires]

Marjorie : Mais en fait ce que j'ai réalisé c'est que des fois les gens passent ici, ils quittent et tu te dis tu n'as pas vu, de tes yeux vu la transformation, il y a des gens tu vois la transformation...

Mireille, Marie-Andrée : Oui, oui...

Marjorie : D'autres, tu ne vois pas, mais quand tu fais le, le résumé de tout ce que cette personne là a, a regardé et a assisté, tu te dis de toute façon cette personne elle a vu, elle a entendu, elle a écouté et quand elle aura besoin de ces valeurs là, elle les connaît déjà.

Elizabeth : Elle a une base...

Mireille : ...pour les mettre en application.

Désirée: C'est par osmose.

Elizabeth: Well it is, Adeline used to say it's about rights education, especially on the issue of women's struggle. Listen, that's why I said women's education! And as for education ah, at all and every levels.

Mireille: At all levels.

Elizabeth: In all spheres.

Marie-Andrée: Someone who works at La Maison d'Haïti and does not learn, will never learn!

[Laughters]

Marjorie: Actually, what I realized is that sometimes people pass through here, they leave and you say to yourself, you did not witness a transformation, there are people for whom you see the transformation ...

Mireille, Marie-Andrée: Yes, yes ...

Marjorie: Others, you do not see it. But when you do the summary of everything that person has looked at and attended, you tell yourself that in any case, this person saw, listened, and when he or she will need those values, he or she will have known them already.

Elizabeth: She has a basis...

Mireille: ...to implement them.

Désirée: It's by osmosis.

Marjorie : C'était dans sa tête, je veux dire ces valeurs là elle les a vu, elle les a vu à l'œuvre, et c'est pas vrai qu'elle n'a pas acquis quelque chose, même si je n'ai pas vu le changement mais il y a eu un acquis.

Alix : Heu, je ne sais pas si c'est créativité mais c'est cette capacité de répondre à différentes choses, de créer des affaires.

Elizabeth: Créativité mon cher!

Marjorie: It was in her head, I mean those values she saw them, she saw them at work, and it's not true that she did not acquire anything at all. Even if I did not see the change, there was a gain.

Alix: Well, I do not know if it's creativity but it's that ability to respond to different things, to create things...

Elizabeth: Creativity my dear!]

(Collective interview, November 28th, 2018)

Education was fundamental at La Maison d'Haïti, embedded in a wider political vision and various activities, as is often the case in community organizing (Hurtubise, 2011; Kruzynski, 2004). Education *was* activism. But in addition, education formed the collective. Through collective learning, education was also crucial *for* activists.

Education as Activism

In 1980, a brief written by Adeline on behalf of La Maison d'Haïti was presented at the public inquiry on adult education, also referred to as the Commission Jean (Chancy, 1980). The document outlines the popular education approach favored by the centre, based on two principles. The first one being collective work, and the second one being the active participation of learners at every stage of their educational process. The importance of popular education for the centre's activities is not surprising knowing that it was fundamental in the broader Quebec community sector at that time (see Kruzynski, 2004), in community organizing in general (see Bourque & Comeau, 2007a; Doucet & Favreau, 2011c) and also has a history related to communist party organizing (see Boughton, 1997, 2013). Paulo Freire's work was even used to train the centre's literacy teachers (La Maison d'Haïti, c. 1982-1983). Andragogy was also

important for the adult education programs, especially the literacy classes. Although andragogy does not have the same political goals as popular education, the importance it gives to adult's prior knowledge, to the learner as leader of his/her own learning process, as well as to the necessary relation between learning and the transformation of social roles, aligns with the premises of popular education. This informed not only how the literacy classes were structured but also the content and structure of the pedagogical material that educators developed themselves for the classes (La Maison d'Haïti, c. 1979-1980). The educational work done at La Maison d'Haïti was also connected to wider debates and educational initiatives taking place in Haiti and elsewhere during the same period, for instance around the integration of Creole in school curriculum (see Rosembert, 1998; Tardieu, 2017). Many in the groups were formally trained teachers and this was certainly influential as well since formally trained pedagogues often give direction to educational projects within community groups (Fernandez, 1991). Duvalier's assault on education institutions, teachers and student associations led to an exodus of teachers and professors, many of whom were activists outside the country as well, but they still reflected on and followed what was happening in Haiti. For instance, the doctoral dissertation of one of the founders La Maison d'Haïti, Charles Dehoux-Tardieu, was a ground-breaking research, exploring the importance of informal types of education alongside formal schooling in Haiti (1988). His dissertation put forth the historical importance of oral transmission of knowledge in Creole for the majority of Haitians. Dehoux-Tardieu eventually became Minister of Education in Haiti. It is no surprise that some of the ideas that emerge from the dissertation can also be found in the approach developed at La Maison d'Haïti, which always favored a less formal approach as was made explicit as early as 1974

Nous avons catégoriquement rejeté
toute méthode d'enseignement
traditionnelle pour permettre une
participation plus active et une
analyse plus approfondie des
problèmes abordés. (La Maison
d'Haïti, 1974, February 22, p. 2)

[We categorically rejected any
traditional teaching method to allow
more active participation and a more
in-depth analysis of the problems
tackled.]

When I asked Adeline if popular or community education better captured the organization's approach in its first decades, she answered that for her, the term community education was more appropriate because it invoked the importance of the collective which was key with regards to process and goals. As many explained, core to La Maison d'Haïti's pedagogy was collective learning – which meant being open to learn from participants as well – and the need for the content and pedagogy of classes to be constantly adapted to learners. For instance, Marie Andrée talked about the importance of the break she gives her student in the literacy class for them to talk to each other. It allows them to bond and exchange while allowing her to understand their interests and adapt her teaching accordingly. Analyzing the educational work done at CAFHAM, Paul (1992) explained that the women-centered pedagogical approach it used relied on activities that opened a space for women to talk, share experiences and thus learn from one another. Marjorie explained that:

L'éducatrice que je suis c'est
l'éducatrice qui fait appel à ton
intelligence et qui fait appel à
l'intelligence collective. ...j'ai

[The educator I am is the educator
who appeals to your intelligence and
who appeals to collective
intelligence ... I always know that

toujours sur que ... je suis jamais en
face de quelqu'un qui sait rien, je
sais que je suis devant quelqu'un qui
sait quelque chose ... je suis une
éducatrice avec un rapport d'égalité
avec toi, je te donne quelque chose et
tu me donnes quelque chose...c'est
le donnant, donnant, ... parce que
même quand je suis en train de te
donner une information sur l'alpha
ou la lettre qu'il faut que tu formes
comme ça... mais t'es en train de
m'apprendre un mot en créole que je
ne connaissais pas.

... I'm never in front of someone who
knows nothing, I know I'm in front
of someone who knows something...
I am an educator with an equal
relationship with you, I give you
something and you give me
something... it's reciprocal ...
because even while I'm giving you
information on literacy, or the letter
you have to shape like that...you're
teaching me a word in Creole that I
didn't know.]

The educational strategies developed were inscribed in what was framed as a global 'socio-cultural' approach encompassing the range of activities and services offered. According to the 1980 brief, four main educational objectives pursued fed into the organization's wider goals. The objectives were to: promote an analysis of the problems specific to immigrants, while taking into account the contexts of Haiti, Quebec and Canada; foster critical reflections on Haitian and Quebec values; access information on immigrants' rights; bring an awareness of individual and community resources. These were to help equip individuals and the community to take charge of themselves, encourage the search of collective solutions for the problems faced, and promote people's participation as active agents in society. This ultimately aimed to facilitate the

adaptation of Haitian immigrants to Québec while promoting Haitian culture. Though the educational initiatives primarily targeted members who came to get services at the centre, the activists also benefited from this community education. The focus on collective learning, knowledge and intelligence, and the active participation of learners influenced their own learning processes. This is why for them La Maison d'Haïti became a university.

Education for Activists

Activist groups can “function as particularly intensive training grounds” (Terriquez, 2015, p. 223). The centre provided space for people to learn, was related to the collective's life and needs, and was anchored in the community's knowledge and resources, three of the four main components of community education (Stein & Imel, 2002). As the archive shows, tensions and conflicts also happened, informed and transformed their activism, illustrating the fourth component: the fact that power relations also play out within communities. Whether these conflicts were ideological, interpersonal, due to people's personality or different motivations, they also certainly informed people's actions and learning. For instance, people learned to negotiate and assert their ideological differences strategically, by choosing to debate them only within and between Haitian groups to be able to present a common front to the ‘outside’ world, especially to the Quebec and Canadian governments. This strategy was also sometimes used when different Black community groups worked together on common issues: though disagreements happened, they were downplayed when time came to make collective demands.

The group of activists at La Maison d'Haïti functioned as a community of practice where people learn through a set of social processes, from and with others, through a particular sphere of practice (Wenger, 2010). Learning emerges from interaction between social competences established over time by members of a given community (whether they be social, cultural,

professional and so on) and personal experiences through membership to that community (Wenger, 2000). In this case I would say that the group functioned as a community of *praxis*, since their practice (the actions they did and skills they developed) was intrinsically related to their theorizing of the world (in essence, their politics and convictions). Beyond relationships, what makes a group, including activist ones, are shared references, experiences, values, and norms (Curtin & McGarty, 2016). Those, alongside the common sense of identity, and the fact of being embedded in a group tend to predict long term commitment to activism (see Doucet & Favreau, 2011a; Louis et al., 2016; Pfaff, 2009; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). This is the activist identity and the “miracle” of still being around each other and around La Maison d’Haïti that people explained in the first collective interview excerpt of the chapter. Because of the different role it had, community education was the process through which the praxis and community were strengthened simultaneously.

The pedagogical role of community education: Sharing knowledge and skills. One of the important ways in which activists learn from one another is through talking which stimulates and sustains people’s political involvement and commitment (Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012). It also brings people to new understandings of their potential in collective action and allows groups to strategize (Thomas & Louis, 2013). Whether they learned new things together, or the more advanced ones provided scaffolding for others, collective processes were at the heart of the group’s learning. La Maison d’Haïti provided a place for people to try new things, make mistakes and sometimes fail, as Marjorie highlighted; it was a space to learn and to simply be. Interestingly, Adeline’s name came up as someone who facilitated learning for many by opening spaces where collective learning could happen. As Marjorie explained, she would constantly remind people that it was ok if they did not know because everyone was learning together, that

their presence was nonetheless important and that they were in their rightful place, even if they were novice in skills and knowledge. The collective learning and teaching were especially important for women, as emerged from the interviews. Marjorie observed that in Nègès Vanyan, through activities, reading and discussion, women trained each other. As can be read in their internal documents, they even established

un système de roulement pour la
rédaction des procès-verbaux, de
façons à ce que les membres à tour
de rôle fassent l'apprentissage de la
tenue de procès-verbaux de réunion.

[a rotation system for taking meeting
minutes, so that members can take
turns learning how to take them.]
(Nègès Vanyan, 1981, p. 2)

By giving tasks to less experienced activists, those with more experience created important learning opportunities. This was expressed clearly in the exchange between Adeline and Marjorie:

M: ... moi j'étais un peu toute neuve
dans cette affaire là ... il y avait
quand même une équipe qui était des
militants depuis plusieurs années ...
Et tu apprends comme une éponge, si
on disait une phrase je la retenais, la
nécessité fait que tu apprends vite!
A : Et puis on te donne des tâches
assez vite si on a confiance.

[M: ... I was new to all this, there
was a team of activists with many
years of experience ... And you learn
like a sponge, if people said a
sentence, I would remember it, you
learn quickly out of necessity.
A: And if we trust you, we give you
tasks quickly.]

Adeline slowly taught Marjorie to read, write and teach Creole by initially inviting her to illustrate pedagogical material and assist her in classes. A few years later, Marjorie did the same for Marie-Andrée:

Quand je suis arrivée ici j'ai dit à	[When I got here, I told [Marjorie] "I
[Marjorie] ... « j'aimerais ça	would like to learn to write Creole."
apprendre à écrire le créole. » Puis là	Then she told me, "I'm going to
[elle] m'a dit « Je vais t'apprendre à	teach you to write Creole," and went
écrire le créole », et [elle] est allée	to get the alphabet and she explained
chercher l'alphabet pour moi et elle	it to me, that's how I learned to write
m'a expliqué, c'est comme ça que	creole.]
j'ai écrit le créole.	

These excerpts illustrate the significance of social relations and of the community itself as a source of learning (Nasir & Hand, 2006; Stein & Imel, 2002; Wenger, 2010) and the social character of learning (Wenger, 1998). Skills learned eventually led to new labour opportunities. For women, learning in the span of community organizing allows them to practice and improve skills such as planning, public speaking, evaluating and analyzing power (Kruzynski, 2004; DeSena, 1998; O'Malley, 1977; Pope, 1990; Rabrenovic, 1995). Learning professional skills was something that both men and women recalled, which allowed them to get paid work inside and outside the institution and even develop paid opportunities for themselves. Elizabeth's first employment in Canada was at La Maison d'Haïti. According to her, the foundation she received there allowed her to get subsequent contracts, including with the Quebec human rights commission, Commission des Droits de la personne. Jacquelin observed that the radio show was also a school because when working in a communication related profession, people learn all the

time. His career as an international journalist built on what he learned by doing *La Voix d'Haïti*. Alix did the same, using his experience from Combo for his work at Radio Haïti Inter in Haiti. Marjorie affirmed that through community work, she basically learned how to work. This eventually served her in her position at the literacy secretariat, the *Secrétariat d'État à l'alphabétisation*, in Haiti during the 1990s.

The cultural role of community education: Shared references and cultural transmission. Suzie noted that part of the impetus for the first cultural activities and programs at the centre came from the need for shared references:

N'oublie pas qu'on n'avait pas de	[Don't forget that we didn't have
repères, fallait créer des repères, on	models nor references, we had to
n'avait absolument rien. On se	create new ones, we had absolutely
cherchait, on s'est dit, qu'est-ce que	nothing. We were trying to figure
ça va être pour nos enfants? Parce	ourselves out, we said to ourselves,
que le milieu n'était pas très	what is it going to be for our
accueillant.	children? Because the environment
	was not very welcoming.]

The cultural and historical transmission at the heart of many educational endeavours and that is documented in the Haitian living cultural archive, facilitated the circulation of knowledge about Haiti and also generated a new frame of common knowledge (see Sanders, 2016). Education building from the community's knowledge fostered the transmission of Haitian culture abroad and allowed the creation of new references and new memories, central to the construction of every diasporic community (see Chamberlain, 2009; Chamberlain & Leydesdorff, 2004) and for diasporic homemaking, as explained previously. Even if they had all been born in Haiti, the

majority of the group mentioned learning about their home country at La Maison d'Haïti.

Women teaching each other Creole is one example. By preparing activities for youth and being around activists and other youth who had arrived more recently, women like Marjorie learned new elements of Haitian culture through organizing. She learned about historical figures through texts and songs, and discovered carnival music and folktales. Mireille, Adeline and Marie-Andrée also mentioned learning about Haiti from members who came to Maison d'Haïti. Adeline recalls returning to her country of birth after over two decades of exile with a deeper knowledge of it:

Moi j'ai appris tellement de chose,	[Me, I learned so much, all these
toutes ces personnes qu'on	people that we met at La Maison
rencontrait à La Maison d'Haïti, La	d'Haïti, La Maison d'Haïti was like a
Maison d'Haïti a été comme une	university for me! ... I learned a Haiti
université pour moi! ... j'ai appris	that I did not know, which I
Haïti que je ne connaissais pas, que	discovered through all the people
j'ai connu par tous ces gens-là qui	who immigrated.]
immigraient.	

The social role of community education: Shared identity and belonging. As mentioned previously, the group's identity as activists is part of what has kept them together over the years and connected them to La Maison d'Haïti. For psychologists, developing social, collective and group identities, can lead to politicization (see Curtin, Kende, & Kende, 2016; Duncan, 1999; Dutt & Grabe, 2014; Klandermans, 2014) and help long term commitment (Thomas & Louis, 2013). As people recognize the social markers that affect their lives (social identity); understand that these are shared with others (collective identity); with whom they are

connected (group identity); and that these markers and structural factors breed injustices and can be addressed (politicized identity); they will be more likely to develop an identity as someone who struggles for change (activist identity) and then engage in action (see Curtin & McGarty, 2016; Drury & Reicher, 2005; Duncan 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Klandermans, 2014; Louis et al., 2016; Sapiro, 2004; Simon & Klandermans 2001). In her interview Adeline explained how the group defined itself as it defined the organization

On construit La Maison d'Haïti, ...	[We build La Maison d'Haïti, ... we
on construit ce, ce projet d'être	build this project of being together,
ensemble, de faire quelque chose	doing something together and it is...
ensemble et c'est ... au cours de ce	through this work that we define
travail là qu'on se définit, qu'on	ourselves, that we define certain
définit ensemble certains objectifs,	objectives together, that we are
qu'on élargi de plus en plus, qu'on	expanding more and more, that we
voit qui sont nos alliés, sur qui on	see who our allies are, who we can
peut compter etcetera, quels sont les	count on and so on, what are the
cibles.	targets.]

Through collective actions, community education and the negotiation of their divergences and similarities, people defined a sense of group identity over time; they defined this Black diasporic community. The social networks people are a part of is a key component of politicization, social action and long-term activism (see Crossley, 2008, 2010; Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012; Drury & Reicher, 2005, in Louis, et al., 2016; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). Florence Passy (2001) argues that activist networks are important for political action for two reasons. They socialize people by facilitating political interest and awareness, helping them define a collective identity

and providing “a structure of meanings” that underlines political commitment (the socialization function of networks) (p. 182). In addition, the connections upon which networks rely, provide opportunities for action (the structural connection function of networks). Suzie recalls that though she understood the challenges she faced as a single mother, by getting involved in the organization:

C'est là que j'ai réalisé qu'on faisait	[This is where I realized that it was
bien de se mettre en groupe ... et ça a	good to gather in a group ... and that
renforcé mes attaches à La Maison	strengthened my ties to La Maison
d'Haïti.	d'Haïti.]

She recognized that belonging to the group provided her with support to raise her children as well as a form of protection, and a place to work for the collective good of her community.

Organizing and learning together reinforced people's common identity as activists as well as the relationships that made the group. This aligns Wenger's observation that “[l]earning is not just acquiring skills and information; it is becoming a certain person... identity reflects a complex relationship between the social and the personal. Learning is a social becoming” (2010, p. 181).

Community education was an essential element that fed the process of collective identity building and of community building and is therefore also an essential element of how Black diasporic communities can come about.

The political role of community education: A sense of collective efficiency. If individual politicization initially brought people to the organization, collective work there helped them refine their politics, especially the articulation of their convictions which will be detailed in the next section. It also strengthened their commitment to activism by helping them gain a sense of collective efficiency which further encouraged them to engage in collective political actions.

The following words by Adeline echo many others' reflection about how La Maison d'Haïti helped them to develop their political thoughts:

Parce que véritablement [...] c'est là	[Because really [...] this is where I
que j'ai accumulé mes connaissances	expanded my knowledge you see,
tu vois, et c'est là que j'ai raffiné	and this is where I refined my
mes orientations, et c'est là que j'ai	orientations, and where I understood
compris que toute œuvre politique	that all political work is a work of
est une œuvre d'éducation.	education.]

Marjorie also recalled that through her involvement at La Maison d'Haïti, something became coherent in her politics and struggle for justice. She had been part of left Quebec groups, but being in contact with people like Max and Adeline and involved with the organization's activities brought everything together. Freire's work on critical consciousness (1972, 1998) is useful to connect individual and collective learning to political action. He argues that people come to analyze and be critical of their living conditions through collective learning, which can lead them to act to change those conditions. Collective social identity, group consciousness, and a sense of political self-efficacy appear to be additional factors that foster critical consciousness *and* social action (see Gutierrez, 1995; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Efficacy is related to the belief that things can be achieved individually and collectively and is closely related to activism (German, 2014; Gutierrez, 1995; Van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, & Akkerman, 2016; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). It emerges from the ability to envision and desire social change – basically to envision different politics – and motivates people to action (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Klandermans 2014; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). To pursue struggles for social justice, you have to believe that even when

things are difficult you can succeed, as Céradieu, Jacquelin and Marjorie all pointed out.

Working and learning together showed members of the group that they were efficient together, enticing them to pursue collective actions, as Marjorie explained

Je pense que c'était l'envie de tout le monde de faire des choses ensemble, et on s'entendait bien, on travaillait bien, on était efficace ensemble, ça aussi c'était intéressant.

[I think it was everyone's desire to do things together, and we got along well, we worked well, we were effective together, that was interesting too.]

Section 3. Convictions and Actions: Articulation of a Shared Praxis

“Convictions with a capital ‘C’”

Marjorie : Mais pour moi, c'était comme, t'as des convictions, tu penses que tu veux te battre pour la justice sociale, contre des inégalités contre la violence, contre la répression, donc t'as des convictions, puis tu sais aussi que t'as comme un, un horizon de quelque chose qui, grâce à un certain changement, pourrait être mieux pour la population donc pour moi c'est le travail de militantisme c'est de faire arriver cette situation meilleure.

Céradieu : Ouais, ça c'est le sens large de...

Elizabeth : ...du militantisme, ouais...

Marjorie : ...du militantisme, donc quand par exemple tu es dans la diaspora et que tu ne peux pas changer le régime Duvalier mais tu peux

Marjorie: But for me, it was like, you have convictions, you think that you want to fight for social justice, against inequalities, against violence, against repression, so you have convictions and you also keep a wider perspective in mind, something that, thanks to change, could be better for the entire population. So for me, the work of activism is to make this better situation happen.

Céradieu: Yeah, that's the broad sense of ...

Elizabeth: ... activism, yeah ...

Marjorie: ... activism, so when, for example, you are in the diaspora and you cannot change the Duvalier regime, you can nevertheless make noise, you can show the horrors that he does so

faire du bruit, tu peux mettre, tu peux militer pour qu'on voit les horreurs qu'il fait et pour ne pas les cacher, tu peux militer aussi pour que les gens qui sont ici aient un...

Céradiou: Comprennent un peu ce qui se passe.

Marjorie : Ce qui se passe puis aient quand même des bonnes conditions de vie.

Elizabeth : Tu peux être militant aussi pour éduquer aussi.

Marjorie : Oui, bien sûr, bien sûr.

Alix : Inévitablement! Je pense que c'est ça...

Elizabeth: Mais être militant aussi, mon Dieu, comme ce mot vient souvent, tu reviens souvent avec ce vocable c'est aussi une question de convictions parce que je peux être militante aujourd'hui et demain matin tu me vois ailleurs, je ne suis plus militante! Donc il y a la conviction d'abord qui marche avec le militantisme.

Marjorie : Et la durée.

Elizabeth : Et la durée, c'est ça ... donc, non, non! Dès qu'il y a la conviction il y a la durée! Pour moi!

Marjorie : J'espère bien! Mais bon on a tellement vu de gens tourner leur veste!

Elizabeth : Exactement!

they don't remain hidden, you can also campaign for the people who are here to have a ...

Céradiou: Understand a little bit what is happening.

Marjorie: What is happening there and still have good living conditions here.

Elizabeth: You can be an activist to educate also.

Marjorie: Yes, of course, of course.

Alix: Certainly! I think that's it...

Elizabeth: But being an activist too, my God, this word comes up often, if we come back often to this term it is also because of a question of convictions, because I can be an activist today and tomorrow morning you see me elsewhere, I am no longer an activist! So first, it is the conviction that works with activism.

Marjorie: And continuity.

Elizabeth: And continuity, that's it, then ... No, No! When there is conviction there is continuity! For me!

Marjorie: I hope so! But we saw so many people turn their jackets around!

Elizabeth: Exactly!

Marjorie: Convictions! There are times you say oh oops...mmm ...

Marjorie : Convictions! Il y a des fois tu dis oh
oups ... mmm ...

Mireille : Petit c ...

Elizabeth : La, la force d'un militant c'est sa
conviction effectivement et puis on peut être
comme vous disiez et puis on peut être comme
vous disiez militant politique, militant écolo,
militant...

Marjorie : Femme! Féministe!

Elizabeth : Femme! Voilà! Donc c'est ça.

Alix : Non, non, non, j'étais en train de dire pour
moi effectivement c'est une question de
conviction, et la justice sociale.

Céradieu : Oui!

Elizabeth : Exactement.

[...]

Alix : ...et effectivement comme Marjorie le dit,
c'est effectivement ça cette conviction là et puis
qui va nous amener à différentes choses à travers
le temps mais c'est ça. C'est ça, le militantisme
c'est de voir à, à lutter, à travailler pour
justement arriver à quelque chose de meilleur ou
bien ce qu'on pense qui devrait être la justice ou
l'égalité.

Mireille: Small c ...

Elizabeth: The strength of an activist is his or
her conviction and then they can be, like you
were saying, a political activist, an
environmental activist, an activist ...

Marjorie: Woman! Feminist!

Elizabeth: Woman! Here! So that's it.

Alix: No, no, no, I was saying for me actually
it's a matter of conviction, and of social justice.

Céradieu: Yes!

Elizabeth: Exactly.

[...]

Alix: ... and indeed as Marjorie says it's actually
that conviction and that will bring us to different
things over time but that's it. That's what
activism is, about seeing, struggling, working to
achieve something better, or what we think
should be justice or equality.

(Collective interview, November 28th, 2018)

If some speak of motivating factors (Brady & O'Connor, 2014) or shared values driving community workers (Savard, 2007) for those I interviewed, *convictions* are what guides them. It is the term many of them used during the individual and collective interviews. Convictions gave direction to their personal and collective activism inside and outside La Maison d'Haïti. They emerged from their concrete learning and lived experiences and are at the core of the group's shared praxis, illustrating once again the constitutive relationship between people's material realities, reflections and actions (Allman, 1994; Freire, 1972). Four overarching and overlapping convictions guided the activists: the need for coherence, the quest for justice, the creation of collective strength and the necessity to share. These convictions also echo with what has been identified as core principles and values for community workers in other contexts such as the quest for social justice, the aim for a greater good, solidarity, autonomy, respect and democracy through the creation of counter-powers, (see Brady & O'Connor, 2014; Doucet & Favreau, 2011b; Jetté, 2017; Savard, 2007).

Coherence

The need for coherence entailed three aspects: coherence between people's politics and actions, coherence of people's overall politics and coherence over time.

Coherent actions. The articulation between actions and critical thought was important for everyone, the sign of a coherent praxis. For instance, though Marjorie was always interested in theoretical ideas, these always had to ground themselves in concrete actions. In turn, when

tu milites, tu fais des actions, il faut
que ça soit articulé autour d'un
discours, de quelque chose, d'une
pensée critique intéressante.

[you organize, you make actions, it
must be articulated around a
discourse, around something, an
interesting critical analysis.]

According to Adeline, this coherence is part of the reason behind La Maison d'Haïti's longevity since those who worked to define the orientations and actions of the centre had an explicit political vision. It gave their work what she framed as a certain thickness and consistency.

Coherent politics. Coherence was also demonstrated by people's commitment to various and interconnected causes and their attempt to bridge different realms of politics or political positions. Like others who envision themselves as actors of change, dedication to more than one cause was evident (see Louis, et al., 2016):

À partir du moment où tu t'intéresses	[From the minute you are interested
à tel aspect des droits humains, tout	in an aspect of human rights,
le reste suit ... il y a des	everything else follows... there are
recoupements certains (Adeline).	always overlaps.]

Marjorie explained that being feminist and anti-racist, working for the rehabilitation of women, Black and Indigenous communities simultaneously, emerged from a constant preoccupation with inequalities. Since the inception of the organization, struggles had to be fought as one and the same whether they related to the defense of Haitian workers in Quebec, the fight against the dictatorship in Haiti, or the struggles of other peoples for the right to self-determination (Céliné, & al., 2016). Because people were committed to various causes this inserted them in different communities of activists, like in the case of Adeline, Alix and Mireille who also worked at the NCC. In turn, being part of different and sometimes overlapping constellations fed the work of many, such as for some of the women who belonged to RAFA and then Nègès Vanyan, to political parties, international socialist women's networks, and to La Maison d'Haïti. Belonging to various groups (see Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012; Louis et al., 2016; Naples, 2012) often leads to increased commitment to activism. There is thus a mutual

reinforcement between belonging to multiple constellations – an illustration of the belief for coherent politics – and activism.

Being committed to various causes also meant connecting those causes and bridging different realms of politics, whether that meant local and international politics or formal and informal political organizing. As the transnational archive demonstrates, the political vision and work of members of La Maison d’Haïti was related to their understanding of the connections between local and international political processes (Céliné et al., 2016). As Céradieu observed, this linked the struggle for a free Haiti to their community work in Montreal and made their work coherent. As Jacquelin said, politics and community work are not separated. Even if many members were members of political parties, the organization made it clear that it was neither a political party, nor affiliated to one. This didn’t stop it from explicitly positioning itself as a progressive community centre with a clear political line (La Maison d’Haïti, 1974, February 22). Activities were always about a bigger political project and politicizing people aimed at creating political (counter)power, even outside of formal politics as Céradieu explained:

On peut travailler fort pour faire	[You can work hard to make a
changer les choses sans avoir le	difference without having the control
contrôle du pouvoir, si vous	of power, if you represent a truly
représentez une force vraiment	valid force that is able to stand
valable qui est capable de rester	before a bad guy ... it can change
debout devant un méchant ... ça peut	things too.]
changer les choses aussi.	

For Adeline, this also means that education is an integral part of politics, and thus of activism. Iton (2008) also observed the importance of the connection between informal and formal

political work and the important mutual influence of culture and politics throughout histories of Black diasporic activism. Through TPZM, Marjorie indeed realized that :

T'étais pas obligé d'aller dans la rue	[You didn't have to go into the
distribuer des journaux ... tu pouvais	streets to distribute newspapers, you
militer en faisant du maintien de	could organize by working to
culture d'origine, de l'éducation	maintain the culture of origin, doing
populaire... c'était plus cohérent	popular education... what we did
pour moi ce qu'on faisait avec les	with the children was more coherent
enfants, avec les jeunes.... Il y a eu la	for me, with the youth... There was
Clinique communautaire en même	the Community Clinic at the same
temps que La Maison d'Haïti.	time than La Maison d'Haïti.]

Coherence through time. The 'miracle' of the group's ongoing presence around La Maison d'Haïti is in fact anchored in people's long-term commitment, connected to their belief in the need for coherence over time. This was also articulated by many as the overt choice they made to stay at La Maison d'Haïti. For Elizabeth, it is because of her strong and coherent convictions that she remained involved over the years while Alix stressed the need for 'long play' to see the impact of one's work, an idea echoed by many. Adeline expressed that activism and community organizing are the work of a lifetime. Whereas for Jacquelin this work *is* a commitment in and of itself. It is the fact of believing in it that sustains one through the inevitable ups and downs.

A Quest for Justice

For activists in general, fighting injustice is a strong impetus, if not the most important

(Bourque & Comeau, 2007a; Doucet, 2011a, 2011b; Savard, 2007). For members of the group, it was no different. People often retraced their awareness and ‘hatred’ of injustice, to use Marjorie’s words, to their childhood. She never considered inequalities normal, even as a young child. Céradiou said :

Qu’est-ce qui m’a fait m’impliquer	[What made me get involved into
en politique? [...] depuis que je suis	politics? ... since I was young, I’ve
tout petit, je suis contre l’injustice.	been against injustice.]

Seeing his cousins disappear during Duvalier’s regime raised for Jacquelin “une quête de justice” [a quest for justice], shared by others. As Labelle and Therrien observed (1992) the political context in Haïti sensitized many future Haitian activists to the issues of poverty, exploitation and injustice under Duvalier’s regime, leading to their engagement in community work in Montreal. The quest for justice obviously encompassed fighting injustice but it also entailed working for better living conditions for all and the right to self-representation and self-assertion.

Fighting injustice. Fighting against multiple forms of oppression at the social, political, family, relational, community, local, national, and transnational levels, and through various means came up in collective and individual interviews as well as in multiple documents. The archive of resistance attests to that. But as Mireille highlighted, the quest for justice also required smaller gestures. For instance, educating to foster autonomy was perceived as a way to bring about justice by helping people fight for their rights. For Adeline, autonomy is

la confiance en soi, c’est l’estime de	[self-confidence, it’s ultimately self-
soi finalement, on croit qu’on peut	esteem, to believe you can do
faire quelque chose, on croit qu’on	something, to believe you can
peut y arriver.	achieve things.]

Rights education was embedded in the literacy courses, pedagogical material and other publications. Literacy aimed to give people tools to analyze and understand their living context and direct their learning process to gain a sense of agency over their lives, be able to find solutions to the problems they faced and have the confidence to act upon them (see Paul, 1992). Teaching people to learn to read and write was also to help them confront exploitation in their families or workplace, for instance for precarious workers without status. The newsletter played a key role: it denounced injustice while making people aware of their rights whether as workers or women for example. In the July-August 1979 newsletter, an article even touched on the role of Haitian folktales in teaching children to recognize injustice. Marie-Andrée spoke of many instances where she taught adults how to read and write their names to help them stop the abuses they were experiencing at the hands of family members who controlled their personal information. For many, empathy, respect and trust in people's ability to learn also helped foster autonomy and were thus key for justice as well. As the 2004-2005 annual report reiterated, even after over 30 years the organization still chose to privilege the most vulnerable groups and to exercise its influence in the search for social justice and in the defense of the common good.

The common good. Justice also meant creating better living conditions for all. A 2016 article by founding members of La Maison d'Haïti reminded readers that since the beginning, the well-being of Haitians inside and outside the country was at the heart of their work. The right for better living conditions for all drove many of those interviewed. Interestingly, understanding that one's wellbeing is connected to that of others is a strong enticement to collective action (Dutt & Grabe, 2014; Drury & Reicher, 2005; Wiley & Bikmen, 2012). As mentioned previously, the difficult living conditions in Haiti were a source of motivation to work for social transformation there. This continued in Canada and still drives people such as Marjorie:

Je continue à toujours militer pour
gagner des choses pour le mieux-
être... comme de te dire que c'est
pas possible qu'une situation comme
ça existe et donc pour que cette
situation n'existe plus il faut qu'on
continue à travailler.

[I still continue to advocate to win
things for the common good... this
means telling yourself that it's not
possible that a situation like this still
exists and therefore, for this situation
to no longer exist you have to keep
working.]

Suzie mentioned that improving collective wellbeing is the only ideology she adheres to.

Providing community care such as accessible health care in collaboration with the CCH or health education sessions specifically for Haitian women with RAFA also related to this search for collective welfare. As the Haitian women activists' archive shows, women's role in caring for community members was significant here, as is often the case in other Black communities (see Collins, 1991; Gilkes, 1994; Hampton & Rochat, 2019; Stall & Stoecker, 1998). Improving children's lives also involved working for better schooling conditions, addressing institutional racism over the years and even demanding right to access to schools for children without status in the early 1970s. One way to try to ensure that the community's needs were addressed was to develop activities and programs based on those needs, something that was reiterated in many documents. Finally, the centre aimed to improve people's labour opportunities and working conditions through professional training for newcomers and youth. Over the years, most worker's training and recruitment for both men and women nonetheless remained oriented mainly towards manual labour, factory and domestic but work information about workers' rights for better work conditions was also circulated (see Paul, 1992).

The right to self-representation. Finally, asserting and representing Haitian history and culture was also seen as working for justice and equality, to challenge distorted and racist images or discourses about Haiti and Haitians. Alix remembered La Maison d’Haïti categorically refused to change its name when pressured to do so for a charity number application, so as not to deny where they came from. Like at the UNIA and the NCC before them (Bertley, 1982) the youth programs emphasized cultural and historical transmission, to foster a strong sense of identity and self-esteem in Black children and help them confront the challenges and racism they were bound to encounter (see Sanders, 2016). Mireille remembers how women in the TPZM program worked to rectify children’s understanding and views of themselves. Often when asked to draw their mothers, Black children would draw them with straight blond hair:

Donc Marjorie a travaillé beaucoup	[So Marjorie worked a lot on that, to
sur ça, tu fais faire prendre à l’enfant	make the child conscious, look at
conscience, [...] de se regarder dans	him or herself in a mirror, “What do
un miroir, « comment tu es? Tu vois,	you see? Look at the pencil, what
le crayon quelle couleur tu vas	colour are you going to use for your
mettre pour ta peau, quelle couleur,	skin, what colour, how are you going
comment tu vas faire les cheveux? »	to make your hair?” You understand,
tu comprends, c’est la représentation	it’s about the representation the child
de l’enfant. (Mireille)	has of him or herself.]

The use of drawings in different publications and pedagogical material by Marjorie also addressed the need for the assertion of Haitianness and Blackness in Quebec since

C’était un manque...pour moi c’était	[It was a lack ... for me it was
important de représenter des femmes	important to represent women and

et des femmes noires et des femmes
bien représentées. À leur juste
valeur.

and Black women, to represent them
well. At their true worth.]

Strength of the Collective, Collective Strength

The emphasis of the collective was not only in relation to the collective good but also referred to the conviction that strength rests in numbers. Building power comes from working with others and not from isolated, individual efforts. Building power comes from building community. If collective good is the aim, fostering collective strength is part of the process to get there and is as important. Adeline's words capture this well:

Quand tu es un collectif ... tu
cherches toutes les richesses que tu
peux avoir de ce collectif, ta force se
multiplie.

[When you are a collective... you
seek all the assets you can have from
this collective, and your strength
multiplies.]

For her, organizing is precisely about combining collective skills, resources and strength to knock doors down and lead to transformation. To do so, building community and nurturing solidarity are essential, demonstrating the importance of building constellations through various connections.

Building community. Nurturing trust to create strong networks was essential for building community at La Maison d'Haïti, something that Marie-Andrée, Adeline, Mireille and Marjorie mentioned (see Paul 1992). This is also the case in organizing in general (Brady & O'Connor, 2014) and relates to the work to forge relationships, which in turn forges the Black diasporic community. However, community building also entailed bridging a heterogeneous community and mobilizing for common causes.

The Haitian community encompasses diverse groups, even different cultures, according to Marie-Andrée. Jacquelin also observed that the community

n'est pas une communauté entre	[is not a quote on quote
guillemet « homogène » ... c'est une	“homogeneous” community... it's a
communauté qui est arrivée...avec	community that arrived with its
ses problèmes, ses difficultés et nous	problems, its difficulties and us,
comme on voulait servir... tout le	since wanted to serve...everyone, we
monde, aussi bien on s'adressait aux	catered to adults for political
adultes pour les questions politiques,	questions but ... there were also
....mais ... il y avait aussi des jeunes	young people at the time who had
à l'époque qui était en difficulté	academic problems.]
scolaire.	

As detailed in the previous chapter conflicts between people, groups, and organizations reoccurred over time, as elsewhere in the diaspora (see Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990; Lindskoog, 2013; Pierre-Louis, 2002) and led to challenges in organizing collective actions. Although divergences within the community caused a lack of solidarity for some (see Déjean, 1978) and sometimes led to collective initiatives falling apart, to overcome these divisions, one of the goals of organizing was to rally people towards a common vision and around common causes, whether these affected Haitians in Montreal or elsewhere. A January 1985 public statement explicitly mentions division between organizations who tended to only collaborate sporadically on specific issues and calls for a stronger, more consistent, unity (La Maison d'Haïti, 1985, January). These divisions were often caused by personal conflicts between representatives of the groups more than by the organization's membership. However, common

causes helped build a sense of community (see Saint-Victor, 2017) and temporarily rallied the various Haitian subcommunities together (see Boucard, 2001). Suzie recalled that:

Quelque chose qui nous a beaucoup	[Something that brought the whole
rapproché toute la gang, c'est la	gang together is the issue of AIDS
question du Sida....on ne disait pas they didn't say "certain people",
« certaines personnes », on disait	they said "Haitians", so we made a
« les haïtiens », donc il a fallu	common front to remove that label.
comme faire un bloc, pour enlever	We had to come together to work.
cette étiquette-là. Il a fallu s'unir	Then we had the issue of
pour travailler, ensuite on a eu la	delinquency, so here we, the
question de la délinquance, alors là,	teachers, the pedagogues, the
nous autre les enseignants, les	trainers, wow, it was as if
pédagogues, les formateurs, wow,	delinquency was Haitian, do you
c'est comme si la délinquance était	understand? So we couldn't sit there
haïtienne, est-ce que tu comprends?	watching.]

Donc on ne pouvait pas rester là, à regarder.

La Maison d'Haïti itself brought people with varying approaches, ideologies, and politics together. The work to foster collaboration applied to women too, as seen through the Haitian women activists' archive. Though the institution and its members were certainly embedded in community conflicts at times, they nonetheless called for unity in multiple instances.

Fostering Solidarity. Solidarity was inscribed in the organization's politics since the beginning and was mentioned by the majority of the group as a driving force. For Jacquelin, solidarity is

une forme de partage, d'abord de	[a form of sharing, first of value, ...
valeur, ...et ensuite de partage	and then of material sharing ... of
matériel... de ce qu'on a. Et moi je	what we have. And I am in solidarity
suis solidaire de certaines causes ...	with certain causes ... and whatever
et quel que soit le moment, je serai	the moment, I will always be in
toujours solidaire de ces causes.	solidarity with these causes.]

Based on his work on various internationalist movements, including Black internationalist ones, Featherstone argues that solidarity is more than just a relation of likeness or based on empathy (2013a, 2013b). It is the construction of actual connections and relations to struggle against oppressions through concrete actions. As noted in the 1998-99 annual report, solidarity with those that were socially excluded, discriminated against or marginalized, such as immigrants in Quebec, continued to direct many of the activities undertaken by the organization over the years. It led the organization to, amongst other things, promote cooperation and raise awareness among public and parapublic institutions for a greater accessibility of appropriate services. Even programs such as CAFHAM aimed at promoting a sense of solidarity from participants (La Maison d'Haïti, 1985). Solidarity meant to collectively and actively promote the community's rights (Maison d'Haïti, 1973, September), confirming that "social group membership and identity can be a basis for solidarity and collective action" (Watts et. al, 2011 p. 53). Diasporic solidarity was also acted out through the various coalitions and actions that brought together Haitian groups in Montreal over the years, such as during the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s and encompassed solidarity with Haitians in the diaspora. Whether it was before or after 1986, solidarity with Haitians in Haiti was fundamental and translated through work done for instance with the AQOCI and the ROCAHD. "Solidarité-Haïti" [Solidarity Haiti] and "Solidarité-

International” [International Solidarity] were actually the titles under which different folders of documents were organized. For Jacquelin and others, solidarity with other groups was equally vital (see Céliné et al. 2016). As can be read in the archive of resistance, they supported anti-dictatorship struggles in the Philippines and Chile; national liberation struggles such as that of Palestine; anti-colonial/imperial struggles such as the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa; workers’ struggles, especially those of racialized immigrants in Quebec and more.

Sharing

As Jacquelin’s earlier quote details, sharing personal resources also related to fostering solidarity. More broadly, the need to share was intimately connected to the quest for justice and to the belief in the power of collective strength.

Sharing leadership. Encouraging people to take charge of, and even initiate activities and programs that were coherent with the centre’s goals and objectives was perceived as a way to foster shared leadership (Maison d’Haïti, 1973, April 3). The first programs were expected to run autonomously, in line with the collectively defined objectives (La Maison d’Haïti, 1976 Dec.-1977 Jan.). As various reports and newsletters reveal, over the years, the core group of organizers attempted to get more people involved in the day-to-day organizing, though it remained a challenge. According to Alix, even if leadership entails bringing a group together, one should

not direct the group, but let the group direct itself ... it’s to have leadership that is.... [a] very democratic type of leadership, in terms of organizing people to get together, [it] gives them the possibility to develop on their own...so let the community develop or grow as they feel.” (Jean, 2014, November 13)

Because of this approach to leadership, no one was ever considered ‘the face’ of La Maison d’Haïti. Marjorie noted that:

Il n’y a personne qui peut dire “c’est moi”, je pense que c’est tout le monde qui a fait, tout le monde ensemble.	[No one who can say “it’s me, I did it”, I think it was everyone who did it, everyone together.]
---	--

‘Everyone did together’ by doing everything that was needed for the centre to run. Though people had their preferred activities and interests, no one was bound to specific tasks or positions, since, as Marie-Andrée proclaimed

c’est un centre communautaire, <i>ou pa gen anyen ou pa fè non la dan!!</i>	[it’s a community centre, there is nothing you don’t do there. I did everything, everything, everything...]
J’ai fait tout, tout, tout, tout...	

Doing everything also meant being on the board of La Maison d’Haïti for everyone interviewed at some point, as well as being on the board of partner organizations for many, illustrating the circulation of people inside and outside the institution. Over the years, there was even a section of the annual report reflecting the work to collaborate with other groups – another form of shared leadership. Those sections were variously entitled ‘collective interventions’, ‘concertation’, ‘relations’, ‘inter-relations’ and more, encompassing the work done through formal and informal partnerships, coalitions, committees, etc. According to Alix, activist work is about going where you will be the most efficient, “c’est toujours une question [de] là où on est plus efficace”. This also meant that paid and unpaid work were one and the same for everyone interviewed.

Volunteering was the primary source of labour that sustained the organization for years and comes up systematically in the newsletters and reports.

Sharing knowledge. People believed that making knowledge accessible is fundamental for social change. Knowledge is meant to be redistributed and circulated. Mireille mentioned sharing her knowledge as well as her skills, such as her dancing skills by volunteering and teaching in various community centres. Adeline recalled how important it was for her to transmit everything she knew to the younger activists she taught Creole and literacy pedagogy to. Sharing and circulating knowledge also meant participating in public events and places, organizing information sessions or workshops as well as creating back and forth communication with the public through the radio show's open line as Jacquelin explained. According to Adeline, knowledge had to be made accessible to move forward, since

les intellectuels prennent plaisir à	[intellectuals take pleasure in
brouiller les choses, à les rendre	confusing things, making them
inaccessible, à les garder pour un	inaccessible, keeping them for a
cercle fermé...mais je crois qu'on	closed circle ... but I believe that we
peut avancer valablement....il faut	can genuinely advance ... we must
donner confiance aux gens	give people the confidence to move
d'avancer.	forward.]

Within the organization, knowledge production and circulation were partly guided by the attempts and desires to create collective leadership and knowledge. For instance, disseminating information through the radio went hand in hand with getting input from community members to inform the organization's actions, as both Alix and Jacquelin explained. Outside the organization, the role of the liaison and information officer in the 1980s was to circulate

knowledge to foster coherence, concertation and collaborations between Haitian groups (La Maison d'Haïti Inc., c. 1985).

Conclusion

Moving forward together, coherently and towards a common goal for social justice and change captures well what the group's shared praxis is about. This chapter demonstrated how various learning experiences influenced activists' politicization and subsequent involvement at La Maison d'Haïti. By learning from people, reading and reading circles, lived experiences of state violence and mobility, as well as participating in youth groups and engaging in activism, members of the group were politicized and enticed to action. Their actions were driven by their common convictions of the need for coherence, the quest for justice, as well as the need to build collective strengths and to share. In this context, community education was intrinsic to their activism but also influenced it. Education played a pedagogical, social, cultural, economic and political role and was therefore essential in ultimately building the community of activists.

As noted by Stekelenburg, Klandermans, and Akkerman "*the* activist does not exist" (2016, p. 311, italics in original). While people's path to activism share commonalities, they are also deeply anchored in very personal experiences and characteristics. Because of its multiple role and impact, community education is therefore fundamental to move people from the personal to the collective, from the individual to a community. It cultivates common politics, facilitates collective actions, nurtures relationships, fosters the creation of a network and promotes a sense of belonging, making it an essential factor for Black diasporic activism. And just as *the* activist does not exist, there is no such thing as *the* Black diasporic activist praxis. It is the plurality of constantly evolving Black diasporic activist praxes that makes the richness of the Black radical tradition. But, as with all traditions, it is the continuity of patterns of practices,

behaviours and thoughts that allows for both its evolution and its enduring quality. These patterns are the components of Black diasporic activism that make for its historical character.

Chapter 7. Components of a Black Diasporic Activist Tradition (and of its Future)

Montreal is considered by many as a node of Black transnational organizing (see Austin, 2013; High, 2017; Mills, Rochat, & High, 2020; Mills, 2016). More than just the city, however, it is the institutions people created for themselves that are truly the nodes that anchored this organizing. Whether in the shape of community organizations, cultural or national associations, or other institutions, Black diasporic nodes materialized from people's imagination, convictions and actions. They arose from communities' shared praxis and inserted the city in a wider transnational Black Atlantic network. In return, they provided people with a space to bond and exchange with one other; a space for Black communities to grow and strengthen, and from which to connect to other communities, Black and beyond.

Black diasporic nodes such as La Maison d'Haïti are an outcome of diasporic community homemaking. According to Laguerre (1998), an important aspect of the transnational political practices of Haitian diasporic communities is the creation of what he calls transnational spaces in their new living contexts. For Laguerre, those spaces are not necessarily specific physical locations though they can be. They are nonetheless spaces of expansion of state boundaries and of insertion of the diaspora into the receiving state. They are hybridized spaces because of the meeting of different communities; spaces of flows of communication, materials, and people; hierarchized spaces because of power dynamics; formal and informal spaces; relational spaces; and transactional spaces. Laguerre's conceptualization of transnational spaces overlaps in different ways with that of Black diasporic nodes. I conceptualize nodes, however, as the real spaces that communities create for themselves. They are, and have been, crucial not only for Haitian diasporic activism but for Black diasporic activism in general because of the various

functions they serve, functions that define them.

The Functions of Nodes

My father is an agronomist. My mother is an artist. One passion they shared is gardening. Everywhere we have lived, we have had gardens. My father planted the Swiss garden of his childhood in our Haitian backyard, even attempting to grow a grape vine from a stem sent from Switzerland by his sister. My mother recreated lush Haitian flora in our Montreal apartments and grew soursop and avocado trees. She multiplied hibiscus plants and pothos through cuttings. My parents pruned plants to strengthen them, propagated them by getting stem cuts to root and grafted plants together to create new flower colors. They were able to do that because they knew the fascinating abilities and functions of nodes.

In biology, plant nodes are the points on stems from which leaves, branching twigs, aerial roots and buds originate from (Ravenscroft, 2015; Vanderlinden, 2018). Nodes are crucial for plant growth because of the important and increased cellular activity that happens there. They also play a fundamental role for the reproduction, propagation and transformation of plants. For instance, through cuttings and air layering techniques, one can get nodes to grow roots and make a whole new plant from a stem. By pruning a stem right above a node, one can get it to grow new branches and make the plant structure stronger and healthier. Nodes are thus “essential plant parts wherein biological processes, structural support and healing take place” (Ravenscroft, 2015). In diagrams or networks, nodes can also be points where lines or pathways intersect, branch and join. They are central points of connections, or better said, “a centering point of component parts” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2021). Whether in biology or beyond, nodes are therefore crucial for the articulation and the development of systems because of the different functions they serve. They can be points

- of intersection: where pathways or units meet, cross, overlap.
- of juncture: where things connect, merge, graft.
- of rupture: where things disjuncture, break, split.
- of regrowth: where structural support and healing take place.
- of growth: where new branches, leaves, and roots originate from, meaning where new elements of organisms, or even new organisms, develop.

Components of a Black Diasporic Activist Tradition

Constitutive Components

There is a constitutive relationship between Black diasporic nodes, constellations, connections, circulation and the shared praxis of communities, which together make for the key components that sustain a long tradition of Black diasporic activism. This activism is itself inscribed in a wider Black radical tradition. The fact that these components mutually make each other ensures the development and continuity of activism over time and through various geographies. They also facilitate the production and transmission of activist politics and practices, the transmission of Black diasporic activist knowledge.

Black diasporic nodes are established through the other four components but also facilitate them in return. They foster the articulation of interpersonal and institutional constellations. They promote personal, spatial and political connections and the circulation of people, knowledge and resources. The shared praxis of activist groups itself relies on personal and political connections, on interpersonal constellations, and on the circulation of knowledge through community education. Through their shared praxis groups give shape to Black diasporic nodes and in turn, nodes provide the space in which this praxis is further experimented, thought, and transformed. They provide spaces where praxis and the community it builds, can develop.

As in the case of plants, nodes are spaces of intense cellular activity where collective knowledge is produced and transmitted through activism. As has been demonstrated throughout this dissertation, through the social actions they undertake to better their lives, community members generate knowledge about their experiences, politics, identities, realities, social environment and so on. This collective knowledge is intimately tied to collective labour and to the physical and social spaces that communities create for themselves, illustrating the connections between the producers of knowledge, modes and spaces of knowledge production, and the actual knowledge produced. This collective knowledge, circulated through community education, builds identity and community. What the dissertation also demonstrates is that the work to preserve this knowledge can also serve to generate knowledge *about* activism and activist knowledge while continuing to build communities. By remaining anchored in a Black diasporic node, community archiving as ethnography not only relied on this and other components of Black diasporic activism, it also illustrated that it was possible for projects of preservation and of production of knowledge to *remain* intimately tied to the original modes and spaces where activist knowledge is produced.

Evolutive Component

Community archiving as ethnography therefore becomes part of the tradition of Black diasporic activism by relying on some of its components, simultaneously ensuring both the preservation of its past and the generation of its future by being based on the premisses that

1. Black diasporic activist archives are communities of records.
2. The societal provenance of these communities of records is anchored in a Black diasporic activist tradition itself part of a broader Black radical tradition.

3. There is an interrelation between the creation of records, their preservation, their activation and uses, and their interpretations framed through an archival continuum framework. This framework accounts for the social nature of knowledge production, transmission, acquisition and preservation.
4. The activities of community-anchored archiving and research can overlap and feed one another, fostering the ongoing and limitless cultivation of the archive.

The Black Diasporic Node

Where Sanders (2016) sees diasporic lakou, Campt sees diasporic homemaking (2009), Laguerre (1998) sees diasporic spaces, I see Black diasporic nodes. All four ultimately speak to the fact that diasporic communities actively work to create their own spaces. These spaces emerge out of collective physical, emotional, and intellectual labour. Forging community spaces as acts of resistance and protection, and for the common good can even be tied to the practice of marooning. For activism, space is crucial in different ways: proximity and shared space facilitate people's engagement with one another and thus, their activism while having a dedicated space also helps foster relations, collective actions, collaborations. Creating spaces for people to connect to one another was an explicit goal since La Maison d'Haïti's inception. This goal eventually transformed collective actions into an actual community centre.

Processing archival records also takes space, and that space, in turn can promote connections between people, and to the records (see Ketelaar, 2008). The fact that the archiving and research projects happened in the community space allowed for the project to evolve over time while remaining anchored in the community that created the archive. It helped maintain connections between the archives' creator and their archives by ensuring that they keep custody and have access to them. It allowed people to connect to the archives, such as during the summer

2016 when we occupied the meeting room. Space, in the shape of a Black diasporic node fulfills different purposes both for community organizing and community archiving as ethnography.

A Point of Intersections: Paths & Constellations

La Maison d'Haïti was a space where paths crossed and where connections happened, allowing for encounters and exchanges that might have been more difficult for instance in Haiti because of divisions along class lines, generations, between rural/urban settings, and more. The transnational archive, with records mapping out different migratory trajectories is a testament to that. The overlap of various interpersonal and institutional constellations was also facilitated by the organization which became the point where pathways met, sometimes even just for a moment. Most people who come to community centres for services don't necessarily stay passed that. No matter how short their passage through the organization is, it nonetheless marks it. It is also for them that activists work, those who only come once, when they feel the need to. Though their presence is certainly less documented in the archive than these of activists, they are nonetheless part of the community of records as well. Even when some of their personal records are erased for confidential issues, the records of the activities they attended, of the advocacy done on their behalf or with them, stay there.

The organization was also a point of intersections of the multiple institutional constellations it belongs to, facilitating collective or coalitional work. Adeline affirmed that the problems that La Maison d'Haïti addressed specifically called for the development of various networks. Being part of various constellations in turn fed the institution observed Marjorie, "c'est ça qui l'a nourri!". The node strengthened constellations and vice versa, and these constellations can be traced in the archive. In turn, the archive is now itself connected to a constellation of other institutional archives. A few documents produced by, or mentioning the

organization are present in archives such as those of Library and Archives Canada [LAC] and Bibliothèque et archives Nationale du Québec [BAnQ]. LAC holds a variety of documents including some of its publications and some related to program funding received from the Canadian government whereas BAnQ holds some of their publications as well as the archival fonds of photographer Serge Jongué. Jongué collaborated extensively with the organization in the late 1970s and 1980s and documented a lot of their activities over these years. The archive is also connected to those of other Black community organizations such as the Jamaica Association and the NCC, other Haitian organizations such as CIDIHCA and other community groups, such as Head in Hands, showing the circulation of information and sometimes of resources between groups. The NCC archival fonds, now held at Concordia University Library's Special collections holds documents that mention La Maison d'Haïti, and others that were produced by it, such as correspondence. In addition, it contains documents related to its various summer camps, including the one created by Alix, Mireille and other Haitian youths, illustrating various constellation of Montreal's Black activists. The node's archive intersects with others.

A Point of Juncture: People, Groups, Knowledges and Labour Coming Together

The Black diasporic node and the circulation of people joined spaces, geographies, and communities. They also helped the coming together of labour, projects, collectives, ideas, and so on, sometimes leading to the creation of new things.

La Maison d'Haïti bridged Montreal and Haïti, it joined communities of Haitian leftists, students, youth, mothers, workers and other community members. It allowed for groups like the ADMEH, and the RIIAH to join forces and create a new space like the CCH. It also became a point of anchor for activists who moved transnationally. For instance, Haitian activists and artists such as singer Martha Jean-Claude who was exiled in Cuba, came to Montreal on a few

occasions to collaborate with La Maison d'Haïti. Jacquelin moved between different places beyond Haiti and Montreal for the organization's radio show and political advocacy.

Transnational circulation, as well as circulation inside and outside the community and the organization is an organic part of all our diasporic lives, thinking, and activism. This circulation allows us to bridge and join communities, geographies and ideas. The node gives us a space and a community to come back to and weave together what we bring back with us. This is critical for Marjorie :

Moi j'ai toujours développé la	[Me, I've always developed the
communauté comme une espèce de	community as a kind of open thing,
truc ouvert, ok. Tu rentres, tu sors, tu	ok. You come in, you go out, you go
vas où tu veux...tu reviens avec des	where you want ... you come back
gens qui ne sont pas de la	with people who are not from the
communauté haïtienne ...il y a une	Haitian community ... there is a
circulation qui doit se faire il y a	traffic that must happen.... other
d'autres idées qui doivent	ideas must enter ... A community is
rentrer...Une communauté est	interesting when you can circulate
intéressante quand tu peux circuler	but if it locks you in there, child,
mais si elle t'enferme là-dedans <i>oh</i>	run!]
<i>pitit! Kouri!</i>	

While working on this project, I myself, had the privilege to move back and forth and live between places connected to my family, including Haiti (Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien), Canada (Cap-Rouge, Charny and Montréal), Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo), and Switzerland (Saubraz and Lausanne). I have explained how these movements shaped my

analytical journey, highlighting the ongoing connections all of us have maintained with Haiti. Coming back to La Maison d'Haïti and its archive from each of these movements also furthered my thinking *from* a diasporic perspective.

Finally, one of the most important strengths of community archiving as ethnography is that it ultimately stems from the juncture of different practices, types of labour, and facilitates the coming together of different sources of knowledge. For Moore (2016) community archiving entails the weaving of a web through the back and forth between various forms of labour that connect different knowledges, activist practices and individuals. The web denotes the creation of the community archive itself, as well as the importance of the constellation of activists that come together around it. As a web, the community archive unites.

A Point of Rupture: Diasporic Décalages and Silences of the Archive

Diaspora emerges out of rupture, and this rupture underlies the foundation of the node as well. Ruptures come from the initial break with the country of origin but also from the discontinuities and décalage intrinsic to Black diasporic communities. The constant efforts to maintain connections with Haiti, to stay informed and respond to events there, to transmit its history and culture can only happen because in the first place, people left the country. For everyone, this rupture was significant. For some, like my grandparents and others, it was even traumatic. Céradieu reminded me how my granddad, like so many others, waited for years for Duvalier's regime to fall to be able to go back home:

On est toujours branché sur Haïti, les
gens, à un certain moment donné tu
as l'impression que...leurs valises
sont restées derrière la porte, il attend

[We always stayed focused on Haiti,
at a certain point, you had the
impression that people left their
suitcases right behind the door,

que Duvalier s'en aille pour
retourner, tu vois il y en a beaucoup
qui était comme ça, dont ton grand-
père!!

waiting for Duvalier to leave, to go
back, you see, many people were like
that, including your grandad!!]

The omnipresence of Haitian culture, history, politics, news, language and so on in the organization's activities demonstrate how community members constantly attempted to overcome the rupture from their home country. The negotiation of differences between Haitian and Black groups also come from the differences and sometimes ruptures that exist between them, and those that are created by activism itself, through divergent politics and approaches.

But ruptures also entail the people or groups that severed their ties to the organization. La Maison d'Haïti eventually became the work environment of many, bringing challenges that arise in every workplace. Literature on organizational conflicts often frames these in two broad categories: task conflicts and relationship conflicts (see Chaudhry & Asif, 2015; Jehn, 1997; Medina, Munduate, Dorado, Martínez, & Guerra, 2005). Task conflicts emerge from the actual work and can entail disagreements on strategies, decision making, procedures, task delegation, assignment of responsibility, etc. Relationship conflicts emerge from interpersonal and group dynamics and factors and can entail conflicts of values, of personality, etc. Like in all organizations, institutionalization of activities also eventually brought the institutionalization of an organizational hierarchy and dynamic that led people to be fired or to resign because of both task-related and relationship conflicts. The various types conflicts explained in Chapter five were not always resolved and sometimes led to the breakdown of relationships, both personal and with the organization. As explained before, no space is neutral, nor devoid of tensions. There are

certainly experiences of La Maison d'Haïti which might be negative, having led to departures from the centre and these ruptures, whether they are documented or not, also shape the archive. As Trouillot argues (1995), each archive has its own silences, partly due to various forms of ruptures. Some of those silences relate to the people who, for various reasons, either left the centre or stopped attending; people who took with them other kinds of stories of the institution. They relate to the groups who did not collaborate, stopped collaborating, or never even established contact with the centre. Part of activism and community organizing is also sometimes what doesn't happen, what never comes into being. For instance, a letter received in 1992 from the Ligue des Noirs du Québec, addresses the issue of leadership and unity between Black communities and attests to some of the failed attempts of various Black community organizations to join efforts (Philip, 1992, July 10). The silences of the archive therefore also emerge from a history that sometimes never was, as well as events that weren't documented. Other silences are those that were actually *purposefully* created in the organization's archives, when documents such as confidential documents were intentionally destroyed. La Maison d'Haïti has always provided services to people who lived in Canada without legal status or with precarious status. The destruction of the documents pertaining to them was also way to ensure their protection though it certainly raises questions about who can afford to be formally documented and who can't. This demonstrates that even with community archives the relationship between archives, power and legal and state authorities can weigh. Nonetheless, it is not because people cannot be documented legally that their lives are not documented: their archives only belong to different communities of records, as explained previously. Documenting and accounting for the archival continuum highlights not only the records that are present in a community archive but also those that weren't created in the first place and those that couldn't be

preserved there. These absences are inherent to the archive's formation. This broader frame is important to keep in mind if we are to preserve archives that reflect the complexities, challenges and sometimes even oppressive dynamics within our communities.

A point of Regrowth: Shared Memories of Violence, Belonging and Healing

Some of the most important functions of nodes for plants are the structural support and healing that they provide. Part of the history of the organization is also the fact that its evolution is inextricably related to the lived conditions of diaspora, which are sometimes painful, even traumatic. Resistance is an answer to lived violence, injustice and oppression. The societal provenance of the archive – the Black radical tradition – is a direct response to racial capitalism's violence. The Haitian Revolution, the U.S. occupation of Haiti, the protests against the Scottsboro case, the assassination of Martin Luther King, the anti-deportation campaign of 1973-74, the various anti-racist struggles of the 1980s, the protests against the police killings of Anthony Griffin and Marcellus François are a few of the many examples of moments around which Black communities rallied against racial injustices and demanded change. They rallied because they understood the shared hurts. Struggles against a dictatorial regime, exile, discrimination, sexism, deportations, family separations, are painful. For exiled communities, a sense of affiliation can arise from shared feelings of trauma and vulnerability after having experienced political violence (Butler, 2003; Jara, 2016). Activism also aims to foster regrowth and healing by embedding people in a community fabric and space with others that have lived similar pains. Feeling of connection to others, of belonging and intimacy help to overcome these pains. This is what enticed Céradiou to continue organizing, even after his own experience of imprisonment.

J'organisais des, des piques niques

[I organized picnics because I like

parce que j'aime ça voir du monde
content... en groupe ... j'aime ça
voir les gens s'amuser aussi, malgré
les souffrances, les douleurs.

seeing people happy...together ... I
like seeing people having fun too,
despite the pain, the suffering.]

For him, activism itself became a source of healing. Being embedded in a community also provides protection for those that feel vulnerable. Suzie recalled that by participating in the activities

c'est là que j'ai réalisé qu'on faisait
bien de se mettre en groupe ici
comme ça ici... . Parce que n'oublie
pas quand tu es toute seule comme
femme, pour élever tes enfants, tu
cherches de la protection et je me
sentais protégée à La Maison
d'Haïti... alors j'ai renforcé ma
présence à La Maison d'Haïti.

[that's when I realized that we were
doing well to gather together in a
group here Because don't forget
when you are alone as a woman, to
raise your children, you look for
protection and I felt protected at La
Maison d'Haïti ... and that
reinforced my ties to La Maison
d'Haïti.]

As Adeline pointed out in one of our discussions, my mother's family also lived Duvalier's violence, "*Ah Duvalier te terib wi!* Ah oui, c'est vrai, ta famille a passé par là-dedans aussi » [Ah Duvalier was terrible, yes! Ah yes, it's true, your family went through this also]. I never experienced the violence, nor the fear, or sense of terror. But the stories of violence experienced by members of my family are part of our family fabric and history – of our own family's community of records – like for the people I interviewed, and others who have lived through this

dictatorship. These memories also bind us together and are why I found traces of my family in this node's archive.

Though I had always known about them intuitively, this process further highlighted my own multiplex ties to this constellation of activists. It also strengthened them. Tamboukou (2014, 2016) notes that archival research creates encounters between the researcher or the archivist, and the people who created or are documented in the records. So does archiving (see Caswell & Cifor, 2016). When we are in the archive we are “entangled in the web of human relations that include both the living and the dead” (Tamboukou, 2016, p. 91). Archiving relies on a physical and sensual encounter with the records (see Farge, 2013; Williams, 2006), and can engender connections between people. Through the oral history interviews I discovered many people knew family members: Marjorie went to school with my aunt in Montreal, Jacquelin and Céradieu knew my granddad well. I knew Adeline was somehow related to my grandfather Routo, but I didn't know how close they actually were: one of the persons who welcomed Adeline at the airport when she and her family landed in Montreal in exile in 1966 is my grandfather. They belonged to both to an extended family network and to a constellation of exiles. Though it doesn't seem he was involved with the CCH, I found out that Routo was part of the ADMHE and that he participated in numerous coalitions for the rights of Haitian refugees as well. I found at least three records about him in the archives. My grandmother, Michaëlle Léger, nicknamed Miki came up in an interview with Adeline.

Some of the most beautiful encounters I had through archiving are, however, personal connections of another nature: they happened with people I actually never met. Such is the case for Dr. Ernst Gresseau, who was the board's president for years, and Max Chancy, Adeline's husband. Fondly remembered, they both left their traces through their work, convictions and

commitment to Haitians in and outside Haiti. After years of being surrounded by their presence in the documents and people's memories, I feel like I've somehow 'met' them and got to know them a bit through the legacy of their work. Someone else whose encounter in the archive shook my heart is my aunt-by-kinship Jessica Carrié. A devoted psycho-educator Jessica collaborated with different women's programs over the years at La Maison d'Haïti. Finding her name in various documents made me feel her presence by my side. Community archiving can bond people to one another, and help communities heal when they look back at their history (Ketelaar, 2008). As I dove into people's lives through documents and oral histories, the sense of shared experiences and intimacy that arose did strengthen our bonds. A sense of belonging emerged from archiving, illustrating the social role of archives as the people that engage with them

construct stories that establish who they are and who they are not, where they fit in and where they do not, who belongs to them and who does not ... the user finds meaning and makes meaning in an archive or a record and those meanings help him or her in structuring and restructuring the relationship between the self and the world and thereby in the formation of his or her identity. (Ketelaar, 2012, p. 27)

A Point of Growth: Rooting and Branching

Nodes foster growth through rooting and branching. "[I]mmigrant life may be interpreted in terms of continuity rather than disruption, and rerootedness rather than uprootedness" (Laguerre, 1998, p. 4). This continuity partly stems from being rooted in a tradition such as Black diasporic activism which allows for communities to reroot in new environments. By fostering transmission of knowledge and of practices aiming for the creation of better living conditions, this tradition branches towards a new future. Black diasporic nodes nurture this process of growth by being spaces where communities and the praxes that make them can

evolve. Archives are important for the process because they connect praxis, community building and community identity through communities of records. Archiving communities of records can in turn, also foster the evolution of praxis and thus, of community.

The historical narratives of diasporic communities are bound up with collective memories (Bastian, 2014). These memories are part of the community of records that people produce through their actions, and eventually their praxis. Actions, even the most minute ones, are expressed and captured in various ways (whether oral, written, through memories, etc.), leading to a situation where there is a mirror between actions and records which documents the community's activities and help form its memory (Bastian, 2003). Through the relations between actions and records and between individual and collective records, a sense of shared identity and of community is built (Bastian, 2003). Shared praxis therefore also forges communities *through* community of records. "At the same time, a community of records is also one in which traditions of record keeping are developed" (Bastian, 2003, p. 5). Interestingly, during the interviews, many people spontaneously commented on the archives and research project, offering advice in some cases, illustrating how the project was a natural continuation of their community work and mine, the natural next step of our common work. Community archiving as ethnography therefore both roots and nurtures Black diasporic activism because orality is central to it, because it is framed by an archival continuum and because it aims to cultivate the archive.

Orality and the circulation of knowledge. The circulation of knowledge has been essential for the transmission of the Black radical tradition as well as for the evolution of La Maison d'Haïti and the community at its core, especially through community education and collective learning. This circulation has often relied on orality which, for a long time, served as the primary medium through which knowledge within and between Black communities was

shared. For community archiving as ethnography orality was also crucial, whether through the oral history interviews, as well as the formal and informal discussions. By fostering and capturing oral records, community archiving as ethnography builds from the centrality of orality for Black diasporic activism.

As the archive was being processed, information *about* the archive was also processed through conversations. Orality, as well as archiving directly in the community space, facilitated the continuous feedback loop between activities, and the transmission and the co-construction of knowledge. For example, it greatly influenced my reflection on the importance of visualizing blackness and the meaning of the social practice of photography. This reflection emerged from organizing the photographs, having people identify some pictures, explain their provenance or use, as well as talking to Alix about his own photographic practice. The individual and collective oral history interviews also allowed me to co-construct new knowledge with practitioners through a dialogical reflective process (Desgagné, 1998; Desgagné et al., 2001). I can now, in turn, pass on some of the stories that were gifted to me. Conversations with Marjorie, Adeline and Kristen were also important and greatly informed the dissertation and archive projects. I discussed every step of both projects with Marjorie. Over our years of conversation, she shared with me the history of the organization, as well as her insights as an activist, an educator and fierce intellectual. Without Adeline's prior labour, a lot of what I found would not have been there. Her work, writings and ideas helped me develop my own thoughts, especially on community education and Haitian politics, as well as contextualize the archives. Conversations with Kristen reinforced my theoretical framework and my work. So did our collaborative writing and presentations, the multiple archiving workshops she gave me and a study day on community archives we organized together. Though we never explicitly planned it like the women from

Nègès Vanyan before us, the sharing of skills and of knowledge is ongoing in our work together, again illustrating the role of community education in forging shared references and bonds.

Archival continuum: Generating community knowledge through archiving.

Community archiving as ethnography attempts to document the entire archival continuum. It threads the different actors, modes, processes, and spaces of knowledge production that form an archive from its creation to its organization and interpretation, showing their interconnections and social character by

- Mapping the historical and political context that influence people and their actions, tracing the collective aspects of organizing and knowledge production.

- Taking into account and looking for the different ways in which people record even their less visible actions.

- Preserving the multiple ways in which communities produce and record their knowledge in their own spaces.

- Documenting how the labour (physical and intellectual) of archiving impacts the interpretation and organization of archives; how archiving itself activates the records.

As Stéphane Martelly astutely captured in in the revision notes of my dissertation draft: by putting the archive and the knowledge it contains in circulation, the project also demonstrates the capacity of the archive and of the archiving project to produce new narratives, new conceptual paradigms and new analysis (S. Martelly, revision notes, Dec. 2020). By activating the archive through archiving and research and making people reflect on their own archives, this project circulated and preserved knowledge. One of the most rewarding uses of the archive, which truly brought it to life, was to be able to show documents and give some copies to the people who created them. People's enthusiasm was heartwarming :

Regarde j'avais même pas le texte,
c'est toi qui me l'a donnée, je l'avais
pas! C'est toi qui m'as dit que le
texte est là oui, je savais même pas si
le texte était là, mais là je l'ai!

(Marie-Andrée)

[Look, I didn't even have the text,
it's you who gave it to me, I didn't
have it. It's you who told me the text
is there, I didn't even know that the
text was there but now I have it!]

T'as plein de fortune là toi! Tu
m'emmène de belles choses-là, oh la
la! (Céradiou)

[You have plenty of gold there! You
bring me nice things, oh la la.]

Ketelaar (2001), building from the ideas of South African archives scholar Verne Harris, reminds us that storytelling is an outcome of archival intervention, and that “[a]t every stage of the record’s trajectory some ‘archiver’, while activating the record, tells a story. We have to document these stories” (p. 140). As I mentioned in the introduction chapter, this dissertation tells the story of this archive, from its creation, to its archiving, to its interpretation.

Documenting the archiving process through notes and discussions helps us to reflect on the process but also to leave traces for future projects. It illustrates the social construction of knowledge, which informed the dissertation as well. Like *Ti Pye Zoranj* and the newsletter before it, this dissertation now becomes another archival record of activists’ work through the story it tells, embedded with my own knowledge. And just like the archive, this dissertation also has its own silences – both intentional and unintentional – because some stories are missing, and others were purposefully left out. I, like others (see Simpson, 2007; Tuck & Yang 2014) do not believe academia is entitled to all knowledges. The relational ethics that ground my work means

that I know some stories are to be preserved in and by the communities that generate them, made to be transmitted orally, shared around a meal at the dinner table in places like community organizations.

Cultivation and the unfinished nature of archive and praxis. Interestingly, different scholars speak of the need to *cultivate* archives to keep them alive and develop the potential meanings they can have (see Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, Fuhrer 2004, p. 32; Ketelaar, 2012). The metaphor builds directly from the meaning of the word in relation to the tilling of the land and the growth of crops which involve preparing the soil and caring for crops so that they can develop. For archival records to keep, transmit, and generate meanings – for them to acquire significance – they also have to be cultivated. Like nodes, cultivation fosters growth. It fosters growth through meaning-making. This is done through the multiple activations of archival records, which generate emotional and intellectual responses as well as impulses to new actions (Ketelaar, 2012). Engaging with archives can indeed lead to important learning for activists by helping them to develop deeper understandings of how social transformation occurs over time; to better grasps of the histories of their local surroundings; and to experience the emotional, embodied and intellectual elements of archival research; all of which can inform and motivate their activism (Buchanan & Bastian, 2015). The archive has an infinite potential for meaning as Ketelaar (2001) brilliantly captures

Every interaction, intervention, interrogation, and interpretation by creator, user, and archivist is an activation of the record. ... Each activation leaves fingerprints which are attributes to the archive's infinite meaning. ... Every activation of the archive not only adds a branch to what I propose to call the semantic genealogy of the record and the archive. Every activation also changes the significance of earlier activations. The

semantic genealogy of the membranaric archive will be seen by some as a threat to traditional values as authenticity, originality, and uniqueness. But shouldn't we stress more the archive's power: the archive as 'repository of meanings'... We read today other things in the archive, than the next generation will read, and so on ad infinitum. The semantic genealogy provides the opportunity for any construction or deconstruction of what all the people involved in the archives' creation and use may have meant in archivalization and archiving. That re- and deconstruction is not the end of the archive, it is only possible through seeing with the archive." (Ketelaar, 2001 pp. 137-139)

By seeing *through* and *with* archives, we can collectively foster new forms and new meanings of Black diasporic activism.

The Earthquake

On January 12th, 2010, a magnitude 7 earthquake shook the area around Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. Aftershocks were felt across the country, as well as in every Haitian community in the diaspora. As Alix recalled: "c'est comme si on a eu un tremblement de terre ici aussi" [it is as if we had had an earthquake here too]. While the epicentre was hundreds of kilometres away from Montreal, reverberations were felt immediately in every Haitian home and centre in the city and lasted for months. Within hours of the earthquake, La Maison d'Haïti was filled with people and news crews seeking more information about what had happened. Haitians were trying to find ways to locate loved ones and understand the scale of the disaster; to get support and share their grief. For the three months that followed, the centre was opened seven days a week, from the early hours of the morning to late at night.

Facing one of the worst crises since the end of the dictatorship, people naturally came to a place where they felt they could get help, comfort, and support. The strong connections

between La Maison d’Haïti and Haiti; Montreal and Haiti; La Maison d’Haïti and other community groups; Haitians in the diaspora; and Haitians and other Quebecers from various communities, became evident in the weeks that followed. The groups which the organization had been involved with over time showed their solidarity in various ways. The centre itself showed its solidarity with Haitians in Haiti. Different institutional and interpersonal constellations mobilized. Haitian community members facilitated family reunification. Allies and neighbours came to volunteer. Women – including therapists, artists and organizers – came to provide emotional and psychological support through individual counselling and healing groups. Different institutions and government offices offered organizational support. Other Haitian groups inside and outside Montreal rallied their efforts to La Maison d’Haïti to help those still in Haiti and those reaching the city. Information circulated between Haiti, Montreal and throughout the diaspora, by word of mouth; through news outlets such as the radio; through social media; and eventually through people coming to Montreal and others going to Haiti. So did financial and material resources.

The 2010 earthquake was the most difficult crisis the centre had ever faced. But as Marjorie and Mireille both observed, the 40 years of political, cultural and community work they had behind them prepared them to handle it:

Ça te tombe dessus ... tu dois
assumer, et tu dois répondre. Mais
moi je pense que c’est tout ce que
j’ai fait dans ma vie qui m’a préparé
à ça...Je savais faire tout ça, voilà.
Tout ce que j’ai fait à La Maison

[It falls on you ... you have to assume
it, and you have to respond. But I
think that everything I did in my life
prepared me for this... I knew how
to do it all, that’s it. Everything I did
at La Maison d’Haïti and in different

d'Haïti et dans toute sorte de
mouvements ... ça me préparait à
répondre et c'est une révélation parce
tu ne sais pas le rôle que tu vas jouer,
tu ne sais pas le rôle de La Maison
d'Haïti jusqu'à ce que tu te rendes
compte que oh, c'est énorme ce
qu'on me demande. (Marjorie)

movements ... it prepared me to
respond and it's a revelation because
you don't know the role you are
going to play, you don't know the
role that La Maison d'Haïti is going
to play until you realize that oh, this
is bigger than I thought, what I'm
being asked is huge.]

People at the centre knew how to mobilize volunteers: they organized support groups; built networks of professionals to help newcomers and the families they were reuniting with; and provided counselling to people experiencing grief and trauma. They weaved a community fabric around those who were coming to Canada for the first time while helping people settle, get their children to school and find furniture, housing and employment. They circulated information to different publics, through different outlets. Activists were able to apply prior learning done in and beyond their activism. Mireille realized that it is during that crisis that she put to use knowledge she had acquired years earlier when she had done a certificate in psychosocial intervention.

People were also moved to action by the shared experiences of having lost loved ones, friends, or acquaintances in the earthquake. No one was spared. Everyone understood the sadness, despair, angst, frustrations, and grief. As Wladimir Jeanty, then president of the board of administrators, wrote in the 2009-2010 annual report (p. 3), the team,

...ignorant ses peines, s'est
immédiatement mise au service de

[...ignoring its own sorrows,
immediately put themselves at the

tous ceux et celles qui, le jour même
du séisme se sont présentés à nos
locaux. Cette équipe elle-même
endeuillée a mis de côté peine et
chagrin pour être à l'écoute et
apporter une aide que j'ai rarement
vue plus humaine.
Cela s'est fait de façon spontanée. Il
n'est venu à l'idée de personne
d'attendre ou de donner la moindre
directive.
Voilà en terre québécoise, une autre
illustration de la résilience haïtienne.

service of all those who, on the very
day of the earthquake, came to our
doors. The team, themselves
grieving, put aside their own sadness
and grief to listen and provide a help
that I have rarely seen more human.
It happened spontaneously. It never
occurred to anyone to wait or give
any direction.
Here on Quebec land, this was
another illustration of Haitian
resilience.]

The response to the earthquake was a collective effort, once again guided by shared leadership. The fact that people naturally came to La Maison d'Haïti showed the significance that the space had acquired for Haitians in Montreal, as observed by Marjorie. La Maison d'Haïti was the node that the community came to for support. This was so strong that government services had to come to set up office there once they realized that people wouldn't go to their actual offices. The space, though old and too small, with only one bathroom, welcomed hundreds of people through its doors, sometimes as many as 250 in a day.

Once again, what happened brought to light how the daily work that goes on at the centre is directly influenced by what happens in Haiti, and that the organization attempts to respond to its members' needs as well as it can. La Maison d'Haïti worked simultaneously to support

newcomers, to continue supporting previous members and remained attuned to what was happening in Haiti. The awareness of changing needs and transformation in the community's demographics led to the transformation and expansion of programs and activities, as well as the initiation of new ones (La Maison d'Haïti, 2010). For example, the women's program, Au Futur, implemented post-earthquake activities for the families who had come to Canada. Even the new teenage girls program decided to do a supply drive for youth in Haiti and to collect feminine hygiene products for young girls in emergency camps in Haiti. Nonetheless, these new initiatives did not cause the organization to deviate from its mandate to also continue improving the living conditions of youth in the neighbourhood who continue to face discrimination, racial profiling and marginalization.

The earthquake transformed La Maison d'Haïti:

On retrouve jamais le rythme	[We never went back to the same
d'avant, on change de rythme et c'est	pace, we changed pace and it is clear
clair que La Maison d'Haïti a comme	that it brought La Maison d'Haïti to
pris un autre, <i>on lôt nivo</i> .	another level.]

(Marjorie)

Because of the increased number of people coming to use the centre's resources, the antiquated space highlighted the need for a physical reorganization of the institution (La Maison d'Haïti, 2010). This pushed members of the board and of the organization to use the momentum gained by the organizing that followed the crisis to launch the new construction project, relying once again on the strength of its networks. Public consultations were done during planning of the project to get community input. The shared leadership between members of the board of administrators, employees, community members, and allies helped to materialize the dream of a

new space into the building that now stands in what used to be the empty lot adjacent to the old centre. The resulting construction is the fruit of collective efforts: the physical illustration of the strength of the collective and of the importance of collective strength. Part of what drove the project was the conviction that people deserved a new and beautiful space, and that such a space could also be part of the neighbourhood's revitalization. Once again, the centre showed its commitment beyond the Haitian community, for the revitalisation of Saint-Michel. In addition to facilitating its various activities, the building was to offer a space where art and culture could be presented, displayed and performed, something lacking in the area. The idea that people, regardless of their income, legal status, or where they live, also have the right to access art and culture is part of a wider understanding of what social justice means and of the embeddedness of political, community and cultural activism.

The node is now planting new roots, growing new leaves and flowers. It connects Haiti, its diaspora and Montreal. It bridges the work members have done before to the one being done now: from the students who imagined a summer project to the people who open the doors of the new building in the morning. It is also a living cultural archive where art done by artists and participants in the various programs is present all around the building, transmitting Haitian and Quebec culture. A 'political statement' about Haiti and Haitians, this living community archive is also an embodiment of the politics of the organization against the negative discourse often conveyed about Haiti:

Il était important que Haïti soit bien
représenté... c'était un political
statement ok... on n'est pas 'le pays
le plus pauvre' tout le temps non,

[It was important that Haiti be well
represented ... it was a political
statement ok ... we are not 'the
poorest country' all the time no, no

non non...il faut de temps en temps
que tu fasses ton *political statement*,
pour la communauté. Pour dire non,
non. Arrêtez cette image
misérabiliste ... on est bien autre
chose. (Marjorie)

no ... you have to make your political
statement from time to time, for the
community. To say no, no. Stop this
miserable image ... we are much
more.]



Figure 7.1 Photo La Maison d'Haïti, 2021

In addition to being the ultimate space of intersections, juncture, rupture, regrowth, and growth, the new building is also a space of memory. La Maison d'Haïti builds on a legacy of Haitian and Black activist politics for justice and social change, for which community building and diasporic homemaking are crucial. A nod to that legacy

is the fact that some rooms in the new building bear the names of past activists, including Max and Adeline Chancy. One room is also named after Haitian writer Dany Lafèrrière, testament to the importance of Haitian art in diasporic memory. Like the NCC summer camps named after important figures of the Black diaspora including Reverend Este in tribute to his community work in Little Burgundy, naming community events and spaces after people who have left their mark in their communities is a way to memorialize Blackness in the face of the scarcity of public memorials related to histories of Black communities.

In this sense, not just memory but memorialization is part of a larger political project, underscoring the relationship between memory and representation. Here, we come upon

one of the ulterior motives of Black memory, ... of keeping visible the actual or imagined experiences of Black peoples that would have been otherwise forgotten or neglected.

(Hanchard, 2008, p. 48)

Memorializing activism and activists is a way to transmit radical traditions as well as create the references and connections that forge Black diasporic communities. Whereas the poster of Charlemagne Péralte welcomed people walking into the old reception area, a reproduction of the painting project *Haiti-Memorial* by artist Rafaëlle Roy³, now hangs in the hallway of the new centre for people to see when they walk in. The frames reproduce 32 of the 4000+ paintings that are part of the series created by the artist to represent the lifelines of the people who died during the earthquake. They pay tribute and bid farewell to all those buried anonymously in mass graves. Rafaëlle Roy is also my mother. While La Maison d'Haïti's stories inhabited my childhood imaginary, her paintings are now part of the organization's community of records, testament to the collective memories that tie all of us, diasporic dwellers.

Returning to Trouillot (1995), with whom I started this dissertation, since “history begins with bodies and artifacts: living brains, fossils, texts, buildings” (p. 29), acts of memorialization of Black resistance, activism, community building, art, and ultimately of Black lives, are a way to provide people with “histories that no history book can tell” (p. 71). They are a way to create archives when archives don't exist. Together with projects to preserve the archives that *do* exist, acts of memorialization ensure the legacy and future of the Black radical tradition.

Archiving and memorializing activism are fundamental to what we are now collectively forging to be a flourishing *Black diasporic archivist praxis*.

³ Artist's website: <https://rafaelleroy.wordpress.com/a-la-maison-dhaiti/>

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This dissertation ultimately set out to explore how to produce knowledge and stories about Black diasporic activism through the work to preserve archives of Black community groups. More precisely, it aimed to study the potential of a collaborative community archives project to investigate Black diasporic activism through the experiences of a group of activists at La Maison d'Haïti. To do this, it examined the role of learning and education in this context; how members of the group expressed their impetus to action; the critical components that sustained their activism; and if the process of organizing a community archives could be a collaborative research methodology. What emerges from this investigation is multifold, and carries historical, theoretical, and methodological implications.

Findings

Four main intersecting findings emerged.

The first one encompasses the five components of Black diasporic activism at La Maison d'Haïti. Some of these were also identified in various histories of activism that precede the organization and led to it, as mapped through the societal provenance of the archive. This demonstrates their relevance as a framework to grasp Black diasporic activism more broadly, something I will go back to further. These five interrelated components are (see Figure 8.1 on following page): 1) the interpersonal and institutional *constellations* established through activism and that sustained social actions; 2) the *connections* that were formed on relational, spatial or political basis and that triggered actions and relations; 3) the *circulation* of people, knowledge and resources that led to activism and was a key strategy of it; 4) a *shared praxis* that emerged

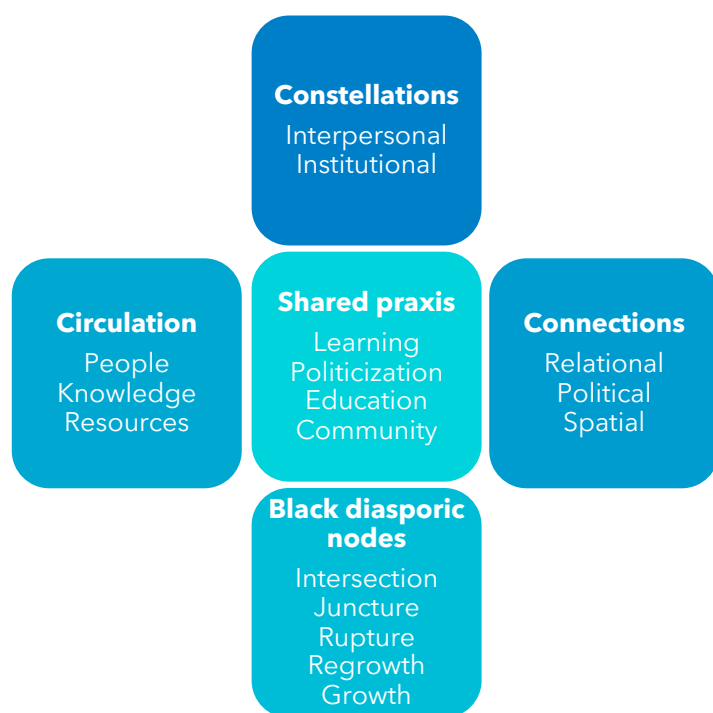


Figure 8.1 Components of Black diasporic activism

from people's politicization, articulated the common convictions and actions of the group through community education, eventually forging the community itself; 5) the *Black diasporic node* in the shape of a community organization, which became of a point of intersection, juncture, rupture, regrowth and growth for community members.

These components are constitutive of each other. However, shared praxis plays a central role as it brings individuals to the collective, which relates to the second important finding of the study. Shared praxis connects people's individual learning paths and politicization, to a community forged by its activism through community education, as depicted in Figure 8.2 (see following page). Various learning experiences appeared as crucial for people's politicization, such as learning from the people around them; from reading and reading groups; from lived experiences of state violence and of mobility; as well as experiential learning from activism itself. Politicization brought people to La Maison d'Haïti, where community education became part of their activism and played a key pedagogical, cultural, social and political role for the collective. Community education led to shared knowledge, skills, identity, convictions and a sense of belonging and of collective efficiency which directly influenced the undertaking of further collective actions. Convictions are how people expressed their motivations to act for social change, individually and collectively. The necessity for coherence, a quest for justice,

fostering collective strength and the need to share emerged as key convictions guiding people.

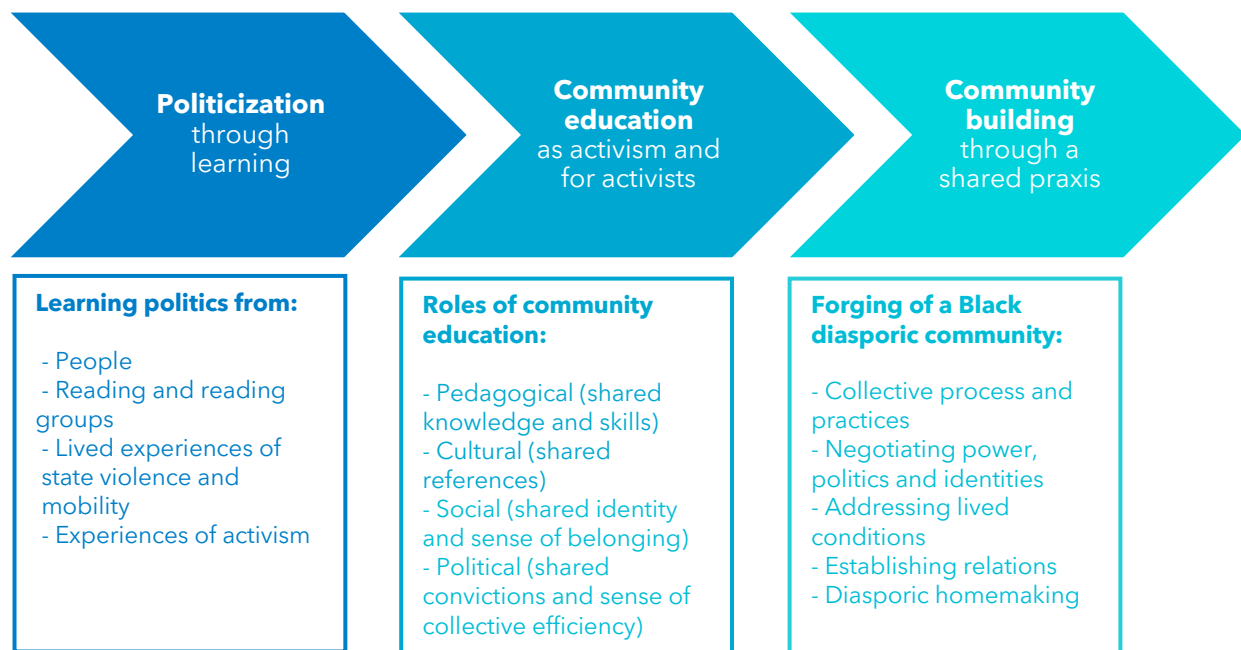


Figure 8.2 Evolution of shared praxis and of community

Community education brought forth the shared component of the praxis and strengthened people's relations, bringing the community into being. This leads to the third main finding, precisely that through this shared praxis, activism forged and sustained this Black diasporic community, also highlighted in Figure 8.2. Activism was a complex, at times conflictive collective *process* relying on collective *practices*. Through it, dynamics of *power* were both challenged and reproduced, as community *politics* and *identities* were *negotiated*. Activism stemmed from and addressed the *lived conditions* of community members while fashioning and sustaining the *relations* that joined them to one another. Finally, activism was also how the project of *diasporic homemaking* was realized, through the foundation of a Black diasporic node.

Together, these three findings demonstrate the fourth one: that community archiving as ethnography can be a collaborative research project through which politics and practices of

Black diasporic activism can be investigated and theorized. By archiving and analyzing a community of records, community archiving as ethnography simultaneously preserves, mobilizes and generates knowledge from/on Black diasporic activism. Oral histories with activists served to document, add to, and provide the memory frame that allowed to map out the archive's configuration and read the discourses it contained – the various insights it carried on activism. Mapping out the archive allowed to grasp it as a complex structure of information and led to the realization that it was simultaneously a Haitian living cultural archive, a transnational archive, an archive of resistance and a Haitian women activists' archive. Oral histories also provided part of the societal provenance of the archive while contextualizing the emergence of the Black diasporic node. Archiving, conducting oral histories and ongoing dialogues were based on different forms of collaboration, leading to the co-construction of knowledge, which is at the core of collaborative research. Orality and the fact that the archiving project happened at the center directly were key in this co-construction, fostering the overlap and constant feedback between archiving and research activities.

However, though collaborative methodology is a strength of this study, it is also part of its limitations. The limited number of people interviewed, the fact that not everyone was involved with all the research activities and that memory, like the archive, is always partial, do frame the findings within particular experiences. Nonetheless, these findings provide important historical, theoretical, and methodological contributions with concrete implications.

Contributions and implications

Historical

Through the overview of the societal provenance of the archive the study contributes to historical knowledge about Black and Haitian community activism, and activism in general, in

the context of Quebec. It also adds a layer to historical understandings of the Black radical tradition more broadly, by connecting various histories of Black diasporic community organizing. By framing the roots of activism of the organization within that tradition, the study furthers arguments made about its plural, historical and incremental character.

Theoretical

The fact that the five components illustrated in Figure 8.1 can be traced through prior histories of Black diasporic activism means that they provide theoretical tools to apprehend other activist practices located within the Black radical tradition. The findings therefore lay the ground for a theoretical framework that could be used in future research to analyze and compare the practices of different Black activist communities through time and in various contexts. This will participate in the production of new historical knowledge about the Black radical tradition. In addition, the framework provides a practical blueprint on which the preservation of Black community archives can rely.

Methodological

The methodology developed contributes to the advancement of collaborative methodologies both for research and archiving. It also contributes to reflections on the role that archiving can play in community building and organizing, and vice versa, precisely because of the collaborative nature of the process and the focus on the social nature of knowledge. By integrating community archiving and research through collaborative work, the methodology offers an avenue into how Black communities of records can be preserved and cultivated. The formula is simple:

+	Integration (of community archiving and research based on the archival continuum) Collaboration (to arrange, process and document the archive)
=	Cultivation of Black communities of records (collective creation, preservation, activation, documentation, interpretation of records for production of new knowledge)

There stands one of the most significant implications of this study. It demonstrates the applicability of an integrative approach that takes into account the collective nature of records creation (as communities of records with specific societal provenance), and is grounded in collaborative labor and relations, to preserve, activate, document, and interpret these records to generate co-constructed knowledge, ultimately leading to the creation of new collective records (see Figure 23). This approach is informed by *and* promotes the social nature of knowledge production, transmission, acquisition, and preservation.

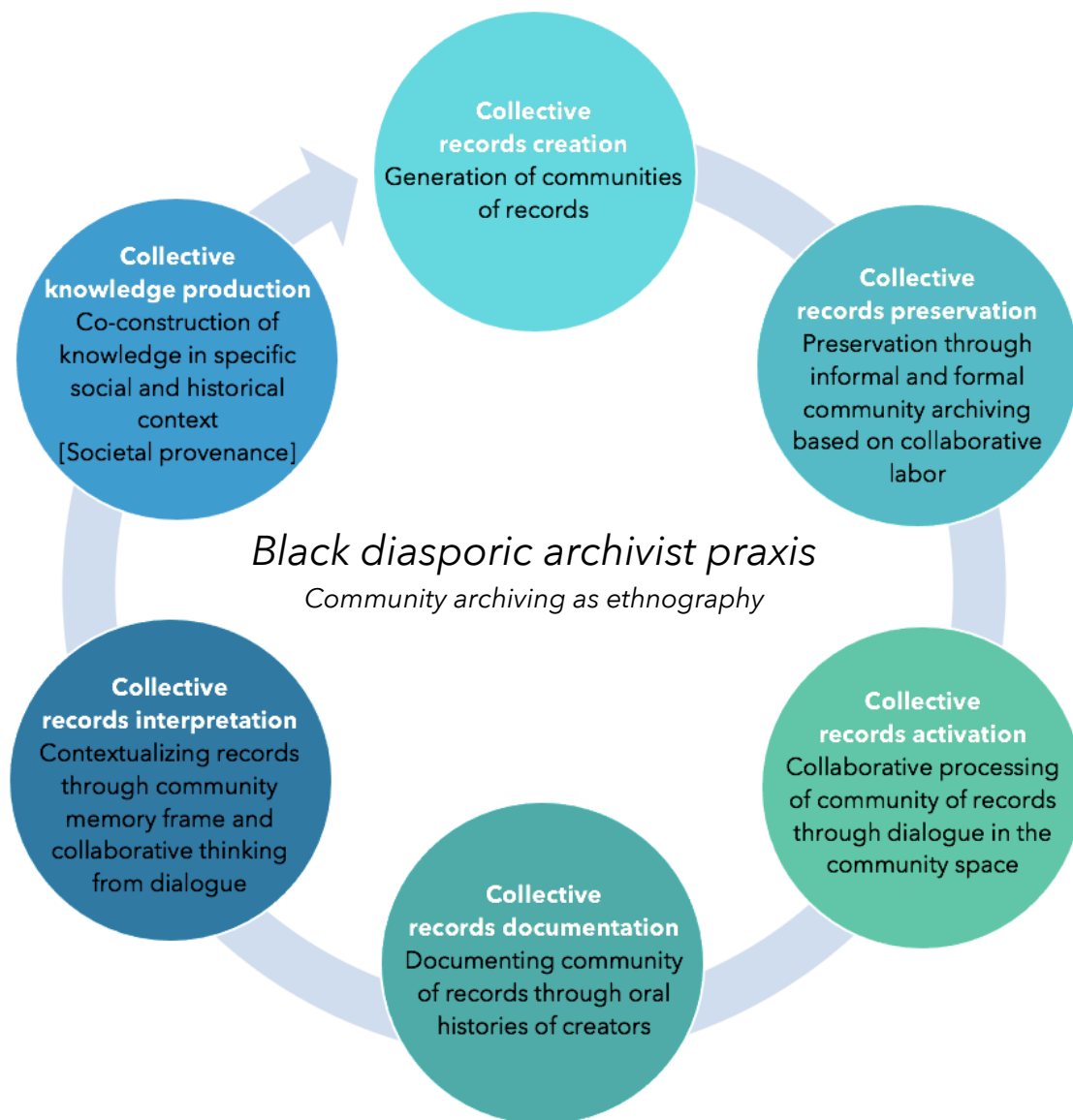


Figure 8.3 Integrative and collaborative approach to cultivate Black communities of records

Community archiving as ethnography therefore emerges as one methodology, stemming from a broader approach that not only honors Black populations, and the archival records and knowledge they generate but places them at the centers of all activities surrounding these. This approach makes collaboration transversal to the archival continuum through *collaborative labor* to organize archival records within community spaces; *collaborative processing* to appraise and document these records through a community memory frame; and *collaborative thinking* to analyze and interpret the records through ongoing dialogues brought about by archiving with communities of creation. By centering on relations, the approach resonates with the one proposed by Caswell and Cifor (2016) based on a feminist ethics of care informed by radical empathy which foregrounds the importance of the relational and affective responsibilities that are integral to caring for archives. Collaboration embeds an explicit relational component into the archival continuum, an explicit *community building* practice. This is where the Black diasporic archivist praxis comes in.

The theoretical framework of Black diasporic activism stems from an analysis of real-life activism. It is thus natural that it provides a *practical framework* to operationalize the approach to cultivate Black communities of records. Collaboration can be actively encouraged and realized through the five components, some of which also proved important for community archiving as ethnography. The *Black diasporic archivist praxis* should be constituted through transnational *constellations* of people and institutions, *connecting* on different basis and working collaboratively by *circulating* knowledge and resources to archive the tangible and intangible records of diverse *Black diasporic nodes* and communities. This praxis can only come about if archivists, community members, workers and educators, artists and all those caring and using Black community archives are open to, and have the space to learn together and from one

another. Though the conceptualization and naming of the Black diasporic archivist praxis is original to this dissertation, it builds on the prior work of Black community workers, educators and researchers, as well as informal and formal collectors and archivists that have been preserving and activating Black communities' histories and records (see Drake, 2016; Ishmaël, 2019, 2020; Ishmaël, Sowinski, Foster, Joseph, & Richards, 2019; Powell, Smith, & Hearn, 2018; Visser-Maessen, 2020; Williams & Drake, 2017). Interestingly, the idea of building constellations around a shared praxis to collaboratively care for archives echoes what scholars Christen and Anderson (2019) propose to ethically preserve Indigenous archives. They propose to work through archival ecosystems that emphasize care, connections and respect the "various modes and types of culturally specific circulation, exchange, stewardship, and sharing practices that frame the hard work of archival caring" (p. 111).

Inspired partly by Dorothy Williams' dissertation (2006) which bridged historical knowledge production and archival inventory, the project with La Maison d'Haïti took up her advice to actively preserve and creatively activate Montreal's Black communities' records to bring "new insights about being part of the Black diaspora within Montreal, Quebec, Canada" (p. 236). If further developed, the Black diasporic archivist praxis and community archiving as ethnography can concretely foster community-based archiving and research. Much remains to be done as Black communities' records are still under-represented in formal repositories in Quebec and most likely across Canada. Black community groups also still often lack resources and capacities to archive their records. Preserving records of/in Black diasporic nodes will hopefully ensure that they remain in the custody of their communities of creation to encourage their collective cultivation, emphasizing the interrelation between the people, spaces, and collective processes from which knowledge is produced. Future research and archiving projects should be

conducted to refine, transform and reinforce the approach, practical framework and methodology that this research advances. Crucially, this can also inform future activism as archives can facilitate organizational continuity, renewal and improvement; be activated for educational purposes; and provide freedom stories.

Building New and Renewed Communities of Praxis

Donc moi je pense que c'est la fin	[So I think it's the end of an era and I
d'une époque et je pense qu'avec	think we have to watch what is
beaucoup de sagesse il faut regarder	coming with a lot of wisdom, and
ce qui s'en vient et préparer ce qui	prepare what is coming, but we have
s'en vient mais il faut être très sage,	to be very wise, ... we are not
... on n'est pas éternel. Mais au	eternal.... we have to have the
moins ... qu'on ait la sagesse de	wisdom to prepare, and the wisdom
préparer, et qu'on ait la sagesse	to admit that it will not be like it was
d'admettre que ça sera pas comme	when we were there.]
quand on était là. (Marjorie)	

As La Maison d'Haïti gets ready to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2022, one of the challenges it will face will be to ensure both its continuity and renewal. While it is important that people know and understand the history that precedes them, it is also important for younger generations to find a space to grow into their activism and into a community. People need to forge their own shared praxis, and make new connections, references, and memories. The politicization of communities through the re-appropriation of histories of activism can aim to expand and improve this activism.

Black political projects are not inherently about freedom or equality, and power relations

also play out in our communities. Our organizations are a balance of functions and dysfunctions which often have historical roots and are influenced by the larger context they evolve in. They sometimes even reproduce some of the dynamics, hierarchies, and status quo that they try to change. Like all human systems, organizations carry their own limits and contradictions because activism is an imperfect practice. Céradiou aptly observed that all organizations have their strengths and weaknesses and that both can actually make you fail. Knowing the histories that bring us to now also means knowing where we failed, what trauma we have lived and still carry with us, what losses we've sustained, and what pains we have sometimes inflicted on one another. Understanding the history that precedes us also means understanding how it impacts us and the work we are doing now. It means addressing our own silences. To do so, we need our own archives and spaces that are designed for this work, which does not particularly need to happen under the gaze of academic research. Addressing issues of power, conflicts and tensions in ways that allows us to move forward while not re-producing trauma, demands that we step back from their anecdotal aspects to gain a wider vision that allows to draw connections and comparisons between organizations and communities through time. The same way we need to theorize our organizing strategies, we need to theorize the sources of conflicts that erupt from this organizing to be able to better confront and correct them. Using archives as part of our activism can help add an historical dimension to our understanding of the processes of transformation we are attempting to bring and make us more critical of our own work (Buchanan & Bastian, 2015). It can also help us reframe what achievements and failures mean by focusing on how smaller actions can bring about change cumulatively.

Archives of community groups also show the local impacts of global processes and how communities' lives and institutions are impacted by capitalism and neoliberalism through the

cooptation, depoliticization and restructuring of the community sector towards a service-oriented one (see Bourque & Comeau, 2007a, 2007b; DeFilippis, 2008). This puts organizations like La Maison d'Haïti, like the community sector in general (see Bourque & Comeau, 2007b), in precarious and vulnerable positions, exacerbating challenges and limits. Just like our struggle against racism is bound to fail if we address only its impact without addressing its systematic character and causes (Andrews, 2018), our local community work needs to be guided by the struggles for global social and systemic justice. It is just one part of the many actions necessary to resist capitalism, economic globalization, racism, sexism, patriarchy, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of oppression. Understanding this wider context in relation to the local one through community archives, can help to develop appropriate and effective actions.

Activating Archives

Part of cultivating archives will entail developing pedagogies based on them and embed them in our community work which we tried to do as we organized La Maison d'Haïti's archive, Documents were presented in numerous events at the centre. The photos were used in educational projects such as one called Raconte-moi mon histoire [Tell me my (hi)story] developed for the teenage girls' programs Juste Pour Elles (see Martinak, Augustin, & Rochat, 2017). The artist and communication coordinator Ralph Maingrette used photographs for a 3D visual project. We shared photographs for a travelling exhibition for high schools on immigrant community histories. The archives were used by at least eight university professors and graduate students. I used archival records in various guest lectures, presentations, a study day on community archives Kristen and I organized, and a co-authored publication (see Choudry & Rochat, 2021). We will nonetheless need to remain creative to nurture future cultivation.

Stories for Freedom

Archives of activism tell dreams of different politics. They show us that “[f]reedom is the dream that we struggle for” (Andrews, 2018, p. 318). They also point to the fact that though there have always been systems and structures of domination, those have always been contested, even through smaller, less visible gestures of resistance.

Thomas King (2005) reminds us that stories are all we are. They infuse our sense of self and of collectivity, our vision of the world and our politics. We understand the world and engage with it through them. In addition to helping me think through my theoretical framework, the text by Joanne Hyppolite (2011) also helped me lay down the words of this dissertation. She writes:

You turn to books to lose yourself. ... You decide you will become a writer. Through your writing they will see you, *dyaspora* child, the connections and disconnections that have made you the mosaic that you are. They will see where you are from and the worlds that have made you. ... (p. 11)

Though I never set out to be a writer, the story that makes this dissertation is indeed my attempt at showing the transnational flow of stories, memories and peoples that weave intricate and intimate cross-Atlantic webs that have made me, and others like me before. To develop a collective sense of critical Black memory and bring forth knowledge from the past into the present, it is essential that stories be told and retold so as to be passed on (Hanchard, 2010). On page 90 of *Ti Pye Zoranj*, the authors explain why oral Haitian stories, tales, and legends often have children as their main protagonists and are also mainly destined for them:

Ces contes éduquent les enfants, les
arment contre la peur et l’injustice.
L’enfant apprendra à chanter la nuit

[These tales educate children, arm
them against fear and injustice. The
children will learn to sing at night to

pour se donner du courage. Il
apprendra que d'autres, dans des
situations pires que la sienne, ont
trouvé la liberté...

give themselves courage. They will
learn that others, in worse situations
than them, have found freedom...]

Black activist community archives are filled with stories that can arm us *all* against fear and injustice. We need to preserve them preciousely, share them widely, and use them creatively, to make sure that every child knows that they can make and write new freedom (hi)stories, and that these tie them to a tradition of dreamers of a radically different future.

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Appendix A : Interview List

Individual Oral History interviews

1. Marie-Andrée Baptiste [Interview conducted on 20 and 26 March 2018; Audio recorded]
2. Suzie Boisrond [Interview conducted on 22 March 2018; Audio recorded]
3. Adeline Chancy [Interview conducted on 19 and 26 October 2016; Audio recorded]
4. Alix Jean [Interview conducted on 7 April 2018; Audio recorded]
5. Mireille Métellus [Interview conducted on 24 March 2018; Audio recorded]
6. Elizabeth Philibert [Interview conducted on April 6 and 17 2018; Audio recorded]
7. Jacquelin Télémaque [Interview conducted on 28 March and 13 April 2018; Audio recorded]
8. Céradieu Toussaint [Interview conducted on 23 March 2018; Audio recorded]
9. Marjorie Villefranche [Interview conducted on 18 April 2018; Audio recorded]

Collective Interviews

1. Adeline Chancy and Marjorie Villefranche [Interview conducted on 9 November 2016; Audio recorded]
2. Marie-Andrée Baptise, Alix Jean, Mireille Métellus, Elizabeth Philibert, Céradieu Toussaint, Marjorie Villefranche [Interview conducted on 23 november 2018; Video and audio recorded].

Appendix B : La Maison d'Haïti Timeline

Year	Events
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haitian students organize to support Haitian migrants arriving in Montreal.
1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students obtain funds for a summer project (Projet La Maison d'Haïti) and offer services such as translation at the airport. Project becomes the Comité Maison d'Haïti and sets up offices at the YMCA. Reference services and activities for families are organized.
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not-for-profit charter obtained. Services expand and organization moves to its first space at 3405 Saint-Denis St.
1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire forces move to a new space, at 3553 St-Urbain St. Services continue and research projects are conducted. Threats of deportation of Haitian migrants lead to important community mobilization.
1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth activities are organized and become the program Nou Gen Peyi Tou [NGPT]. Regular programs lead to institutionalization of the community center. Radio show La Voix d'Haïti and newsletter are launched. Haitian women's committee Rasanblemant Fanm Ayisien [RAFA] is founded.
1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center moves to bigger offices at 4150 Saint-Denis St. and houses the newly founded community clinic, Clinique Communautaire Haïtienne [CCH]. Children's program Ti Pye Zoranj Monte [TPZM] starts. Leisure and cultural activities are organized for families and community members.
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La Maison d'Haïti is a founding member of the Mouvement québécois pour combattre le racisme [MQCR], denouncing racism in Quebec. Literacy and French program, and the youth radio show Combo are started. Funding obtained for center's first official coordinator.
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La Maison d'Haïti is part of the Comité 20 juin to denounce racial profiling. Partnership with Bureau de la communauté des Haïtiens de Montréal [BCHM] for foundation of Centre Haïtien d'Orientation et d'Information Scolaire [CHOIS]. Two fires force closure of CCH. La Maison d'Haïti moves to a temporary space. Activities for women are developed and lead to the program Fanm Vlé Palé.
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haitian women's committee Nègès Vanyan is created. La Maison d'Haïti moves to 7714 Lajeunesse St. Festival Diaspora I organized in collaboration with other Haitian groups.
1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start of Lakay summer camp.
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> La Maison d'Haïti celebrates 10 years. Mini-congress organized to evaluate activities and orientations. Community mobilizations for the rights of Haitian refugees in the U.S. The radio shows become independent from La Maison d'Haïti. Brief submitted to inquiry on racism in the taxi industry.
1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center moves to 8833 Saint-Michel St. Brief submitted to inquiry on participation of visible minority to Canadian society. Community mobilizations against AIDS discrimination.
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Centre de femmes Haïtiennes [CAFHAM] is founded.
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of the short-lived youth program Carrefour des jeunes de la Maison d'Haïti.

1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On February 7 Jean-Claude Duvalier is ousted from Haiti.
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New programs for professional development are created • Mini-congress on the center's orientations and activities.
1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief presented to an inquiry into Police relations with visible minorities. • Coalition on Black youth with BCCHM, CHAIS, CHAF, CHRISOCQ, Maison des Jeunes Louverture, Maison d'Haïti, NCC and BCCQ.
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La Maison d'Haïti sponsors 3 projects in Haiti through Fonds délégué AQOCI-Haïti. • Foundation of the Table de Concertation sur la délinquance des jeunes haïtiens with CHRISOCQ, BCCHM, SANQI, Associations Jeunes Louverture.
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the Bureau d'appui à la jeunesse Québécoise d'origine haïtienne
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide is ousted by a coup d'état.
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 year anniversary. • CAFHAM, TPZM, Camp Lakay and literacy and French classes continue. • NGPT starts again as a recreational and sports program. • An after-school program and an employment program are developed.

Appendix C : Oral History Consent Form

Formulaire de consentement entrevue individuelle d'histoire orale.

Consentement à participer au projet *Mémoires et histoires d'éducation communautaire : retracer 40 ans d'histoire à travers les archives de la Maison d'Haïti*.

Projet de recherche doctorale de Désirée Rochat (260373774), candidate au doctorat en Éducation à l'Université McGill au Département d'études intégrées en éducation (desiree.rochat@mail.mcgill.ca; 514-973-9005).

Superviseur : Dr. Aziz Choudry, (aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca; 514-398-4527 Ext. 00952)

Projet financé par : Bourse doctorale, Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture.

But du projet :

Ce projet de recherche vise à retracer et systématiser les approches pédagogiques développées par les éducateurs et éducatrices communautaires (anciens et actuels) de la Maison d'Haïti. Pour ce faire, je propose de réaliser une revue de plus de 40 ans d'histoire à travers un projet collaboratif d'archive communautaire. En organisant, documentant, et préservant –c'est-à-dire en archivant—les documents et la mémoire des éducateurs et éducatrices de la Maison d'Haïti, cette recherche va explorer et synthétiser leurs pratiques et philosophies éducatives uniques. Les résultats seront disséminés à travers la dissertation doctorale et un livret produit en collaboration avec la Maison d'Haïti.

Note : Si vous le désirez, vous pouvez obtenir une copie du protocole de recherche en anglais ainsi qu'un résumé du protocole en français.

Procédures : Si vous acceptez de participer, vous serez invité à échanger avec moi durant une entrevue d'histoire orale sur votre vie et votre implication à la Maison d'Haïti, qui se déroulera à une date, heure et lieu vous convenant. Certains documents provenant de l'archive de la Maison d'Haïti pourraient vous être présentés durant l'entrevue, pour que vous puissiez les commenter. Pour la finalité du projet, l'entrevue sera enregistrée sous format audio. Elle aura une durée approximative de deux à trois heures, mais si vous le désirez, nous pourrions prolonger ou écourter la rencontre. Si nécessaire, nous pourrions faire l'entrevue sur deux ou trois temps de rencontre.

Suite aux entrevues individuelles, vous serez invité à participer à une entrevue collective avec les autres participants du projet de recherche, à la Maison d'Haïti.

Risques et avantages : Certaines questions ou sujets de discussions pourraient raviver des émotions liées à des souvenirs de nature délicate. Si vous en sentez le besoin suite aux entrevues je pourrai vous fournir les contacts de ressources de soutien psychologique. Le bénéfice principal de votre contribution est de faire connaître et participer à la préservation de l'histoire institutionnelle de la Maison d'Haïti.

Consentement de participation

Veillez lire les phrases ci-dessous et signaler votre accord ou désaccord.

Vous avez le droit et la liberté de retirer votre consentement à tout moment pendant la recherche. Vos informations seront alors détruites et ne pourront être utilisées subséquemment. En tout temps vous pourrez refuser de répondre aux questions posées pendant les entrevues. N'hésitez pas à me demander des clarifications au besoin, en tout temps.

A. En ce qui concerne la révélation de votre identité :

Vous êtes d'accord que votre identité soit révélée dans toute publication et/ou présentation résultant de l'entrevues d'histoire orale.

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

B. En ce qui concerne le transfert d'une version éditée de votre entrevue et de la transcription corrigée aux archives de la Maison d'Haïti :

Vous consentez à ce qu'une version éditée de l'enregistrement et une transcription de votre entrevue, révisée et approuvée par vous, soient transférées aux archives de la Maison d'Haïti et accessibles aux utilisateurs de l'archive selon le protocole d'accès aux archives de l'organisme.

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

C. En ce qui concerne l'utilisation d'extraits de la transcription corrigée de l'entrevue pour la description des archives de la Maison d'Haïti :

Vous consentez à ce que des extraits de la transcription de votre entrevue approuvée par vous, soient utilisés dans les fiches de descriptions de l'archive de la Maison d'Haïti.

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

NOM PARTICIPANT.E

SIGNATURE

CONTACT

DATE

NOM INTERVIEWEUSE

SIGNATURE

CONTACT

DATE

Si vous avez des questions concernant vos droits et votre bien-être en tant que participant à cette recherche, veuillez contacter le Comité d'éthique en recherche de l'Université McGill au 514-398-6831 ou lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Appendix D : Collective Interview Consent Form

Formulaire de consentement entrevue collective

Consentement à participer au projet *Mémoires et histoires d'éducation communautaire : retracer 40 ans d'histoire à travers les archives de la Maison d'Haïti*.

Projet de recherche doctorale de Désirée Rochat (260373774), candidate au doctorat en Éducation à l'Université McGill au Département d'études intégrées en éducation (desiree.rochat@mail.mcgill.ca; 514-973-9005).

Superviseur : Dr. Aziz Choudry, (aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca; 514-398-4527 Ext. 00952)

Projet financé par : Bourse doctorale, Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture.

But du projet :

Ce projet de recherche vise à retracer et systématiser les approches pédagogiques développées par les éducateurs et éducatrices communautaires (anciens et actuels) de la Maison d'Haïti. Pour ce faire, je propose de réaliser une revue de plus de 40 ans d'histoire à travers un projet collaboratif d'archive communautaire. En organisant, documentant, et préservant –c'est-à-dire en archivant—les documents et la mémoire des éducateurs et éducatrices de la Maison d'Haïti, cette recherche va explorer et synthétiser leurs pratiques et philosophies éducatives uniques. Les résultats seront disséminés à travers la dissertation doctorale et un livret produit en collaboration avec la Maison d'Haïti.

Note : Si vous le désirez, vous pouvez obtenir une copie du protocole de recherche en anglais ainsi qu'un résumé du protocole en français.

Procédures : Suite aux entrevues individuelles, vous êtes invité à participer à une entrevue collective avec les autres participants du projet à la Maison d'Haïti. Durant cette entrevue, vous serez invité à voir et commenter les archives de la Maison d'Haïti et à discuter de votre travail collectif au sein de l'organisme. Pour la finalité du projet, l'entrevue sera filmée et enregistrée et aura une durée approximative de deux heures. Si vous le décidez, votre identité sera connue seulement de l'intervieweuse et des autres participants. Si vous ne désirez pas être filmé, vous pourrez vous asseoir en dehors de l'angle de la caméra et toute mention de votre nom sera rendue inaudible dans l'enregistrement.

Risques et avantages : Certaines questions ou sujets de discussions pourraient raviver des émotions liées à des souvenirs de nature délicate. Si vous en sentez le besoin suite aux entrevues je pourrai vous fournir les contacts de ressources de soutien psychologique. Le bénéfice principal de votre contribution est de faire connaître et participer à la préservation de l'histoire institutionnelle de la Maison d'Haïti.

Consentement de participation

Veillez lire les phrases ci-dessous et signaler votre accord ou désaccord.

Vous avez le droit et la liberté de retirer votre consentement à tout moment pendant la recherche. Vos informations seront alors détruites et ne pourront être utilisées subséquemment. En tout temps vous pourrez refuser de répondre aux questions posées pendant les entrevues. N'hésitez pas à me demander des clarifications au besoin, en tout temps.

A. En ce qui concerne la révélation de votre identité :

Vous êtes d'accord que votre identité soit révélée dans toute publication et/ou présentation résultant de l'entrevue collective.

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

B. En ce qui concerne les extraits vidéos qui vous correspondent :

Vous consentez à ce que des extraits vidéos correspondant à vos contributions à l'entrevue – c'est-à-dire des extraits où vous apparaissez ou où l'on vous entend – soient dans la vidéo éditée de l'entrevue qui sera transférée aux archives de la Maison d'Haïti et accessibles aux utilisateurs de l'archive selon le protocole d'accès aux archives de l'organisme.

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

C. En ce qui concerne le transfert de la transcription de l'entrevue collective aux archives de la Maison d'Haïti :

Vous consentez à ce que les transcriptions de vos contributions à l'entrevue fassent parties de la transcription de l'entrevue qui sera transférée aux archives de la Maison d'Haïti et accessibles aux utilisateurs de l'archive selon le protocole d'accès aux archives de l'organisme.

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

D. En ce qui concerne l'utilisation d'extraits de la transcription de l'entrevue collective pour la description des archives de la Maison d'Haïti :

Vous consentez à ce que des extraits des transcriptions de vos contributions à l'entrevue collective soient utilisés dans les fiches de descriptions de l'archive de la Maison d'Haïti.

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

NOM PARTICIPANT.E

SIGNATURE

CONTACT

DATE

NOM INTERVIEWEUSE

SIGNATURE

CONTACT

DATE

Si vous avez des questions concernant vos droits et votre bien-être en tant que participant à cette recherche, veuillez contacter le Comité d'éthique en recherche de l'Université McGill au 514-398-6831 ou lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

Appendix E : Oral History Interview Guide

Le guide d'entrevue ci-contre est adapté du guide d'entrevue intitulé 'Exemples de questions d'entrevue pour l'établissement d'un récit de vie' produit par le Centre d'histoire orale et de récits numérisés de l'Université Concordia, disponible à l'adresse suivante :

http://storytelling.concordia.ca/sites/default/files/ARUC_Guide%20d%27entrevue%20g%C3%A9n%C3%A9ral%20en%20fran%C3%A7ais.pdf

Des questions ont été adaptées, éliminées ou rajoutées pour la recherche. Par exemple la section X porte plus spécifiquement sur l'expérience des participants à la Maison d'Haïti. Les questions ci-contre sont données à titre suggestif pour déclencher et relancer l'entrevue mais ne sont pas nécessairement obligatoires, ni dans un ordre précis. L'entrevue d'histoire orale est un dialogue et le participant peut décider d'approfondir un sujet plus qu'un autre, d'où les propositions de sous-questions, ou de revenir sur un sujet déjà discuté. Les questions sont à titre d'exemple plus qu'à titre directif.

I. Données biographiques :

- a. Quand/où êtes vous né/e ?
- b. Quel était le nom au complet de votre père/de votre mère ?
- c. Avez-vous des frères et sœurs ?
 - i. Comment s'appellent-ils/elles ?
 - ii. Quel âge ont-ils/elles ?
- d. Êtes-vous/avez-vous été marié/e ?
 - i. Comment s'appelle/s'appelait votre époux/épouse ?
 - ii. Quand/où vous êtes-vous marié/e ?
- e. Avez-vous des enfants ?
 - i. Comment s'appellent-ils/elles ?
 - ii. Quand/où sont-ils/elles né/es ?

II. Antécédents familiaux :

- a. Pouvons-nous parler des parents de votre mère ? Vous souvenez-vous de votre grandmère ? Et de votre grand-père ?
 - i. Vos grands-parents étaient-ils de la même ville/grande ville/région que vous ?
 - ii. Comment vos grands-parents gagnaient-ils leur vie ?
 - iii. Ont-ils aidé à vous élever ? Vous sentiez-vous proches d'eux ?
 - iv. L'un ou l'autre a-t-il exercé beaucoup d'influence sur vous ?
 - v. [Répéter les questions pour les parents du père]
- b. Vous souvenez-vous d'autres membres de votre famille appartenant à des générations antérieures ?
- c. D'autres personnes âgées ont-elles été particulièrement importantes pour vous dans votre enfance ?
- d. Pouvez-vous me parler des rapports entre votre père/mère et vos grands-parents ?
- e. Pouvons-nous parler de vos parents ? Nous commençons par votre mère ?
 - i. Pouvez-vous me décrire son caractère ?
 - ii. Étiez-vous proche d'elle ? Était-il facile de lui parler ?

- ii. Quel genre de travail faisait-elle ? A-t-elle toujours exercé ce travail ? A-t-elle continué à travailler après avoir eu des enfants ?
- iv. Qui s'occupait de vous lorsqu'elle travaillait ? Lui est-il arrivé d'être au chômage ? vi. Comment faisiez-vous, alors ?
- v. [Répéter les questions pour le père] f. Comment compareriez la façon dont votre mère et votre père ont influencé votre vie ?
- g. Que vous souvenez-vous de ce que vos parents/grands-parents vous ont dit de leur enfance, du fait de grandir ?
- i. À quelle/s religion/s appartenaient vos parents ?
- j. Pouvons-nous parler de vos frères et sœurs ?
 - i. Comment vous entendiez-vous lorsque vous étiez enfants ?
 - ii. Avez-vous un frère ou une sœur préféré/e ? Pouvez-vous me parler de lui/d'elle ? A-t-il ou a-t-elle exercé une grande influence sur vous ?

III. Enfance :

- a. Que vous rappelez-vous de votre première maison ?
 - i. Qui habitait dans la maison ?
 - ii. Qui prenait les décisions à la maison ?
 - iii. Quelles étaient vos responsabilités en tant qu'enfant ?
- b. À quoi pensez-vous quand vous entendez le nom de l'endroit où vous êtes né/e ?
- c. Pouvez-vous me décrire le quartier de votre enfance ?
 - i. Est-ce que vous aviez des voisins tout près de chez vous ?
 - ii. Y avait-il de l'entraide entre voisins ? Quel genre d'entraide ?
- d. Pouvez-vous me parler de vos amis proches ?
 - i. À quel genre de jeux jouiez-vous ?
 - ii. Étiez-vous libre de jouer avec qui vous vouliez ?
- e. Quand vos parents ne travaillaient pas, quel genre de choses faisaient-ils pour se distraire ?
 - i. Appartenaient-ils à un club ou à une association ?
 - ii. Où allaient-ils pour se distraire ?
- f. En quoi votre enfance est-elle différente de celle du sexe opposé ?

IV. Jeunesse/formation :

- a. Quand avez-vous commencé l'école ?
 - i. Quelles écoles avez-vous fréquentées ?
 - ii. Que pensiez-vous de ces écoles ?
- b. Vous souvenez-vous des personnes qui les dirigeaient ?
- c. Pouvez-vous me parler de vos enseignants ?
 - i. Soulignaient-ils que certaines choses étaient importantes dans la vie ?
 - ii. Encourageaient-ils la discussion ?
 - iii. Traitaient-ils différemment les enfants selon leur appartenance sociale ou leur race ?
 - iv. Est-ce qu'un/une enseignant/e a exercé une influence importante sur vous ?
- d. Que préféreriez-vous étudier ?
- e. Avez-vous suivi une formation ou un apprentissage spécial ?
 - i. Aviez-vous un emploi à temps partiel, tout en étudiant ?
- f. Lorsque vous avez quitté l'école, que vouliez-vous faire ?

V. Travail/Communauté :

- a. Quand avez-vous quitté la maison ?
 - i. Habitez-vous seul/e ?
 - ii. Êtes-vous allé/e dans une autre ville ?
- b. Pouvez-vous me parler de la communauté dans laquelle vous habitez ?
 - i. Pouvez-vous me décrire votre quartier ?
 - ii. Aviez-vous des voisins tout près de chez vous ?
 - iii. Y avait-il de l'entraide entre voisins ? Quel genre d'entraide ?
- c. Apparteniez-vous à un club ou à une association ?
- d. Pouvez-vous me parler de festivals ?
- e. Où allaient les gens pour se rencontrer ?
 - i. Aviez-vous un endroit préféré pour rencontrer vos ami/e/s ?
 - ii. Y avait-il des lieux de rencontre que vous évitiez ? Pourquoi ?
- f. Dans votre quartier, étiez-vous considéré comme étant plus aisé/e ou moins aisé/e que vos voisins ?
 - i. Quels étaient vos relations avec les autres membres de la communauté ?
 - ii. Qui fréquentiez-vous le plus facilement ?
 - iii. Y avait-il des gens qui se sentaient supérieurs aux autres ?
- g. Comment gagniez-vous votre vie ?
 - i. Comment avez-vous obtenu votre premier emploi ?
- h. Pouvez-vous me parler d'une journée normale au travail ?
 - i. Pouvez-vous me parler des gens avec qui vous travailliez ?
 - ii. Aviez-vous des ami/e/s à votre travail ?
 - iii. Travailliez-vous avec des membres de votre famille ?
 - iv. Les femmes et les hommes travaillaient-ils ensemble ?

VI. Mariage et enfants :

- a. Pouvez-vous me dire comment vous et votre compagne/compagnon vous êtes rencontrés la première fois ?
 - i. Pouvez-vous me parler d'elle/de lui (pays d'origine, appartenance sociale, travail, personnalité) ?
- b. Vivez-vous toujours avec votre mari/épouse ?
 - i. Comment décririez-vous votre relation actuelle ?
- c. Pouvons-nous parler de vos enfants ?
 - i. Quand vous les éleviez, qu'est-ce qui à vos yeux était le plus important pour eux ?
 - ii. Leur parliez-vous beaucoup ?
 - iii. À qui parliez-vous si vous étiez inquiets pour eux ?
 - iv. Pensiez-vous que les filles et les garçons devaient être traités de la même façon ou différemment ?
 - v. Les avez-vous élevés dans l'opinion que certaines choses sont importantes dans la vie ?
 - vi. Quand ils faisaient quelque chose que vous désapprouviez, que faisiez-vous ?
- d. En quoi pensez-vous que votre attitude envers vos enfants était différente de celle de vos parents envers vous lorsqu'ils vous élevaient ?
- e. Quels sont vos espoirs, vos rêves et vos aspirations pour vos enfants ?

VII. Raisons de départ/migration :

- a. Quels sont les événements qui vous ont amené/e à partir ?
 - i. Quelles ont été les premières nouvelles de violence dans votre pays ?
 - ii. Comment vous-même et votre communauté avez-vous réagi à ces nouvelles ?
 - iii. Cela a-t-il créé des divisions dans la communauté ?
 - iv. Que pensiez-vous des politiques du gouvernement à l'époque ?
- b. Quand avez-vous commencé à ne pas vous sentir en sécurité ?
 - i. Pourquoi ne vous sentiez-vous pas en sécurité ?
 - ii. Par qui vous sentiez-vous menacé/e ?
 - iii. Ne vous sentiez-vous pas en sécurité dans votre communauté ?
 - iv. Vous sentiez-vous soutenu/e par les gens autour de vous ?
- c. Quelle a été votre expérience personnelle de la violence ?
 - i. Comment avez-vous réagi ?
 - ii. Comment les autres personnes de la communauté ont-elles réagi ?
- d. En quoi pensez-vous que votre vécu de ces événements diffère de celui d'autres femmes/hommes ?
- e. Avez-vous essayé de vous cacher ou de dissimuler votre identité, parce que vous vous sentiez menacé/e ?
- f. Pouvez-vous me parler des semaines et des jours qui ont précédé votre départ ?
- g. Qui pensez-vous avoir laissé derrière vous ?
- h. Où êtes-vous allés en quittant votre pays ?
 - i. Pourquoi ce lieu ?
- k. Êtes-vous parti seul ?
 - i. Si non, avec qui ?
 - ii. Comment ?

VIII. Montréal :

- a. Quand avez-vous, pour la première fois, pensé à venir au Canada ? Pourquoi ?
 - i. Quelqu'un de votre famille était-il parti à l'étranger avant vous ? Où ?
 - ii. Pourquoi vous êtes-vous installé/e à Montréal ?
 - iii. Que saviez-vous du Canada, de Montréal ? Qui vous en avait parlé ?
 - iv. Comment imaginiez-vous le Canada, Montréal ?
- b. Pouvez-vous me parler de votre expérience auprès des services d'immigration canadiens ?
- c. Quelle a été votre première impression de Montréal ?
- d. Quelle a été la plus grosse difficulté qu'a posée votre installation à Montréal ?
 - i. Selon vous, les gens étaient plutôt amicaux ou hostiles envers vous ?
 - ii. Qu'est-ce qui a le plus aidé, selon vous ?
 - iii. De quoi aviez-vous le plus besoin et que vous n'aviez pas ?
- e. La communauté haïtienne vous a-t-elle aidé/e ?
 - i. Avez-vous fait de nouvelles connaissances au sein de la communauté haïtienne depuis que vous êtes ici ?
 - ii. Avez-vous un « réseau » de rencontres ou pour trouver du travail, un logement ? Qui appartient à votre « réseau » ?
 - iii. Y avait-il des divisions dans la communauté ? Si oui quelles étaient-elles ? Sont-elles toujours les mêmes ?
 - iv. Comment les souvenirs sont-ils associés à ces divisions ?

- v. Comment les survivant/e/s, les réfugié/e/s s'organisent-ils ?
- f. Observez-vous fêtes et les traditions de votre pays d'origine ?
- g. Comment avez-vous gagné votre vie depuis que vous avez emménagé au Canada ?
 - i. Avez-vous eu de la difficulté à trouver du travail ?
- h. Pouvez-vous me parler des différentes vagues d'immigration en provenance de votre pays d'origine ?
 - i. Comment cela a-t-il affecté la communauté ?
 - ii. Quelles sont les différences et les points communs entre le vécu de ces différents groupes ?
 - i. Comment pensez-vous que vos sentiments concernant votre pays d'origine ont changé depuis que vous avez emménagé au Canada ? Depuis votre enfance ?
 - i. Comment pensez-vous que vos sentiments concernant votre communauté ont changé ?
- j. Que pensez-vous de la division entre les gens, ici, à Montréal ? Entre anglophones et francophones, par exemple ?
- k. Comment d'autres Montréalais hors de votre communauté vous ont-ils traité/e ?
 - i. Avez-vous des ami/e/s francophones/anglophones ?
- l. Quand/où vous sentez-vous le plus mal à l'aise au Canada ?
 - i. Où vous sentez-vous le plus à l'aise ?
- m. Vos enfants aiment-ils être ici ?
 - i. Pensez-vous que vos enfants se sentent plus à l'aise que vous ?
- n. Étiez-vous en contact avec d'autres haïtiens dans la diaspora ? Si oui qui ? Où ? Pourquoi ?

IX. Retour :

- a. Êtes-vous retourné/e dans votre pays d'origine ?
 - i. Si non, pourquoi ?
 - ii. Si oui, qu'avez-vous fait pendant que vous étiez là-bas ?
 - iii. Qu'avez-vous ressenti à votre retour ?
 - iv. Qu'avez-vous éprouvé face aux changements dans votre pays d'origine ?
- b. Avez-vous songé à y retourner de façon permanente ?
 - i. Pour quelles raisons, entre autres, aimeriez-vous le faire ?
 - ii. Pour quelles raisons, entre autres, préféreriez-vous rester au Canada/ne pas retourner dans votre pays d'origine ?

X. Maison d'Haïti :

- a. Comment avez-vous connu la Maison d'Haïti ?
- b. Quand avez vous commencez à y être impliqué ?
 - i. Comment ?
 - ii. Pourquoi ?
 - ii. Étiez-vous bénévole ou employé ?
- c. Qu'avez-vous faits comme activités et/ou programmes ?
 - i. Avez vous développé ces activités et/ou programmes vous-mêmes ? Pourquoi ?
 - ii. Si non, qui était en charge et pourquoi vous êtes-vous impliqués particulièrement dans ces activités/programmes ?
 - iii. À qui s'adressaient ces activités et/ou programmes ?
 - ix. Avec qui travailliez-vous ?
- d. Comment décririez-vous votre approche de travail ?

- e. Combien de temps et pourquoi êtes-vous restez impliqué dans l'organisation ?
 - i. (Si applicable) Pourquoi avez-vous quitté ?
- f. Étiez-vous impliqués dans d'autres groupes ou réseaux communautaires ?
 - i. Quels étaient-ils ?
 - ii. Qu'est-ce que vous y faisiez ?
- g. Étiez-vous impliqués dans d'autres groupes ou réseaux haïtiens ?
 - i. Lesquels ?
 - ii. Pourquoi ?
 - iii. Qu'est-ce que vous y faisiez ?
- h. Qu'elles ont été vos meilleures expériences à la Maison d'Haïti ?
 - i. Quelles ont été les plus difficiles ?
 - ii. Qu'avez-vous appris à travers votre implication à la Maison d'Haïti ?
 - iii. Cela vous a-t-il servi en dehors de la Maison d'Haïti ?
- i. Que faites-vous maintenant ?
 - i. Revenez-vous souvent à la Maison d'Haïti ? Pourquoi ?
- j. Que pensez-vous avoir légué à l'organisation ?

XI. Souvenirs et héritage :

- c. Comment les gens dans votre communauté parlent-ils du passé ?
 - i. Comment/où/quand/pourquoi des histoires en particulier sont-elles racontées ?
 - ii. Comment ces histoires rejoignent-elles la vôtre ?
 - iii. Quels sont les silences dans ces histoires ? Qu'est-ce qui n'est pas dit ?
- g. Quels sont les lieux de mémoires dans la communauté haïtienne à Montréal ?
 - i. Qu'est-ce qui y est transmis ?
 - ii. Comment ?
- d. Que dites-vous à vos enfants à propos de votre pays d'origine ?
 - i. Parlez-vous des raisons qui vous l'ont fait quitter ?
 - ii. Comment parlez-vous de la violence avec vos enfants ? Comment la formulez-vous ?
- h. Avez-vous vu le vécu de votre communauté exprimé artistiquement, au cinéma, sur scène, etc. ?
 - i. Quelle a été votre réaction ?
 - ii. Quelle a été la réaction de la communauté ?
 - iii. Comment pensez-vous que vos histoires et celles de votre communauté peuvent être représentées dans des musées, au théâtre ou en classe ?
 - iv. Quel pourrait-être le rôle de la Maison d'Haïti en lien avec la passation de la mémoire ?
- j. Qu'aimeriez-vous surtout que les personnes hors de votre communauté sachent de votre vécu ?
 - i. Qu'aimeriez-vous que les autres personnes de votre communauté sachent surtout de votre vécu ?

Appendix F : Collective Interview Guide

1. Vous connaissiez-vous avant de commencer à travailler ensemble ? Si oui, comment ?
2. Comment avez-vous collaboré dans votre travail à la Maison d'Haïti ?
 - i. Quel moment de collaboration vous a le plus marqué ?
 - ii. À quel type de conflits avez-vous fait face ?
 - iii. Comment les avez-vous résolus ?
3. Quel étaient, selon vous, les axes de travail les plus importants de la Maison d'Haïti au moment où vous y étiez ? Pourquoi ?
 - i. Quels ont été les programmes qui ont connu le plus de succès ? Pourquoi ?
 - i. Ceux qui en ont connu le moins ? Pourquoi ?
 - ii. Si vous aviez à refaire ces derniers, que feriez-vous de différent ?
4. Étiez-vous impliqués dans d'autres groupes, associations, organisations pendant que vous travailliez à la Maison d'Haïti ?
 - i. Avez-vous travaillé avec certaines personnes de la Maison d'Haïti en dehors de l'organisation ? Si oui, dans quel cadre ?
5. Quel aspect de votre travail devrait ressortir dans l'organisation de l'archive de la Maison d'Haïti ?
6. Si vous deviez raconter une histoire de votre passage à la Maison d'Haïti, laquelle serait-ce et pourquoi ?
7. Avez-vous des questions quant au projet d'archive de la Maison d'Haïti ?

Appendix G : Project Summary

Désirée Rochat,
Candidate au doctorat, Département d'études intégrées en éducation,
Université McGill

Résumé du projet doctoral : Mémoires et histoires d'éducation communautaire : retracer 40 ans d'histoire à travers les archives de La Maison d'Haïti.

But du projet :

Ce projet de recherche collaborative vise à retracer et systématiser les approches pédagogiques développées par les éducateurs et éducatrices communautaires (anciens et actuels) de la Maison d'Haïti. Pour ce faire, je propose de réaliser une revue de presque 40 ans d'histoire (1972-2000) à travers un projet collaboratif d'archive communautaire. En développant une méthode pertinente pour archiver les documents qui ont été produits pendant ces décennies d'activités, cette recherche va continuer un travail déjà entamé pour préserver le patrimoine matériel et immatériel de l'institution. Le projet émerge de réflexions collectives et continues sur la mémoire de l'activisme caribéen au Québec. En organisant, documentant, et préservant –c'est-à-dire en archivant—les documents et la mémoire des éducateurs et éducatrices de la Maison d'Haïti, cette recherche va explorer et synthétiser leurs pratiques et philosophies éducatives uniques. Ce, pour créer des ressources pouvant servir aux futurs éducateurs, éducatrices et participant.e.s de la Maison d'Haïti. Finalement, cette recherche se veut collaborative car la démarche est ancrée dans un projet communautaire qui a pour but de participer à assurer la continuité de l'histoire qui s'écrit et se fait à la Maison d'Haïti depuis presque 45 ans.

Objectifs :

Les objectifs spécifiques de la recherche sont les suivants :

1. Identifier les aspects clés des philosophies et pratiques pédagogiques d'un groupe d'éducateurs et éducatrices communautaires pour approfondir les connaissances sur l'éducation communautaire.
2. Évaluer la pertinence d'un projet d'archive communautaire comme processus de réflexion collective sur les pratiques éducatives dans un centre communautaire haïtien à Montréal.
3. Évaluer le potentiel d'un projet d'archive communautaire comme projet de recherche collaborative.
4. Proposer de nouvelles stratégies pédagogiques qui ont émergées du projet d'archivage et de la synthèse des approches pédagogiques.

Questions de recherche :

Les questions guidant le projet sont les suivantes :

1. Comment un projet d'archive communautaire peut-il aider à saisir la manière dont des éducateurs et éducatrices communautaires dans un organisme Haïtien de Montréal conçoivent leurs pratiques et philosophies éducatives ?

Comment ces éducateurs et éducatrices comprennent-ils leurs philosophies et pratiques éducatives ? Quelles leçons peuvent-elles nous offrir ?

Le processus d'organisation d'une archive communautaire peut-il être un processus de recherche ethnographique collaborative ?

Le processus d'organisation d'une archive communautaire peut-il être un processus de systématisation des pratiques pédagogique dans un contexte communautaire ?
Quelles connaissances peuvent être tirées de ce projet d'archive communautaire pour nourrir des approches pédagogiques futures ?

Démarche :

La recherche se fera à travers l'organisation des archives de la Maison d'Haïti et à partir d'entrevues individuelles et collectives. Les participant.e.s seront 10 à 12 anciens et actuels éducateurs et éducatrices, choisis selon les recommandations de la Maison d'Haïti. Les entrevues individuelles seront des entrevues d'histoire orale et les entrevues collectives serviront à rassembler tous les participant.e.s pour des discussions de groupe sur des moments marquants de l'histoire de l'institution. Selon leur consentement, les transcriptions révisées des entrevues et les enregistrements audio-visuels seront intégrés aux archives de la Maison d'Haïti. De plus, toujours selon leur consentement, des extraits de ces entrevues serviront à compléter la description du matériel de l'archive.

Calendrier original:

Juin-Décembre 2016 : Tri, organisation et classification des documents de l'archive.

Septembre-Décembre 2016 : Entrevues d'histoire orales avec les participant.e.s.

Janvier-Février 2017 : Rencontres collectives.

Mars-Mai 2017 : Début de la rédaction ; présentation des résultats préliminaires et corrections selon les commentaires ; finalisation de la classification de l'archive (préparation des documents de description, index et catalogue).

Juin-Juillet 2017 : Présentation de l'archive et des résultats de la recherche.

Juillet-Décembre 2017 : Rédaction de la thèse et du livret.

Calendrier révisé :

Juin 2016-Décembre 2017 : Tri, organisation et classification des documents de l'archive.

Septembre 2016-Décembre 2017: Entrevues d'histoire orales avec les participant.e.s.

Janvier-Février 2018 : Rencontres collectives.

Septembre 2017-Mai 2018 : Début de la rédaction ; présentation des résultats préliminaires et corrections selon les commentaires ; finalisation de la classification de l'archive (préparation des documents de description, index et catalogue).

Juin-Juillet 2018 : Présentation de l'archive et des résultats de la recherche.

Juillet-Décembre 2018 : Rédaction de la thèse et du livret.

Aboutissements :

L'archive et un catalogue de ce qui s'y trouve.

Thèse sur les pratiques éducatives de la Maison d'Haïti.

Livret synthétisant certains aspects de la thèse, l'histoire de la Maison d'Haïti et le projet d'archive communautaire.

Appendix H : Letter for Participants

Participation au projet doctoral sur la Maison d'Haïti

Mémoires et histoires d'éducation communautaire : retracer 40 ans d'histoire à travers les archives de La Maison d'Haïti.

But du projet

Comme vous le savez peut-être, nous travaillons depuis quelques temps à organiser et rassembler les archives institutionnelles de la Maison d'Haïti. De ce projet a émergé mon projet de thèse, que je fais dans le cadre du doctorat au Département d'Études Intégrées en Éducation à l'Université McGill. Mon projet vise en partie à retracer et systématiser les approches pédagogiques développées par les éducateurs et éducatrices communautaires (anciens et actuels) de la Maison d'Haïti. Pour ce faire, je propose de réaliser une revue de presque 40 ans d'histoire (1972-2000) à travers un projet collaboratif d'archive communautaire, d'où le lien avec le projet d'archive de la Maison d'Haïti. En organisant, documentant, et préservant –c'est-à-dire en archivant—les documents et la mémoire des éducateurs et éducatrices de la Maison d'Haïti, cette recherche va explorer et synthétiser leurs pratiques et philosophies éducatives uniques. Ainsi, cette recherche participera au travail déjà entamé pour préserver le patrimoine matériel et immatériel de l'institution, ce qui permettra de développer une méthode pertinente pour archiver les documents produits pendant les 4 premières décennies d'activités de l'organisation. L'archive servira donc à mettre à disposition ces ressources historiques aux futurs éducateurs, éducatrices et participant.e.s de la Maison d'Haïti et mon projet doctoral proposera une réflexion sur l'approche pédagogique de l'organisation et sur le projet d'archive communautaire.

Démarche

La recherche se fera à travers l'organisation des archives de la Maison d'Haïti, la recherche et analyse de documents et à partir d'entrevues individuelles et collectives. Les participant.e.s aux entrevues seront 10 à 12 anciens et actuels éducateurs et éducatrices. Les entrevues individuelles seront des entrevues d'histoire orale et elles auront lieu entre septembre et décembre 2016. Les entrevues collectives serviront à rassembler tous les participant.e.s qui le veulent, pour discuter des archives et de moments marquants dans l'histoire de l'organisation. Elles auront lieu entre janvier et février 2017.

Participation demandée

Si vous êtes d'accord, vous serez appelé à d'abord participer une entrevue d'histoire orale avec moi, dans le lieu et selon le temps qui vous convient. Si vous le désirez, je vous remettrai ensuite une copie de la transcription que vous pourrez vérifier et corriger. En second lieu, vous serez invité à participer si vous le voulez, à deux rencontres de groupes avec d'anciens et/ou d'actuels collègues de la Maison d'Haïti pour commenter l'organisation des archives et discuter de certains aspects et moments marquants de votre travail collectif. Vous pourrez choisir de rester anonyme ou d'être nommé dans ma thèse, en lien avec votre entrevue. De plus, selon votre consentement, les transcriptions révisées des entrevues et les enregistrements audio-visuels seront transférés et intégrés aux archives de la Maison d'Haïti. Toujours selon votre consentement, des extraits de ces entrevues serviront à compléter la description du matériel de l'archive. Finalement, vous serez invité à la présentation des résultats préliminaires de ma thèse.

Si vous êtes intéressés à participer ou avez des questions, vous pouvez me contacter au 514-973-9005, ou à desiree.rochat@mail.mcgill.ca

Merci d'avance !

Désirée Rochat

Superviseur : Dr. Aziz Choudry, (aziz.choudry@mcgill.ca; 514-398-4527 Ext. 00952)

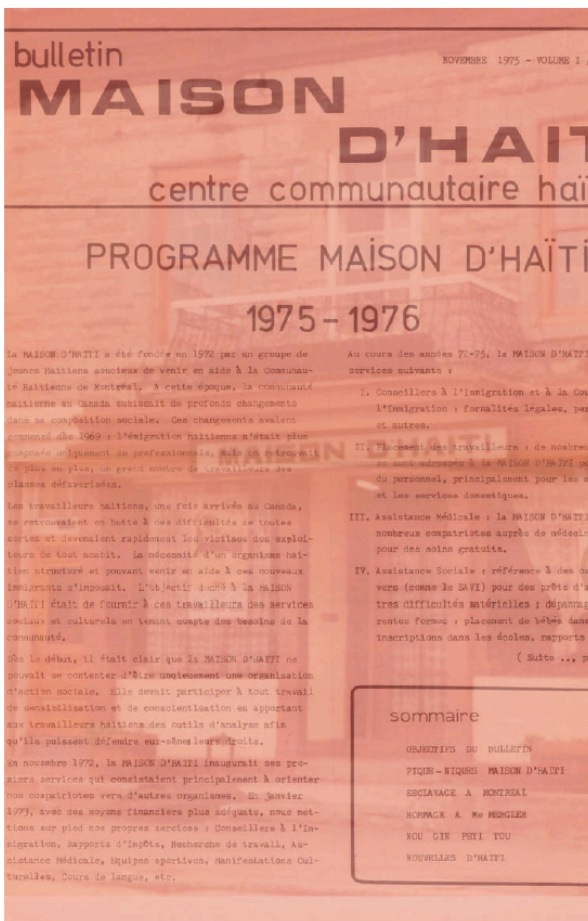
Appendix I : Excerpt Annual Report, La Maison d'Haïti (2015-2016)



Rapport annuel 2015 - 2016 Maison D'Haïti

Table des matières

Mot du président	1
Structure organisationnelle	2
Notre approche	3
Profil de la population desservie	4
Notre année en un clin d'œil	A
Tableaux, résultats des interventions	7
Éducation, accueil intégration, dossiers femmes, jeunesse, communications	
Rapport d'activités	
Accueil, intégration et immigration, Confie-toi	12
Éducation	
Alphabétisation et francisation	15
Ateliers l'art d'être parent	17
Intégration socioprofessionnelle	19
Dossier Femmes	21
Au Futur	22
Réseau des jeunes parents	25
Bedonkaine	26
Café rencontre	27
Halte-garderie	28
Jouer c'est grandir	29
Ligne Info mamme	31
Services aux femmes	32
Ma boîte à provisions	33
Programmes Jeunesse	
Juste pour Elles	35
Patrouilleurs de rue	38
Aide aux devoirs	40
Camp d'été Kan Lakay	41
Communications	42
Mes finances, mes choix	44
Mémoires et histoires	46
Concertation	48
Campagne de financement	50
Remerciements	52



Mémoires et histoires de notre Maison : les archives de la Maison d'Haïti.

Responsable : Désirée Rochat, candidate au doctorat Département d'Études Intégrées en Éducation, Université McGill

Le projet « Mémoires et histoires d'une Maison : les archives de la Maison d'Haïti » est l'aboutissement d'une réflexion entamée en 2013 sur le patrimoine historique matériel et immatériel de l'organisme. Le projet comporte deux volets interdépendants. Le premier implique l'organisation des archives institutionnelles depuis 1972. Le deuxième est une recherche collaborative* qui vise à retracer les approches pédagogiques développées par les éducatrices et éducateurs et de la Maison d'Haïti depuis ses débuts. En archivant leur mémoire et les documents de l'institution, la recherche va explorer et synthétiser leurs expériences et connaissances uniques qui pourront servir de ressources pour le futur. Ceci contribuera à assurer la continuité de l'histoire qui s'écrit et se fait à la Maison d'Haïti depuis plus de quatre décennies.

Les objectifs du volet archive

1. Établir le programme d'archive de la Maison d'Haïti.
2. Organiser, ranger et classer les archives pour les rendre accessibles aux employé.e.s et participant.e.s.
2. Collecter et archiver des histoires orales d'anciens employé.e.s ou participant.e.s.

Les objectifs du volet recherche

1. Identifier les aspects clés des philosophies et pratiques pédagogiques d'éducateurs et éducatrices de la Maison d'Haïti.
2. Évaluer la pertinence du projet d'archive comme processus de réflexion collective sur les pratiques éducatives de la Maison d'Haïti.
3. Évaluer le potentiel du projet d'archive comme méthode de recherche collaborative.
4. Proposer de nouvelles stratégies pédagogiques.

Perspectives :

Faire connaître l'histoire et l'expertise de la Maison d'Haïti.

Faire vivre les archives à travers des activités culturelles, intergénérationnelles artistiques et éducatives. Valoriser le patrimoine de la communauté haïtienne à Montréal et du quartier St-Michel.

Appendix J : Excerpt Annual Report, La Maison d'Haïti (2016-2017)



TABLE DES MATIÈRES	
Mot de la directrice	2
Structure organisationnelle	4
Profil de la population desservie	5
Campagne de financement	10
Partenaires et Collaborateurs	11
Communications	12
Évènement	14
Accueil des nouveaux arrivants	16
Alpha-francisation	18
De la rue à la Maison d'Haïti	20
Juste pour "ELLES"	24
Art d'être parents	29
Aide aux devoirs	30
Kan Lakay	32
Projet d'insertion socioprofessionnelle	35
Dossier femmes	36
Femme, voir plus loin	38
Espace parents	40
Au Futur	42
Bedondaine	44
Halte-Garderie	46
Café-Rencontre	48
Jouer, c'est grandir	49
Service aux femmes	50
Ma boîte à provisions	51
Ligne info-mammo PQDCS	52
Fab Lab	54
Mes finances Mes choix	56
Mémoire et histoire de notre Maison	59

MÉMOIRE ET HISTOIRE DE NOTRE MAISON

LES ARCHIVES DE LA MAISON D'HAÏTI | DÉsirÉE ROCHAT

Le projet vise à préserver et faire connaître le patrimoine historique matériel et immatériel de la Maison d'Haïti à travers l'organisation de ses archives institutionnelles et une recherche collaborative.*

*Projet doctoral de Désirée Rochat, candidate au doctorat Département d'Études Intégrées en Éducation, Université McGill



PERSPECTIVES

1- Finaliser l'inventaire, réorganiser les archives dans le matériel approprié et continuer les entrevues d'histoires orales,

2- Écriture d'un chapitre sur le projet dans un ouvrage collectif.

3- Préparer une exposition à partir du matériel.

ACTIVITÉS RÉALISÉES

1- Rangement des archives

Tri, élagage et premier rangement des archives et de la bibliothèque de ressources dans le nouvel espace.

Début de l'inventaire et des entrevues d'histoire orale.

Obtention de la subvention 'Soutien au traitement des archives' de Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec pour acheter du matériel de préservation.

2- Utilisation des archives

Présentation de documents et photos d'archives lors des journées d'ouverture d'octobre 2016 et dans le cadre de cours universitaires (Telling Stories à l'Université Concordia et Organizing Non-Formal Learning à l'Université McGill).

Utilisation des photos pour le projet « Ma culture, Mon identité » avec le programme Juste pour Elles.

EFFET & IMPACT

L'utilisation des archives lors d'activités culturelles, éducatives et académiques permet de favoriser un sentiment d'appartenance chez les membres de l'organisme et de faire connaître la Maison d'Haïti dans de nouveaux réseaux. Une présentation du projet à la Conférence annuelle de 'Archives Association of Toronto' ainsi que la publication de deux projets de recherche ayant mis à profit les archives ont permis de faire la promotion des archives, de l'organisme et de son histoire.

Publications:

-Sean Mills (2016). Une place au Soleil. Haïti, les Haïtiens et le Québec. Éditions Mémoire d'encrier

-Alain St-Victor (2017). De l'exil à la communauté. Une histoire de l'immigration haïtienne à Montréal, 1960-1990. Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Montréal.

Appendix K : Organizational Chart, La Maison d'Haïti, Circa 1979

