Haitian Migration and the Changing Context of the Transition to Adulthood

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Abstract

The transition to adulthood in developing countries is undergoing dramatic transformations. Changing expectations and burgeoning opportunities facilitate geographic mobility, and many rural developing country youth view migration to cities as the most viable option for a productive future (Behrman and Sengupta 2005; Quisumbing and Hallman 2005).This paper aims to describe the migration experiences of Haitian youth, explore the potential consequences for their individual life trajectories, and examine how these experiences transformed following the January 2010 earthquake, which dramatically altered the migration context. It employs data from 22 semi-structured interviews conducted with Haitian youth in June and July of 2010. Findings reveal that educational and economic opportunities along with the idealization of the urban setting encourage youth migration, and they do not expect the hardships they encounter, including prepared lack of support and harmful living conditions. Additionally, Haitian youth and their families face challenging decisions when considering future migration to disaster afflicted areas, and youth are foregoing educational opportunities in light of current migration circumstances.

Haitian Migration and the Changing Context of the Transition to Adulthood

The transition to adulthood in developing countries is undergoing dramatic transformations. Youth are raising their expectations beyond traditional roles and delaying long-established markers of adulthood, such as marriage and family formation, in favor of education and its anticipated returns (Quisumbing and Hallman 2005). Burgeoning globalization creates awareness of the opportunities beyond their natal communities, and the increased availability of transportation and communication infrastructures facilitates geographic mobility (Behrman and Sengupta 2005), and many rural developing country youth view migration to cities as the most viable option for productive futures. Youth migrate with optimism and resilience seeking educational and employment opportunities that will propel them into productive futures. Yet the stark reality is that many are underprepared for the challenges and risks they will encounter.

Haiti, where youth[2] comprise 70 percent of all internal migrants (Metz et al. 2001), is an ideal setting to examine how these experiences unfold. Migration has long been an important aspect of the transition to adulthood in Haiti, but migration experiences and meanings are changing dramatically in light of new opportunities (Schwartz, 2010). In January 2010 a devastation 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Port au Prince, a primary urban migration destination in Haiti, further altering the risk and reward calculus for young potential migrants.

In this paper I examine youth migration experiences in Haiti and explore the potential consequences for their individual life trajectories, and examine how these experiences transformed following dramatic changes to the migration context. Haiti is an ideal setting to examine youth migration due to the high incidences of both internal and international migration beginning at a young age.

Background

Migration has shaped the Caribbean region into a unique socio-cultural, political, and geographic region. Initially, colonial European powers profited from plantation economies, whose productivity relied on forced African slave migration (Portes & Grosfoguel 1994). Following slavery's abolition in the region, which began with the Haitian Revolution in 1804

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[2] There is no universally accepted age definition of youth, and I adopt a definition that that indicates adolescents and young adults, ranging in age from approximately 15 to 25 years.

and eventually followed elsewhere, the need for workers, primarily in labor intensive agricultural production, such as sugar cane harvesting, encouraged wage-labor migration both within the region and to its periphery (Gammage 2004). As a result, the intra-regional movement of people to fulfill labor demands is an integral part of the Caribbean experience.

In recent decades, changing economic regimes transformed the Caribbean economy from reliance on primary agricultural goods, such as sugar, bananas, and coffee, into a service based economy with tourism and manufacturing as its primary pillars (Palmer 2009). Consequently, the Haitian labor supply strives to match pace with these demands, and recent migrants more commonly seek non-agrarian work and educational opportunities that lead to service economy employment (Ferguson 2003). Youth in particular migrate seeking both educational and non-agrarian employment opportunities. While decades ago, the typical young migrant cut sugar cane, today, young migrants more frequently work in non-agricultural domains such as tourism and construction. Accurate internal migration estimates by age are not available, but the primary migratory flows are from rural to urban areas and include large numbers of youth. Internal migration estimates from the late 1990s report that approximately 70 percent of Haiti's rural to urban migrants were between 10 and 29 years old (Metz et al. 2001).

Cultural values, land pressures, and the demand for education jointly act to encourage youth migration. Haitians define adulthood by individual economic viability, establishing an independent household, and producing children who are adequately supported; until this occurs, the individual remains a child in the eyes of Haitian society (Schlesinger 1968; McElroy & Albuquerque 1988; Schwartz 2009). Due to decreased land availability caused by both population growth and environmental degradation, farming potential has also declined, leaving little economic motivation to remain in rural Haiti. The Haitian rural peasantry has continuously owned land, which is inherited equally by all children; a consequence of this land tenure system is very small plots of land barely capable of sustaining farming (Mintz 2010).

Finally, the demand for education also drives youth migration. During recent decades, educational opportunities expanded dramatically in developing countries, and there was a shift towards longer periods of human capital investment (Lloyd 2005). Among 20 to 24 year olds in Haiti, 64 percent completed at least primary school, a completion rate much higher than among older cohorts (Macro International 2006). For many youth, potential educational pay-offs drive migration due to the absence of rural secondary schools. For example in Haiti, the average

distance to a secondary school is 10 kilometers and substantially farther in rural areas (Filmer 2007). This characterizes much of the developing world where most children live within walking distance of a primary school, but many rural youth cannot access middle and secondary schools due to distance (Lloyd 2005).

Haitian families make extensive efforts to educate their children, attesting to the high internalized value of education. They sacrifice to pay the required fees demanded at both public and private school, and a large portion of remittances are directed towards schooling costs (Bredl 2010). Families with the necessary financial and social capital send their children to school in urban areas where they believe school quality is superior but where children often reside with extended family members or friends. This practice increases among more advanced students due to the absence of secondary schools in rural areas. Increasingly, students desire university degrees or technical training, though actual enrollment is low (Lunde 2008).

Despite the potential opportunities of migration, many youth also face extreme challenges from migration. A survey of Cité Soleil, the notorious gang-controlled slum district, surprisingly revealed a young population, where two-thirds had migrated from rural areas, and with literacy rates well above the national average (Metz, 2001). This scenario begins to illustrate the direst conditions that youth tolerate to seek opportunities.

Further jeopardizing migration rewards was a January 12th, 2010 a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, triggering "the largest urban natural catastrophe in recorded history," (p 3) and the internal displacement of approximately two million people (OCHA 2010a). Earthquake damage was primarily concentrated in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area and Jacmel, the capital of the South-East Department, both common urban migration destinations for youth in the study region. Both physical and social infrastructures in Port-au-Prince were heavily overburdened (Metz 2001), and the earthquake exacerbated these conditions. In the days that followed, people poured out of metropolitan Port-au-Prince and Jacmel seeking food, shelter, and safety. Approximately two-thirds of respondents eventually resettled in Port au Prince, but over one year after the event, 1.3 million people still reside in settlement camps for internally displaced persons, while another 660 thousand remain displaced in outlying provinces (Government of Haiti 2010). In addition to destroying homes and other buildings, the earthquake severely damaged or destroyed 80 percent of the schools in the affected area and 23 percent of all schools in Haiti (OCHA 2010b). Reopening primary schools was a

priority, and between 72 and 100 percent of the primary schools in different parts of the affected region reopened before the end of the 2009-10 school year. However schools were operating under tents and next to rubble in conditions that parents believed threatened their children's well-being. Whereas Port-au-Prince was previously a city of opportunity for young Haitians seeking advancement through education and non-agricultural employment, many of these opportunities were no longer available, and the risks in these contexts increased dramatically.

Theoretical Framework

Given the lack of a comprehensive theory specifically addressing youth migration, I draw primarily on a life course framework. The life course emphasizes the intersection of different time domains: an individual's own life timing (i.e., life phases and individual transitions), family members' life clocks (i.e., the interdependence of family members), and historical time (i.e., specific social and economic contexts (Elder 1975). Applied to youth migration, this perspective highlights the interdependence of kin in the migration process. Migration reinforces established kinship ties as youth migrants capitalize on established bonds and kin play a vital role in adapting the migrant to a new environment (Hareven 1982). It also applies to Haitian youth, who still rely primarily on family financial and social capital and whose migration may by considered a family investment. Furthermore, the life course is also appropriate for explaining the transformations that occur from the abrupt changes in the physical, social, and cultural contexts induced by rural to urban migration and important historical events, such as the January 2010 earthquake.

I examine post-earthquake migration using a threat-based decision model, which posits that individuals will flee their homes based on perceived threats to their safety and well-being (Davenport, Moore, & Poe, 2003). This model is generally conceptualized in the context of response to violence, but I apply this theory to describe internal displacement following a natural disaster and the subsequent decision making process for returning to disaster afflicted area.

METHOD

Sample

I conducted 22 semi-structured interviews with Haitian youth aged 15 to 27 during June and July 2010. The sample was purposefully selected through a sequential sampling approach

(Teddlie and Yu 2007). I began with a matrix that included three age groups (15 to 18, 19 to 22, and 23 to 27) divided by previous migration experience and no previous migration experience and recruited respondents based on representation across the matrix. As patterns emerged during data collection, I sought respondents with particular schooling, work, family formation, and migration experiences to generate contrasting characteristics for comparison. I purposefully moved throughout the communities and sought respondents from a variety of current activities and dwelling characteristics to increase the diversity of the sample.

I recruited potential respondents by initiating conversations with individuals who appeared to be in the target age range. When seeking respondents with particular characteristics, I asked for interview referrals from community members. These techniques are contextually appropriate in Haiti where most information is relayed verbally and strangers commonly interact. Interview refusals were few, and most were justified by a desire to watch or listen to World Cup matches.

All respondents lived in Haiti at the time of the interview and self-identified as Haitian. Due to community composition and limited economic diversity, all respondents were either members of Haiti's peasant class or urban poor who relocated following the January 2010 earthquake. Table 1 provides a more comprehensive description of respondent characteristics.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Before initiating the interview, I verbally consented or assented all respondents using Internal Review Board (IRB) approved procedures. For respondents aged 15 to 17, parental consent was also obtained. Along with respondents and their parents, I selected interview locations that afforded an optimal combination of privacy and comfort. Interviews occurred in yards, inside homes, and in community buildings.

The interviews retrospectively examined key life course transitions occurring during adolescence and early adulthood and the experiences surrounding them, particularly how migration was a part of these transitions. The interviews were structured around an interactive, youth focused, life-history calendar (LHC) that I developed for the purpose of these interviews. I extended previous LHCs, a tool to encourage respondents to recall key life events (Axinn & Pearce, 2006), by making the calendar relevant to youth themes. I also made the calendar

friendlier for low-literacy respondents by using illustrations and magnets that respondents could manipulate.

I am fluent in Haitian Creole and Haitian cultural norms, which contributed to my rapport with respondents. Most interviews lasted approximately one hour, but some continued for as long as two hours. I translated and transcribed the interviews and sought external opinions when meanings were unclear. The transcripts were coded for common themes.

Setting

Interviews occurred in southeastern Haiti in two small towns, each with a population of around 23,000 inhabitants, and one rural community of unspecified boundaries. The primary means of production in the region are agriculture and resale of bulk items. Small plots of land to produce cash crops, such as beans and millet are common, as are livestock ownership and fishing in the coastal part.

The study area is directly adjacent to the Dominican border. Regional residents commonly engaged in cross-border trade and labor opportunities. Movement in the immediate border region is relatively unrestricted, which provides economic opportunities, and cross-border commutes are common. The Haitian government has underinvested in the region, evident from the lack of electrification and the poorer quality roads, schools, and hospitals than found in the rest of Haiti. The short distances on the map are deceptive, and accessing Jacmel, the department capital or Port au Prince, the national capital, occurs only via a precarious day long journey. Health care infrastructure is weak, and many residents seek care in nearby Dominican health clinics.

Local residents rarely cross the border to attend school and must rely on Haiti's educational infrastructure. Families with the resources to seek higher quality education send their children to schools in cities. For the study region, these schools are primarily in Jacmel and Port au Prince. Whereas Haitian towns comparable in size to the towns in the study region generally provide secondary education, there is only a single secondary school in one of these towns. The second town offers school through 9th grade, and education is available until 6th grade in rural areas. The lack of schools and other youth opportunities is a primary cause of regional out migration.

RESULTS

      Overall, findings reveal that educational and economic opportunities along with the idealization of the urban setting encourage Haitian youth migrate. Though they benefit from these opportunities, they also encounter unexpected hardships such as lack of support and harmful living conditions. Fear of continued seismic activity as well as personal security threats discourage return to Port-au-Prince. However, opportunities have not increased in rural areas, and the allure of urban potential persists. Consequently, Haitian youth and their families face challenging decisions as they balance future opportunities with potential risks. I present these findings in more detail below.

Motivation to Migrate

      Respondents migrated previously and desired future migration to expand their educational opportunities. For respondents who did not have access to secondary schools, this was the only option to further their education. The end of schooling opportunities directly encouraged migration to an area with the next level of schooling. They explained that this is simply what one does, because rural youth "can't even find a secondary school."

      For others, improved school quality encouraged departure even when the appropriate schooling level was available. Respondents believed that the quality of education in both Port-au-Prince and Jacmel is superior to rural schools and that anyone with the opportunity would go, because, "Port-au-Prince is better because they teach you more." Many respondents specifically attested to the quality of French instruction. The ability to speak French differentiates among social classes in Haiti and is a prerequisite for many jobs. Respondents also expressed the desire to receive computer, language, and other technical training skills that would help them secure potential employment. Again, these opportunities were absent in rural areas, and respondents viewed these as reasons for moving to urban areas. However, lack of ability to pay school fees and secure housing inhibited migration. One respondent who hoped to attend school elsewhere in the coming school year explained, "I still don't know if I will go there because they are expensive. The schools are expensive." Many relied on the generosity of family members or charity organizations to bear the costs.

      Potential income generation opportunities also encouraged migration. Respondents generally felt that more opportunities were available elsewhere. When explaining why she would

want to be a vendor in Port-au-Prince a female respondents stated that, "Port-au-Prince is a place where you can try." Another explained that, "In Haiti, to find work, you experience a lot of misery, but in the Dominican Republic whenever you finish working there you always find a job."

One female respondent who migrated within the region to benefit from the binational market explained, "Well I came here to work, and here I am." She could not find anyone to pay her schooling fees, and she considered entrepreneurism the next best option. Additionally, she offset her migration costs by traveling with a mission group from her church and not returning home and then securing a microfinance loan for her initial investment.

Financial obligations, primarily to support one's family were often a direct antecedent to engage in less favorable work opportunities. One respondent explained,

> "It is an obligation. Staying in Haiti a man does nothing. Then in the Dominican Republic from the time he arrives in the cane cutting area, they pay him. Then things become more expensive in Haiti…Then the kids need to be sent to school…So then what can he do in Haiti to pay that money? He is obligated to go to work to send money, so kids can go to school, so the family can eat."

Though many dreamed of a professional or semi-professional job somewhere, either in a Haitian city or abroad, such experiences were uncommon and brief experiences among respondents. This pattern may be due to the residential location of the sample. However, they also reported few professional jobs among immediate family members. None of the respondents wished to migrate to the Dominican Republic as an agricultural laborer. However, when prompted, many said they would as a last resort. Consistent with this idea, returned agricultural labor migrants and those whose parents had been agricultural labor migrants described the experience as one where they simply went when economic conditions were exceptionally challenging and the opportunity presented itself. They often indicated particular trigger such as the hospitalization of a family member or a poor growing season.

Respondents also described the allure of the capital city that had "ambiance" and exposure to media and technology absent in their home areas. Explaining how people in Port-au-Prince are different, one respondent explained, "People there, they watch things like videos, they become more, more enlightened. They come to understand more about the world and that kind of stuff." Youth who attended school elsewhere described their experiences to their peers,

> "When I went to Champs de Marche I saw some things, and then when I came
> here I explained to the other kids what I saw and why I liked it. Then when I went
> to the Rex Theater to see Haitian films I always told them what I saw and what I
> liked….I told them, and then they got the idea that they wanted to go to Port-au-
> Prince so that they could go see it."

In turn, youth who had never left home absorbed these sentiments, "They say that Port au Prince is a beautiful city. They go to carnival. People talk about it, but I have never been."

Several respondents who had never left their homes idealized the potential urban life style in multiple domains. Describing life in Port-au-Prince, one stated, "They live better; their houses are nicer; the kids go to school earlier and they learn lots of things. Here it isn't like that." Another explained,

> "Well I live out here in the countryside; we do hard work. Like when you go to
> get water, you have to climb a mountain to get water, but in their yards everyone
> has water. You don't carry a load on your head to get water."

Many respondents also expressed the sentiment that urban areas and peers who migrated to urban areas created a better marriage market. When asked to describe what she expected prior to marriage one female respondent stated, "If he worked in an office that would be good, but here they don't have jobs like that; people here only work the land. When asked if she would consider a guy that worked the land she responded, "No, I don't think I could be interested in him." Similar sentiments were echoed by multiple female respondents who desired that he "have a job in an office," rather than someone who worked the land. These opportunities are again only available to these who seek opportunities away from home.

Migration Consequences

Respondents spoke candidly about the benefits of their migration. These experiences echoed the motivations described above. Many were progressing through the educational system, and those who sought to earn an income scraped by and returned with meager earnings to pay debts and make small entrepreneurial investments.

However, they were unprepared for the negative experiences. Entering new schools was not always easy. Respondents described being rejected from school admissions, and often extended family members who they thought would pay for school could not afford the costs.

Additionally respondents reported repeating grades they completed in their rural schools and encountering a more challenging school environment. Young men who worked in the Dominican Republic both in agricultural and tourist services had difficulty finding jobs and expressed their desire to avoid returning there.

Though there was considerable heterogeneity in their destinations, many youth described migrating to dangerous urban neighborhoods. A respondent who attended school in Port-au-Prince for several years and returned home only after the earthquake described the city as follows: "It is hot; they like to shoot people; there are places where people rob you; when you go out, they will capture you and put you in a sack. That is why I don't like that place." Another experienced isolated to remain safe, "When I was in Port au Prince, I didn't go out. My mom (who was not there) didn't want me to go out."

A common, but certainly not universal, theme reported among female respondents was extensive forced work and harassment by the households that received them. Several even went as far as to state that they lived as *restaveks*.[3] These experiences directly contradict the opportunities that youth expected. All respondents described household chore participation from a young age as a normative experience and in a relatively cheerful manner. However, the context changed outside their natal homes where they felt they did an unfair amount of work. One female respondent described being forced to manually grind flour for extensive periods of time. Another explained that, "Every day when I got up, she (my sister-in-law) would boss me around. That is why I didn't like it there." A third explained that, "When I would go out, they would lock me outside. When I arrived (at their house), I didn't come with a bed, and they would make fun of me because of the bed."

No male respondents reported personal experiences similar to what the female respondents reported above, though a few described severe work environments as a potential threat and explained that they intentionally avoided these living situations. One described the hard physical labor and food deprivation his male cousin experienced while living with their grandfather and his wife and explained that this was one reason he refused to go live in that town to attend school. Another expressed concern that while living with an aunt she would make him a *restavek.*

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[3] This is a Creole term used to describe a child domestic worker who receives no compensation or access to schooling, and the United Nations classifies it as a form of slavery.

An alternative to adult extend family members is residing with similarly aged siblings or cousins. This residential scenario generated different risks. One respondent living with her 18 year old sister explained, "When the stuff (food) was gone, she would send stuff for us. We would call her on the telephone, but if we didn't have money to buy anything, we would just stay like that."

They also described the absence of the social networks that made their lives tolerable when faced with difficult circumstances in rural areas. As one respondent described,

> "In Port au Prince you must have money with you. If you don't have money when you go to the morgue, your people will be waiting at the morgue longer because you don't have money to buy even a coffin or the beverages to serve people who come to the burial. But here, when people die, you can go somewhere where they will give you credit. They'll give you sugar and everything else on credit, and after that you can work to pay. This is the big difference between people in here and people in Port au Prince."

Changing Expectations

Many victims residing in structurally damaged areas during the earthquake were able to flee the disaster area and remain elsewhere for extended periods of time. Some respondents were in this category of displaced people, and all other respondents received displaced friends and family members in their homes following the earthquake. Respondents explained that extended kinship systems and other social networks facilitated their migration decisions. One stated, "I was lucky that my mother had introduced me to the countryside where I was from…Me, I know the area where I am from, but they never had that opportunity."

Upon contemplating either return migration or migration initiation, respondents expressed concern about continued seismic activity, the living conditions in tent camps, and poor school conditions. For youth seeking further education, this event became a critical juncture forcing them and their parents to reconsider the best schooling options. Recounting a conversation with her father about returning to school shortly after the earthquake, one respondent stated, "What if the same thing happened again. I can't go to Port-au-Prince again." Though still refusing to return immediately, she slowly began to reconsider her options, "I saw that to go to school in Port –au-Prince, all the schools collapsed and everyone was under tents. I

saw kids who went and then came back so I said that I would stay and that next year I would go."
Another explained why she was attending school elsewhere "My school wasn't continuing, I
didn't want to lose this year, so I came to school here so that I could continue to the next class in
the following year."

Some insist they will never return to Port-au-Prince for an extended time period and are
considering other possible destinations for economic and educational opportunities. One
respondent stated, "I won't return to Port-au-Prince. If I don't stay here, I would go to the
Dominican Republic…I would look for work to see what kind of work I would do."

Others eager to return to Port-au-Prince are engaged in a waiting game. One respondent,
describing a conversation she had with her daughter's father about where the daughter would
attend school and where she and the daughter would live, told him, "If I see that things change in
Port-au-Prince, that people start to rebuild and that there are houses to stay in, then I will go…I
am not going to stay in the street under a tent where I am going to be wet." Another respondent
explained her plans for the following September, "I don't know yet, I might stay here or I might
go to Port-au-Prince. If there are good teachers here, I will stay. If there aren't good teachers I
will go." She further explained why she would potentially tolerate attending school under a tent
stating, "It is nothing; you can learn."

DISCUSSION

This paper strengthens a still developing body of literature on youth migration by
highlighting Haiti, a country where the changing context is reshaping youth migration patterns. It
provides insight into migration motives and experiences and how they transform following a
natural disaster. Haiti is a country where migration traditionally played a key factor in the
transition to adulthood, but where the regional economic context dramatically transformed this
experience in recent decades. Furthermore, the consequences of the January 2010 earthquake
further transformed the risks and opportunities associated with migration.

Results reveal a new migration regime among Haitian youth, whereby education and non-
agrarian work opportunities are the driving factors, and agricultural labor migration is less
desirable. These migration motivations diverge from previous patterns whereby agricultural
labor migration was the primary pathway to economic independence and adulthood (Schwartz,
2009). However, new pathways have developed, whereby youth desire formal educational

attainment and non-agricultural jobs. Currently both youth's idealized and actual scenarios about progression to adulthood include migration as a fundamental stepping stone for achieving economic independence and adulthood. Migration for educational and economic reasons creates a critical transition point whereby youth move towards their own economic viability. In previous decades, men participated in agriculturally oriented wage-labor migration whereby they earned the capital necessary to invest in a small homestead, legitimizing their position as adults (Schwartz, 2009). In conclusion, pathways into adulthood demonstrate consistency over time such that migration facilitates the economic viability necessary to achieve adulthood. However, migration experiences have diverged to accommodate the labor demands of a changing economic system.

Results also highlight that youth who leave their natal homes for more urban areas seeking education are unprepared for the risks they encounter. They enter more vulnerable environments, but they view facing these risks as the only means for self-advancement. Youth reported fear of violence, maltreatment, and absence of those who would otherwise help them meet basic needs. The extent to which youth were often unhappy when living with extended family members was a surprising result. It attests to the large obstacles youth are willing to overcome to achieve education.

The difficult experiences they report may also have further consequences, such as making them more vulnerable to delinquent or violent activities outside the household where they reside. This finding indicates that youth service agencies should consider expanding their services to monitor and provide resources for this group of vulnerable youth.

Finally this analysis of migration behaviors and attitudes suggests that six months after a large scale natural disaster suggests that youth are altering their previous migration strategies. For some this includes migrating elsewhere, and for others it means waiting for conditions to change. Current efforts to improve living conditions and rebuild Port-au-Prince are progressing slowly, indicating that those who wait may forgo educational opportunities or revaluate their strategy.

This finding suggest that an important medium to long term consequence the January 2010 earthquake is the threat to human capital development. Educational resources, particularly secondary schools, were heavily concentrated in Port-au-Prince and other urban areas. Previously these factors encouraged rural to urban migration. Currently, safety threats, lack of

housing and inadequate schooling conditions discourage return to Port-au-Prince, and many youth are unable to safely continue with secondary education. Reconstruction goals should recognize the disruption of educational services for rural youth and consider possible ways to facilitate their secondary education.

Furthermore, a growing number of youth unable to attend school or find desirable jobs has implications for youth idleness. Idle youth can become either a resource for innovation and advancement or a source of crime and a threat to national stability (Lloyd 2005). Creating opportunities will increase the potential for productivity and innovation among youth. Therefore, these findings call for increased investments in opportunities for adolescents and young adults.

In conclusion this study examines youth migrations in Haiti by exploring motivations and consequences amidst a changing migration context. Potential opportunities to increase education and engage in non-agricultural work motivate youth to migrate to more urban areas. However, they are underprepared for the circumstances they encounter. Youth serving organizations in Haiti should consider how to monitor and provide support to these youth. Additionally, youth are adapting their migration strategies following the January 2010 earthquake. Reconstruction efforts should consider how to support secondary education for rural youth.