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BOTH SIDES NOW

Gender Relations in Credit and Agriculture Cooperatives
in Rural Haiti

by

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Department of Geography
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec

September, 1992

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation applies the theoretical perspective of gender relations and develops methods to understand and analyze the movement of women from the center of social systems to its margins when these systems are undergoing rapid socio-economic and political change. This research responded to the pressing need for the application of newer, more appropriate theoretical and methodological perspectives to examine shifting power relations between women and men in areas undergoing transformation. In the case study, I investigate the locus of power in a system of cooperatives in the Département du Nord, Haiti and discover how and why female members are being relegated to the periphery of this development programme. I find that a system of gender-based social power is causing unequal opportunities and oppressive power relations for female members in the cooperatives. I analyze how and why this system of social power causes conflict when the interests of female and male members differ in the cooperatives and I explore strategies for change. This dissertation also contributes to a greater understanding of the power dynamics which exist when one group holds different preferences and practices to the dominant group whose framework is the one considered acceptable in the society.

RESUME

Dans cette thèse, j'ai utilisé la perspective théorique des relations entre les sexes, en tant que méthode d'examen et d'analyse du mouvement des femmes qui sont poussées du centre des systèmes sociaux vers leur périphérie, lorsque ces systèmes subissent de rapides changements socio-économiques et politiques. Au cours de l'étude de cas, j'explore le point central de pouvoir au sein d'un système de coopératives, dans le département du Nord, en Haïti, pour tenter de découvrir comment et pourquoi les femmes-membres sont reléguées à la périphérie de ce programme de développement. J'ai découvert qu'un système de pouvoir social fondé sur la différence des sexes entraîne une inégalité des chances et génère des relations de pouvoir opprimantes pour les femmes membres des coopératives. Dans cette recherche, j'analyse comment et pourquoi ce pouvoir social provoque des conflits lorsque les intérêts des hommes et des femmes diffèrent, et j'y explore des stratégies de changement.

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Chapter One

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

Introduction

I have been absorbed with patterns of social equity, and social tension in localities undergoing development, for over a decade. In this study, I address the problematic concerning the all-too-common movement of women to the margins of social systems when these systems are undergoing rapid socio-economic and political change. In the case study, I disentangle factors that lead to inequitable opportunities for women compared to men in a system of agriculture and credit associations in rural Haiti, and explore strategies for change. This research contributes to a greater understanding of the power dynamics which exist where the lives of women and men intersect.

I have found that when systems are undergoing rapid development some individuals gain more control over their socio-economic and political lives while other individuals are adversely affected because they are relatively disempowered by the process. The phenomenon wherein women are disempowered by development programmes is neither unique nor exceptional. It is important, therefore, to expose the terrain of female exploitation when studying these areas of transformation. It is equally important to investigate exactly how and why the movement of women from the center of a social setting to its periphery happens.

This work grew from an experience I had in 1983 when I conducted a survey in six rural sections in the department of the north, Haiti, the regional site of a newly-established cocoa cooperative project. The purpose of that

study was to establish a data base and to conduct a preliminary evaluation of project impact on individuals in these communities. Not surprisingly, among the results of the 1983 study in Haiti I isolated a conflict of interest related to women and men in the community.

The project was structured to encourage the production of cocoa and to make marketing of this crop more efficient. This goal was consistent with part of The World Bank Country Development Programme, which included supply stimulation and export oriented policies (to solve liquidity crises and supplement foreign exchange earnings to correct balance of payments deficits). Women were experiencing a negative impact from this project because, in changing traditional marketing strategies, control over income derived from the sale of cocoa shifted from women to men.

Similar experiences were replicated in other non-industrialized countries where Structural Adjustment programmes were causing significant social upheaval. Structural Adjustment programmes often demand major socio-economic and political change in the short term (4-7 years). Such strategies are unrealistic because changes in social, economic and political structures are rigid in the short term. As well, international demand for an export product is limited and its supply often inelastic.

Implementing the above policies, therefore, often augments poverty for certain groups in the society, such as women. In the mid-1980s, leaders in development policy, such as The World Bank, acknowledged that poverty alleviation in many countries required that their research techniques and development strategies be more refined.

Structural Adjustment programmes began to include a

poverty alleviation component, strategies targeted at groups who are more vulnerable (women, ethnic minorities, those who lose employment or land during the restructuring process) when a country follows their policies. Yet attempts to correct the former bias against women, for example, have not produced meaningful results. Results have not been significant because strategies have been too general in their theoretical perspective and an appropriate feminist perspective has been absent.

Traditionally, development is measured by 'outputs' (eg., production, education, health), because development is synonymous with capital accumulation, viewed as the basic source of economic growth. Policies based on this approach do not necessarily improve the lives of many community members because in this approach, the facts speak for themselves and tension is not revealed. Yet, most development specialists agree that development is a dynamic process of change. If development is a dynamic process of change, and change is characterized by perpetual flux, why restrict the study of development to an approach wherein change is measured by a series of static states? Such a methodology, which separates in space and fixes in time, often overlooks the particular geographic dimensions of spatial relations and is ahistorical and non-dialectical in its approach.

On the other hand, authors who have examined the tension between classes (Baran 1952), or who focus on the tension between local peripheral producers and regional, national and world metropolitan centres of accumulation (Frank 1969; Wilber 1979; Roxborough 1979; Brewer 1980), as well as those who employ a basic needs approach (Streeten 1980; Chenery 1980), have only found partial solutions. Their recommendations focus on the the removal of structural

and institutional rigidities in world systems to allow for the realization of individual or country developmental potential. Yet, even in countries where reform has occurred, equitable development has not necessarily followed. Structural reform was necessary but not sufficient. I believe equitable development did not occur because practitioners had a less-than-precise image of the exact nature of the tensions within systems, tensions which reflect the complexities in human relations.

In reality, life is more diverse. Power within systems is commonly diffused and fractured. Individuals who are powerless in one context can enjoy power in another. Power can be based not only on class, region, and nation but also on ethnicity and gender. Moreover, power, being a social construct, is provisional and dissolvable. Possibilities might be transformed into an endless series of differing actualities and it is important to investigate the nature of all these alternative realities. In the examination of alternative realities, it is essential to highlight the different social interests specifically related to gender.

Recently, development practitioners have tried to address this gender issue but most policies are based on the concept of sex roles. This theoretical view tends to be insubstantial in praxis because it does not address systems of gender-based social power which drive women from the nucleus of social systems to its periphery. An appropriate theoretical perspective exposes the locus of conflict where social power exists between women and men.

As this study commenced, the components of a system of gender-based social power were being defined. An articulation of how and why the power works was imprecise. My research responded to the pressing need for the testing

of newer, more appropriate theoretical and methodological perspectives to examine the power relations between women and men in a development context, so that women could really be integrated into the new socio-economic and political order. In the case study, I tried a gender relations approach to examine female movement to the margins of a system of agriculture and credit associations which were part of a larger country development programme in rural Haiti.

Over a one-year period, in the first stages of the research, I refined the methodology including the field techniques. This chapter outlines the stages of this work and establishes the approach and methodology used in the realization of the final study.

In Chapter Two, I present the country context for this research. It is useful for one to have a general image of this country and its people in order to appreciate the importance and difficulties of this research program in Haiti.

In Chapter Three, the lives of women and men and gender relations in rural Haiti are highlighted. This work is a compilation of materials from numerous documents as well as personal observations and knowledge accrued during the first period of research.

Mid-way into the second year I was able to examine gender relations undergoing change in a system of cooperatives in northern Haiti. I disentangled factors that were leading to inequitable opportunities for women and men in the cooperatives, and investigated strategies for change. In Chapter Four, I describe the specific field techniques used in my study of gender relations in this system of

cooperatives. I have tried to be as explicit as possible in describing these techniques so that the procedures can be shared by other researchers concerned with similar issues.

In Chapter Five, I present the results of the study where gender relations in credit unions and agriculture cooperatives in Haiti (Département du Nord) were scrutinized. This research proved to be very illuminating. Plans for an all-encompassing study abruptly came to a halt due to heightened political instability in this country. The research presented in this chapter was completed a few months before the latest coup in Haiti and plans for further work were cancelled. The cooperative project in this study was temporarily discontinued as part of the sanctions imposed on this country by the international community. Nonetheless, data which were collected still confirm the value of the this work.

In the concluding chapter of the thesis, I reiterate the importance of research of this nature. The significant question is how to allow women, who are more vulnerable in periods of rapid socio-economic and political change, equal access to the opportunities offered by our development strategies. This research addresses this issue and demonstrates how gendered social equity in localities undergoing development can be realized.

1.1 Background to Research Problem

The under-evaluation, internationally, of women's economic contribution to country welfare is well documented. As a result, women often have an experience where they are disempowered in country-wide development programmes. Case studies where female contributions have been under-evaluated and where women have been pushed from the centre of society

to the margin proliferate in development and historical literature (Pinchbeck 1930; Boserup 1970; Mitchell and Oakley 1976; Vicinus 1977; Beneria and Sen 1981; Reddock 1985; Mair 1986; Deere and Leon 1987; Momsen and Townsend 1987).

In the Haitian context, the movement of women to a peripheral position in country development is irrational. Haitian women, like their counterparts in other countries in the Caribbean, play an important and independent role in the agricultural sector. The precise expanse of female contributions to community life is recorded in a large body of literature on women in the Caribbean (Henry and Wilson 1975; Chaney 1983; Henshall 1984; Griffith 1985; Anglade 1986; Berleant-Schiller and Pulsipher 1986; D'Amico-Samuels 1986; Ellis 1986; Reddock 1986; Mones and Grant 1987; Momsen 1988; Pulsipher 1989). Moreover, Haitian women's significant input to this sector is deeply rooted in the past (chapter three).

There is explanation at both the practical level and theoretical levels. First, as to the practical level, policy makers and program designers had been largely constrained by inadequate data on women. The problem of insufficient data can be traced to patterns of research which mainly recorded the male life-world. "In effect, nearly all the human geography of the past has been the study of a masculine, or at best a neuter, world, not the world of all humankind" (Zelinsky, Monk and Hanson 1982, 319). Until recently, social science research resulted in studies which either completely ignored women or inquiries which subsumed women under the category of household (Eichler 1988a). Women were rarely acknowledged as creative human agents in their own right despite the reality that:

...almost everywhere women's lives are different in nature from men's: their relations to the earth, to its resources, and to the productive systems that people have evolved for making use of these resources, are not the same as, nor even parallel with, those of men. (Hayford 1974, 1)

One result of this under-evaluation has been a bias within development circles in favour of projects which neglect female contributions to the rural economy. Until recently, few planners and policy-makers whose work centers on developing areas, respected traditional production and marketing systems. Female and male peasants were often viewed as irrational, unintelligent and underemployed. Attention was focused on technological change and institutional innovation as sources for increasing productivity in farming (Gerrard 1983). According to this attitude:

....technological changes are expected to move the production function upward-i.e., all factors will produce more when certain technological innovations are made. Institutional innovation is seen as that which will (a) provide incentives to greater production, (b) reliably supply needed inputs, (c) remove barriers to accumulation of capital and investment of surpluses. (Alverson 1984, 1-2).

When productivity is defined as output per hectare or per person day of labour then one is ignoring the total context of social reproduction. The outcome of this limited conceptual view is naive attitudes which result in schemes whereby, for example, programs call for the addition of fertilizers which can make weeds grow healthier than crops. If there is a shortage of labour for weeding, work which is often performed by women, productivity may decrease rather

than increase. Planners who recommend these forms of technological change have considered women as underemployed because female participation in domestic activities such as wood and water gathering, child care, the transformation and distribution of agricultural produce has not been perceived as productive work.

From this example, it is clear that if one ignores women as a distinct group in a population, their contributions to their environments are omitted and we are left with a distorted and inaccurate description of material reality. It has been necessary to create a new vantage point that allows us to observe the world from an additional sexual dimension (Tivers 1978; Johnson 1985).

Introducing the perspective of women into a previously androcentric frame of reference has resulted in a flood of research which has slowly clarified the role of women as human agents and in so doing has challenged many of our established views. With this information, there has been an attempt to correct country development bias. The main strategy has been to graft women-oriented projects to larger country development programmes. The mechanism of 'adding women in' to larger development programmes however, has often failed to produce meaningful results.

The weakness of this type of strategy is that it is "...supported by the theoretical perspective of the traditional sexual division of labour, which posits a sharp segregation of roles according to sex (Powell 1984, 97). In this view, women are viewed as having predetermined roles and related tasks in the domestic domain because of their reproductive function. Yet, the new body of research on the lives of women indicates that time and space "...not only form the context of human environmental relations, but they also shape and are shaped by human interaction; they illuminate the process and shifting boundaries of production

and the reproduction of people (Mackenzie 1988, 25). As boundaries of production and reproduction of people shift, so do sex roles. The image of a static society, where roles are rigid, changes to an image where women and men operate in multiple roles over time and space.

The strategy of 'adding women in' which has a one-sided emphasis on women's reproductive role reflects a limited recognition and assessment of women's non-familial activities. More significantly, this strategy indicates that the dynamics of women's lives have not been clearly understood. This type of essentialist thought does not allow for an analysis of particular female and male actions which can be observed over time and space, such as confrontation, implication, and change.

In order to study the problematic concerning the movement of women to the margins of social systems when these systems are undergoing rapid socio-economic and political change, one needs a theoretical perspective which is fluid in space and time. It is essential to isolate the terrain of spatial inequality which exists between women and men and to understand the mechanisms which operate where the lives of women and men intersect.

1.2 Theoretical Orientation

In the 1980s, consensus grew in the social sciences around the contention that women's lives are different from men's lives. Social scientists who acceded to the idea that knowledge had been mainly informed and shaped by a male viewpoint sought to reorient knowledge to include a female perspective.

Researchers such as Harding (1987) and Eichler (1988a) questioned epistemological issues (a redefinition of criteria for what counts as knowledge), problematics (how

questions posed are influenced by gender), and language (which often devalues women's work relative to men's work) used in previous social science research. Additionally, a collection of theoretical and methodological literature grew which suggested that concepts, methods, interpretations made, and policy recommendations must be altered to adjust for a female perspective (Roberts 1981; Dixon 1982; Eichler 1988b). Information on the female life-world was augmented through the use of various themes such as: home and workplace (Blumberg 1976; Rogers 1980); production and reproduction (Kuhn and Wolpe 1978; Meillassoux 1981; Delphy 1980, 1984); and private space (female) and public space (male) (Evans 1980; Elshtain 1981; McLaren 1988).

Geographers, for their part, such as Tivers (1978); Mackenzie (1980; 1988); McDowell (1980; 1988); Ardener (1981); Monk and Hanson (1982); Mazey and Lee (1983); McDowell and Massey (1984); Breitbart (1984); Massey (1984); Darke (1984); Johnson (1985); Harding (1987); Hartsock (1987); Momsen and Townsend (1987); Moser and Peake (1987); and Andrew and Milroy (1988) provided information concerning women's lives from a geographical perspective. Through this work we find that different valuations based on gender have material and theoretical implications for understanding the structuring of space. Moreover, the meaning of women's contributions to society has been clarified and a more detailed record of the female life experiences has been recorded.

Weaknesses in this body of research began to appear when the various components of the work were viewed as a totality. One discovers contradictions between theoretical perspectives and the reality of different female experiences cross-culturally and historically. For example, in some of this research (Delphy 1980; 1984) it has been suggested that the exploitation of women is part of the exploitive class relations of the capitalist economic system. Yet, we know

that women were in subordinate positions to men long before capitalism and this subordination continued in countries during periods when they ceased to be capitalist (eg., The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and China).

Additionally, cross-societal studies of the reality of different female experiences reveal that physiological fact, female/male differentiation within a species for the function of reproduction, only takes on meaning in a whole context. In his study of pre-industrial societies, anthropologist M. K. Whyte (1978) found that whereas there are no known cultures in which women are generally dominant over men, there are quite a few in which the reverse is true, and there are many areas where substantial equality does exist between the sexes.

Whyte found extensive independent variation in aspects of what he refers to as the general status of women. For example, information about women's role in subsistence production does not help predict their property rights or restrictions on their sexual or marital lives. Likewise, male monopoly of property does not necessarily result in a lack of informal influence by women within the society. Whyte (1978, 116) concludes that "...we can find no evidence for the existence of any general 'status of women' complex that varies consistently from culture to culture". In my studies in rural Haiti, I too found that power between women and men is highly complex and complicated as women are major players in the economy (chapter three).

The contradictions between theoretical perspectives and the reality of different female experiences cross-culturally and historically appear because the interconnectedness of the different mechanisms through which male domination of female generally works across space and time is not precise in most of the body of research on women's lives. Part of this problem relates to the fact that in most of this

research female and male life experiences are separated into two distinct categories. This vision does not fit the day-to-day reality of human lives. In reality the lives of women and men intersect, and it is at this locus that the harmony or conflict in social interests or each group are most clearly expressed. At this intersection of lives gender-based social power can be observed.

In the mid 1980s, in the embryonic stages of my own research, a debate arose in the geographic literature (Bowlby and Mackenzie 1982; Bowlby, Foord and McDowell 1986; Foord and Gregson 1986; Gregson and Foord 1987; Gier and Walton 1987; Johnson 1987; Knopp and Lauria 1987) which responded to the observed weaknesses in the research on women's lives. As the debate unfolded, it was generally agreed that it was important to examine sex-based social power rather than female and male roles based on reproductive functions when studying areal variation. Furthermore, in order to examine the power dynamic between the sexes it was essential to think in terms of the concept of gender.

Gender is a concept which translates "...the phenomena of human sex difference into the epiphenomena of meanings which are produced by human thought, language, and society" (Gier and Walton 1987, 57). That is, we discuss, identify, and classify the meaning of human biological differences and similarities by use of the concept gender. Gender is something which is socially not biologically constructed and in this perspective, sex moves from a loose arrangement of natural or customary power and mutual dependence to a tightly organized system of sex-based social power and exploitation (Cocks 1989; Walby 1990).

Yet, the concept of gender alone tends to employ a scheme designed into broad categories to describe a wide ranges of issues and this obscures the contradictoriness

within the social process of gender. The conclusion of the debate was that the concept gender relations must be used to discuss the practical politics of gender.

Gender relations are different ways of structuring gender which reflect the dominance of different social interests, that is, "...the ideology, institutions, structures and practices that create and reproduce unequal material conditions and oppressive power relationships between women and men (McDowell 1988, 162). This concept exposes sex as a socially constructed system of political power between women and men where oppression can occur in either direction. The studies in the 1980s were finding, however, that when examining issues related to gender, female subordination to male authority is more common.

Through the use of the gender relations concept it was thought the investigator could reach a clearer understanding of the interconnectedness of the different mechanisms through which male domination works, its different forms with accompanying support institutions and ideologies in different historical periods and political economies. Through this theoretical window an image of communities arises where biological difference plays a less significant part in power relations. Human behaviours are seen as the product of continuous interactions between biological and environmental influences from the time of conception.

Moreover, in this perspective, biological differences between women and men, such as the general muscular weakness of women relative to men, are revealed only in the light of the ends proposed by individuals. Muscular superiority has no advantage, indeed may be irrelevant, if physical force is not socially valued. As De Beauvoir (1953, 33) concluded many years earlier in The Second Sex, we must "...view the facts of biology in the light of an ontological, economic, social and psychological context". Rather than

seeing biology as the essential core of humanity, setting and defining human potential, the concept gender relations views human reproduction as a function of social, economic and political factors. Distinctions of human characteristics into 'innate' female and male natures are viewed as social constructs.

Furthermore, the concept of gender relations allows for the elements of choice, spontaneity, and transformation in gender relations. This notion of choice in gender relations coincides with the view of Connell (1987, 44) who argues effectively that: "Groups that hold power do try to reproduce the structure that gives them their privilege. But it is always an open question whether, and how, they will succeed".

To sum, the strength of the concept of gender relations is that it points to the existence of a power dynamic, a nucleus of tension, between women and men where their lives intersect. Characteristics linked to biological differences in humans become less important relative to the social constructs that define gender difference. Rather than biology acting to constrain and limit our potentialities, this concept points to the cultural processes or societal norms that ensure through force, laws, and ideologies the conformity known as human nature. When social and political distinctions appear to be natural and biological in order, it is easier to justify differences in social roles and relationships of domination and subordination.

When the field research for this dissertation began, the theoretical perspective of gender relations seemed more appropriate to my research problematic of how and why women were pushed from the centre of a social system to its margins in development programmes than the theoretical perspective of sex roles based on reproductive functions. I had enough evidence from the literature and professional

experience related to this issue to conclude that there exists a sex-based social power which results in the oppression of women by men when social interests between females and males differ. I decided to explore the possibility that gender relations (ideologies, institutions, structures and practices that create and reproduce unequal socio-economic conditions and oppressive power relationships between women and men) were causing unequal opportunities for women and men in the cooperative development programme. In the use of this approach I sought to discover exactly how and why a system of gender-based social power works and I also explored possibilities for more equitable involvement by all members in the development programme.

1.3 Methodological Orientation

Methodologies for gender-based research have been discussed by social scientists in the past decade. Specifically, in this discussion, it is suggested that researchers do not have to separate themselves from the people who are the focus of research (Andrew and Milroy 1988). Research methods where criteria other than objectivity are used to assess the value of research results have been developed, and a wide variety of methods by which to overcome a sex bias in our approaches has been recommended. One main school of thought argues for qualitative over quantitative methods. In this school, there is a variety of opinions. One author states that the best feminist analysis "...insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter...." (Harding 1987, 9). Smith (1988) recommends that ethnomethodologies are of particular interest. McDowell (1988, 165), in her discussion of feminist research, argues that:

... 'intensive' methods such as case studies,
interactive interviews, ethnography and

qualitative types of analysis may be more appropriate in attempts to produce causal explanations.

As concerns gender research and qualitative versus quantitative methods, I agree with Eichler (1988b), that any method, without exception, can be used in a manner which has a sex bias. Furthermore, I think qualitative and quantitative methods can be complementary. I had used quantitative methods previously in rural Haiti with success. I found, however, that there were practical problems with a qualitative approach in rural Haiti which had to be overcome.

Traditionally, humanistic researchers assimilate new material into their own interpretative frameworks which are then transmitted to others for their appreciation. According to Johnson (1988, 177-78):

Our own research is then not a random series of events. Rather it is a sequence of speculating and testing (and reporting) guided by a framework. The particular questions that we ask may be the consequence of our observations of the world we live in...but those observations themselves are influenced by the frame of reference provided by our research paradigms, as is our incorporation of them into our models.

This facile movement between practice and theory is questionable in the analysis of qualitative information, more so when the interviewer and respondents come from extremely divergent geographical regions. I struggled to interpret Haitian perception meaningfully into our models, particularly as information was being filtered from Créole to French to English. I am familiar with Haitian rural society and Créole, but I decided it would be more fruitful to work (on separate outings) with two Haitian interpreters

(a male from one of the rural communities and a female from Port-au-Prince). Both admitted that Créole changes from village to village, isolated region to isolated region, likewise do mental concepts. They admitted to confusion of interpretation on their part from time to time and I certainly had no final truth.

This problem is further complicated by the fact that there is a long tradition whereby Haitians will conceal and disguise much about their personal lives, such as relations with others, how they receive information, and economic status. A tradition, founded in the days of slavery, when slaves found it in their interests to keep their thoughts private from overseers (Hall 1962; Efron 1951-52; Craton 1978; Reddock 1985), continues to the present due to a non-ending history of repressive political regimes (Leyburn 1941; Heintz and Heintz 1978). Secrecy was the *modus operandi* during the American Occupation 1915-1934 (Moore 1972) and was particularly reinforced under the Duvaliers 1957-1986 (Courlander and Bastien 1966; Diederich and Burt 1969; Remy 1974; Ferguson 1987, 1988; Abbott 1988).

Additionally, rural Haitians communicate in a manner which is extremely covert and obscure due to their faith in vaudou, that is, in order to keep neighbours from persecuting them with harmful magic (Hurstun 1939; Simpson 1941; Leyburn 1941; Métraux 1959; Courlander 1960; Laguerre 1973; Lowenthal 1978; Diederich 1983; Davis 1983; 1985; 1986). In sum, there is a high level of secrecy throughout the country and meetings among rural dwellers are extremely discreet. This means that the use of a tape recorder for conversations is out of the question if one wants to collect meaningful responses. Yet, how reliable is data collection when conversations (e.g., ethnographies) are recorded in note form or on the basis of memory, particularly, when there is the inevitable delay between information gathering and writing? More importantly, how can one clarify life-

world when repondents are continually mystifying it? In the following passage, I offer an example from my personal diary of one such opaque experience which demonstrates the complexity of this task in rural Haiti.

Her Story/His Story

12 July 1990

The traders are beginning to arrive at the export house. A brightly coloured camionette arrives in the yard, deposits its load of goods and people and departs all in one smooth motion. As I watch the general flurry of activity, my eye wanders back to the gate where I notice that a flat bed truck is hastily depositing four heavy sacks and one very old woman on the sidewalk just outside the export house. Once dumped, the old woman remains motionless, gazing around in her worn, dusty, black dress and plastic beige-brown sandals. She has pulled her hair back away from her face using a black and white kerchief tightly tied at the neck which emphasizes her sunken jaw and severe cheekbones. Her eyes are like two faint slits indicating that she is one who has sat too long in the glaring sun. Her general demeanour is that of a very tired old women. She waits seated on the pavement for a generous amount of time before deciding to move each sack herself by pushing them slowly one after another along the sidewalk to a chosen spot just inside the gate of the export house. Off and on she stands up and then sits back down on her sacks. As the weighing of sacks begins she situates herself on a chair directly in front of the scale. Her sacks, however, still remain at the gate. She is the sole female trader in the yard and she sits isolated from the men who are actively engaged in a

discussion concerning commerce in the countryside. She gives the appearance that she is ignoring the others, but careful observation reveals that she is listening to and watching all the proceedings.

About mid-morning, I notice that she is having an altercation with the exporter, who has clearly been ignoring her since her arrival. They argue briefly and he walks away obviously very annoyed. As the morning wears on, she is overcome by age and exhaustion. She falls asleep upright on the chair with her head fixed in the crook of her arm which rests on the chair back. In the protection of the yard she is safe with her sacks. She rests in deep slumber, a vulnerable, frail entity.

At mid-day, six hours after her arrival, I notice that her four sacks are being moved to the scale. Her sacks are weighed but another hour passes before she is paid. Only then does her face light up and she quickly engages in conversation with the other traders. After this, she gestures farewell to all around and leaves, flashing a broad toothless grin. How does an outside observer perceive such events?

Given all the literature on paternalism, I perceived another female victim of sex discrimination. Fortunately, in this instance I received reliable information (head yardsman, a female and a male administrator in the export house) to explain the process of the morning. This seemingly frail old woman is one of the oldest and toughest (also most irritating) traders at the export house. She always brings in produce which is 'off season'. Today, for example, she has brought four sacks of sour orange peels. Yet she

knows the exporter only buys the sweet variety during this trading period. Over time, the old woman and the exporter have mapped out an informal strategy between them which takes into account her costs (time and vulnerability due to age) and his costs (storage, deterioration of the peels, the possibility of others doing the same thing). Apparently they have been playing this game for several years. As for the seemingly frail nature of this old woman, after her morning at the export house, she went to the market in Cap Haitien to buy basic household necessities such as soap, oil and sugar which she sells in the market in Ouanaminthe near the Dominican border. She returned to this village later in the day (a hard and long 3-hour voyage by motorized vehicle).

I decided that in a context such as rural Haiti, as in many similar situations in non-industrialized countries, one should question qualitative methods, including ethnographies and individual case studies, as a sole means to obtain information. Instead, I used a combination of three qualitative and quantitative field techniques to overcome subjective bias (Jackson 1983; Jackson and Smith 1984).

First, and most importantly, I began with indirect inquiry. Over one year was spent in rural Haiti gaining an understanding of the general scope of the roles of women and men in this context. I also studied gender relations through informal discussion and personal observation. Additionally, I examined historical and contemporary documents pertaining to the topic. The information gathered using this method (see Chapter Three) greatly assisted my observations and analysis during the second period of research where I examined gender relations in the cooperatives.

Secondly, during the research in the cooperatives (see

Chapters Four and Five), I used formal questionnaires to extract quantitative information and qualitative information (concerning the subjective knowledge of female and male respondents) pertaining to the selected issues under study. The use of questionnaires enabled me to standardize and verify perceptions and intentions.

Thirdly, to gain a significant understanding of the tension in the locus of interaction between women and men in the cooperatives, I engaged in interactive discussion meetings between myself and a suitable group sample of the participant population. With this approach, I focused both on the dynamics of the social power and the practical consequences of our discussion. This field technique enabled me both to understand and to change current affairs. When studying development, one must recognize "...a precarious world with an uncertain future, at least part of which remains to be made by human agency" (Smith 1984, 355).

This type of action research allows one to delve below the superficial appearance of unity in the cooperatives in order to reveal the reality of competing agendas. Interviewing must be flexibly structured. That is, the interview is structured in the mind of the researcher who follows a plan regarding the kind of information being sought but is flexible about the order in which the various pieces of information are brought out. The method is also flexible enough to allow one to respond to novel insights made in the course of the inquiry.

I found that action research field techniques create good conditions for mutual understanding and consensus between individuals coming from societies where there are major differences in experiences, knowledge and perceptions. In this context, an informed researcher can collect information. Additionally, practical knowledge can be produced. These methods seek not only to heighten the

researcher's understanding but also that of the people who are the centre of the research. Many individuals, particularly those preoccupied with daily survival, lack the information, skills, and experience to understand critically and to analyze the social structures and relations which shape their lives. The role of the informed researcher, in this instance, is to communicate an understanding of how power structures work (McGuire 1987; Ley 1988).

To summarize, indirect investigation, action research and survey methods have reciprocal benefits. Qualitative methods such as indirect investigation and action research provide an effective method in which the units and boundaries of inquiry are as little predetermined as possible. Indirect investigation informs the researcher on the topic, making participation in action research possible, and observation and analysis more meaningful. Yet, while these qualitative methods offer the researcher a means of securing data within the experiential worlds which have meaning for the respondents, the subjective nature of such observations involves problems of validity, standardisation, verification and evaluation for the researcher. In the employment of quantitative methods such as questionnaires one addresses the fundamental question of validating or generalizing from the findings of experiential fieldwork.

1.4 A Practical Complication in Gender-Based Research

1.4.1 Biasing the Data

There is always a danger of biasing observations by an over-reliance on those informants who prove to be the most readily accessible. The most approachable are often an elite (male) who are the gatekeepers to local knowledge. Information must pass through community leaders to the local population. I found that my attempts to talk privately and directly to individual respondents continually blocked by

community leaders. To illustrate I provide a day from the diary dated 17 July 1990.

Yon moun ki respecté tet-li (a person who respects himself)--this is a phrase that best describes Lucien, my appointed guardian for the day. As I am travelling far from Cap Haitien tomorrow, it has been decided (against my wishes) that I am to go with protection. Lucien decides we have to get up at 3:00 a.m. to catch the 4:00 a.m. to Savanette. As we make our way in the dark to the truck depot, he explains why today's travel is particularly dangerous. Lucien (in his 60s) has lived in Cap Haitien all his life and he considers those who live in San Raphael (on route) and Savanette (our destination) to be "savage". There are several reasons for this, one being historical. After the revolution the marrons hid in this area. Interestingly, project workers have already informed me that there are roughnecks in this zone.

I reflect on this as I stumble along behind Lucien. We are hurrying our pace because we are meeting our respondent at 7:00-7:30 a.m. in the village. In the darkness we cross a rather dangerous footbridge with huge holes in the boards. I wonder how many people doing this fall in the water and drown each day? We get across safely. It is below this old bridge that the poorest of the poor live in damp, absolutely unsanitary conditions. During the daylight hours, small vendors line the old bridge with their baskets of smoked fish, fruits, and vegetables.

When we arrive at the station it is quiet and we mount the camionette loading up for Savanette.

There are only four others inside, a bad sign. It seems Lucien has his facts wrong (I am not surprised given that rumour dominates the communication system here). We missed the 'Merci Jesus' which apparently leaves before 4:00 a.m. and we must play the waiting game which today varies in its strategy. After a half-hour wait, the driver begins to move along side roads in a part of town which is unfamiliar to me. What is familiar is the smell of rancid cooking oil, indicating that vendors are already preparing food for the early risers such as ourselves. Along these dark, seemingly desolate backways, the driver makes deliberate stops loading up one passenger here and one passenger there. I try to imagine what form of human information network exists in this world.

The camionette is full as we leave Cap Haitien but as usual the driver continues to take on passengers at the outskirts of the town. Now we are overloaded. I know from personal experience that overloaded trucks often tip on the road causing fatal accidents. One day it may well be my turn. The trip at dawn is quieter than the daylight runs and not nearly as pleasant because you cannot see the scenery. I try to rest. We arrive in the Savanette area around 7:30 a.m. Unfortunately, Lucien is again misinformed and insists that we dismount at a school near Savanette. I, on the other hand, have information that the respondents will meet us at the market in the centre of town. Who am I to defy Lucien, yon moun ki respecté tet-li? The school is deserted as is the general vicinity surrounding the school and the next camionette will not pass for another 3 hours. We must walk to the town. It turns out to

be a very long walk but as the gardens along the route are superb, the air fresh and clean, I profit from the situation.

At the home of one of the respondents, and then the market, I find I am prevented from private discussion with respondents by the village heads and Lucien (who I think is just trying to be helpful). This is becoming a serious research constraint.

I am particularly concerned because the observations are being biased by an over-reliance on male informants. The most approachable and accessible are commonly male. For example, on this day I had an appointment with a female respondent, an independent powerful trader in this area. When I arrived I was told by her husband that she was in a distant area searching for new suppliers of produce. He, however, was available and willing to take her place. At this point in the research it was not clear how I would by-pass the men to talk to the women.

This problem of biasing the data by an over-reliance on male informants and the local elite was resolved by changing the case study. Originally, I had planned to examine gender relations in the context of dooryard gardens in rural Haiti. After one year, I concluded that the energy and time devoted to the investigation of gender relations in dooryard gardens was not synchronized with the time allocated to the doctoral research. This change in case study enabled me to overcome the problem of biasing the data.

1.4.2 Resolving the Practical Complication

In the second year of field work, an international non-governmental institution based in northern Haiti invited me to combine my research, which interested them, with their Programme de Crédit au Développement République d'Haiti (PCD).

The PCD Project managers contacted me because they had concerns about traditional male domination of these structures. Male control was in conflict with their general goal of social equity in the PCD Project. As their questions concerning equitable participation by female and male members in the organizations linked to the project were entirely aligned with my own questions about gendered involvement in development programmes, I accepted the opportunity to examine this situation. I was allowed complete freedom to apply my methodology and I controlled and managed all research procedures. Within the framework of this internationally recognized organization, private access to female and male respondents was assured.

The focus of this research is not on this PCD Project, nor on cooperative development in Haiti. These groups were mainly of interest to me because they provided me with a development context where relations between the genders were undergoing change. Moreover, I found that work on this case study was enhanced because it responded directly to an immediate and expressed need by the participants in the study. One of my major concerns when doing research of this nature is that the research be significant for those who participate in the inquiry.

Particularly in Haiti, a sensitive researcher cannot help but be aware that respondents have neither the time nor the interest in answering questions which do not seem directly relevant to their daily struggle for survival. In

the chapter which follows I present a detailed description of conditions, past and present, in this country so that the reader can understand and appreciate the regional context of this research.

Chapter Two

THE HAITIAN SETTING

Introduction

Haiti, is a geographical area where human inhabitants realize a meager existence in the face of numerous constraints. It is a country characterized by a scarcity of resources, natural, capital and human. Most inhabitants live in wretched poverty, with the worst housing, health and education record in the Caribbean. While agricultural activity has always provided a level of subsistence for much of the population, the agricultural sector can no longer be relied upon to feed either the rural or urban populations.

Political turmoil has gripped Haiti for much of its history since its independence from France in 1804. Today, as this turmoil continues, political instability has halted all development efforts including foreign aid assistance. Moreover, there is currently a trade embargo imposed on this country by the international community. The results of this are felt mainly by the mass of poverty-stricken Haitians living in a general context which is detailed in the following script.

2.1 Geographic Location

Haiti is located on the western one-third of the Island of Hispaniola. This island is the second largest in the Caribbean and lies between latitude 17° and 20° north. The meridian of 72° west lies slightly east of Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. The remaining eastern two-thirds of the island is occupied by the Dominican Republic. To the northwest, Haiti is separated by the Windward Passage from

Cuba, which lies approximately 90 kilometres (57 miles) distant. Jamaica is located 180 kilometres (116 miles) to the southwest.

Mountains cover approximately three-quarters of the 27,750 square kilometres (10,714 square miles) of land surface. The rugged terrain limits cultivable land and compartmentalizes the nation into many relatively isolated regions. The climate ranges from tropical in the major lowlands and interior valleys, to subtropical in coastal regions and at high elevations. The annual mean temperature ranges from 20°C (68°F) to 34°C (94°F), and seasonal variation is usually less than 5.6°C (10°F). The cool and dry seasons coincide between January to April, while the remainder of the year is warm to hot and is characterised by two rainy seasons which result from the northward movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (approximately May/June and August/September). Hurricane season runs from August to October.

The Republic is divided into five geographical areas-- Nord-Ouest, Nord, L'Artibonite, Ouest, Sud. Approximately 80% of the population of over six million live in rural areas. The urban population is concentrated in the capital of Port-au-Prince. Other principal cities include Cap Haitien, Gonaives, Les Cayes, and Jérémie (Figure 2.1).

2.2 History of Underdevelopment in the Republic of Haiti

The history of Haiti has been one of political and economic revolution rather than evolution. In pre-Columbian days the Arawak Indians were exterminated by Caribs advancing from the east and they, in their turn, were virtually eradicated as a result of the conquest of western Hispaniola first by the Spanish, then by the French. (Wood

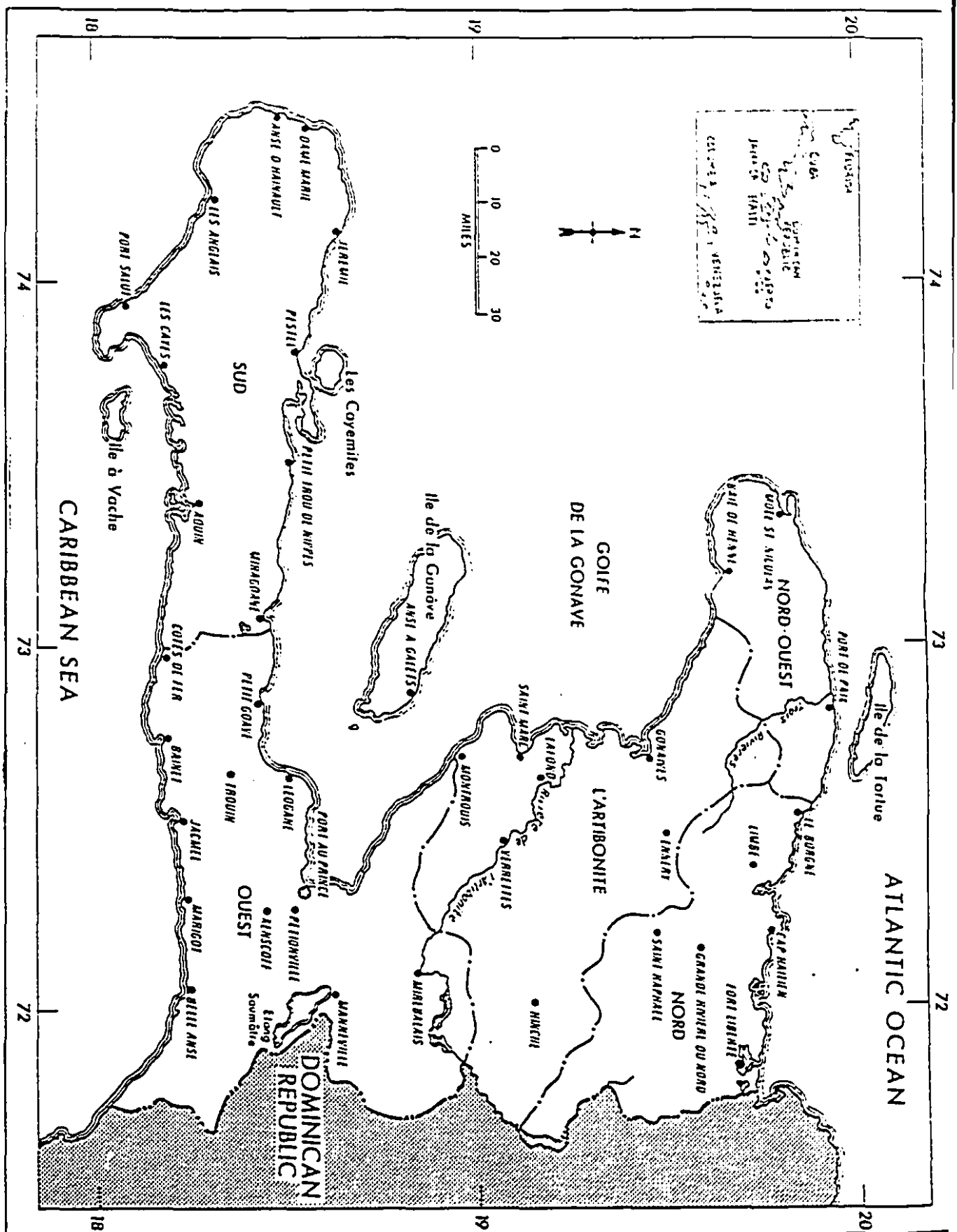


Figure 2.1 Populated Places & Political Subdivisions of Haiti

1963, 8)

The French colony of Saint Domingue was once the wealthiest European outpost in the New World, the jewel of the Caribbean and the first country in Latin America to achieve its independence. Known today as Haiti, it is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. The key factors which have contributed over time to Haiti's current economic plight are outlined and discussed briefly.

First, there was foreign interference, which resulted in skewed patterns of production, an explosive political situation, and a costly war of independence. Saint Domingue (1697-1804) was basically an export colony and much of its own food was imported. It was heavily dependent on French administrative and business skills as well as French finance capital. The enormous prosperity of the island was made possible only by the perpetuation of a highly rewarding system of gross exploitation of both human and natural resources (Heinl and Heinl 1978, 10-122). The class-colour division eventually resulted in rebellion against French authority in 1771, and a decade-long war for independence which depleted Haiti's human and capital stock. Moreover, fear of renewed foreign intervention created the need for a large standing army which absorbed much of the remaining male labour force and drained government revenues.

When direct exploitation of Haiti's resources was no longer possible, France used its political and military muscle to coerce Jean-Pierre Boyer (Haiti's president from 1818-43) into agreeing to a crippling annual indemnity to France in exchange for full recognition of independence (Rotberg 1971, 66-7). The huge indemnity, which lasted for sixty years, plus preferential tariff arrangements insisted upon by France, decreased Haiti's control over its own

financial resources and in this way curtailed Haiti's development potential.

By 1888, the indemnity to France was finally liquidated (Rotberg 1971, 86). Now American foreign interference replaced that of the French. Capitalizing on Haiti's political and economic vulnerability, the United States of America invaded the island in 1915 and occupied it until 1934. The Occupation created a completely colonial context, depriving the island of any opportunity for self-determination or self-development (Rotberg 1971, 109-46). Haiti continued to operate under the shadow of American influence even after the last of the marines were withdrawn in 1934. American financial advisors remained on the board of the Banque Nationale de la Republique d'Haiti (BNRH) until 1947 thereby retaining some control over government finances (Moore 1972, 61-67).

A second key factor leading to underdevelopment in Haiti was the general lack of constructive political activity and leadership for development purposes. The departure of the French created a political vacuum eventually filled by the large landowners who deserted the rural areas in favour of the cities after the destruction of the plantation system. Sugar cultivation had depended on capital equipment, skilled administrators and an gravely exploited labour force, all of which had disappeared in the fight for independence. In the urban areas, former landowners went into politics and in this way were able to transfer farming income to themselves by taxation of goods produced and consumed in rural areas. The presidency was tied solely to self interest, becoming the juiciest financial plum in Haiti. The conflicting interests of groups backing these presidents resulted in revolution after revolution, and the rapid turnover of leadership obviated

political activity for Haiti's development. According to Leyburn (1941, 89)

Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office; three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years.

The tradition of elite-government abuse of the general population which grew out of the post-revolutionary period was reinforced by the American presence. A constitutional government was not in effect during the American Occupation. Instead a puppet government (1918-22) and a two-headed dictatorship (1922-30) controlled political events. There was no training for self-government on the American model, and treatment of the general population was repressive (Logan 1968, 130-40).

A brief period of semi-political enlightenment occurred prior to the coming to power of François Duvalier (1957-71). Under Duvalier however, the economic and political status of the rural population worsened. Indeed with the exception of a chosen few, the elite also suffered under this administration (Diederich and Burt 1969, 96-393). Jean-Claude Duvalier, "Baby Doc" was designated to be the successor of his father "Papa Doc" and his regime provided little more guidance for country development. Since Duvalier's exile February 7 1986, Haiti has reverted to its former tradition of 'fly-by-night' leadership (seven administration changes in six years). Predatory autocracies have governed Haiti for a century and a half and it seems

that many Haitians now perceive autocracy as a legitimate, even natural, form of government (Lundahl 1989).

A third major factor which played a significant part in Haiti's economic demise was the presence of a poor biophysical resource endowment with continuing impoverishment of these limited resources due to growing population pressure. Leyburn's (1941, 13) brief statement accurately summed up the problem:

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people.

In Haiti, mountainous terrain up to 2,682 metres in height occupies two-thirds of the area, and torrential downpours spilling off these largely tree-less mountain slopes wash away crops and soil. The plains are arid, sterile and forbidding, supporting only a growth of cacti and spiny plants. Hurricanes, droughts, and hailstorms are not uncommon. The colony of Saint Domingue had a population of approximately one-half of a million when it was ranked among the wealthiest regions of the world. Today, however, an estimated population of more than six million lives in Haiti. In 1980, rural density was estimated at over 540 persons per square kilometer of cultivated land (Allman 1982, 237) and today density of population on arable land is estimated at 650 people per square kilometre.

Presently, accelerated soil erosion devastates between 10,000 and 15,000 hectares yearly and deforestation is causing progressive desertification. "In 1923, 63% of the island was covered with forests; that figure is now reduced

to a mere 9%, with true forests occupying only 2% of the territory" (ACDI 1990, 4).

Finally, there is an additional factor, which when combined with the above, became problematic for Haiti's economic development. This is Haiti's long history of dependence on a few major crops, in particular coffee, as well as cocoa and essential oils, for export to North American and European markets. After the destruction of colonial plantations, small farmers were able to continue the harvesting of coffee and cocoa with little effort. Coffee supplanted sugar as the main export crop (Girault 1981). These trees grew liberally in the hills and required neither large tracts of land nor constant care. Tree crops have been left to regenerate themselves and maintenance is poor to non-existent (no pruning or fertilizing and harvesting methods are crude). This is in large part due to government indifference which is reflected in heavy taxation of coffee producers, little or no investment incentives to encourage improved practices, and, the existence of oligopsony among exporters. According to Tanzi (1976, 71):

The coffee tax thus amounts to a very high proportional tax on the income of the coffee producers. It has generally been equivalent to an average income tax rate of 25 to 40 percent depending on the price of the product. This makes this group by far the most heavily taxed group in Haiti.

Yet, most producers are among the poorest in Haiti. A relatively low return to producers perpetuates poor maintenance or cutting of coffee trees in a shift to non-taxed subsistence crops. Historically, coffee has played a major role in the economy of Haiti. It has been very

important as a source of foreign exchange, generating between one third and one half of total export earnings. Furthermore, coffee has been an important source of livelihood for a large proportion of the population. Over time, coffee and the other two major export crops have slowly lost their social and economic importance. For example, by the mid-1980s coffee composed about 28% of export income. From 1983 to 1988, coffee exports dropped in value from 262.4 to 197.1 mn gourdes, fob., and cocoa declined from 23.4 to 20.7 mn gourdes, fob. as did essential oils from 38.3 to 25.3 mn gourdes fob. during this same period (EIU Country Profile 1989-90).

To conclude, nearly two hundred years have passed since the beat of the vaudou drums called the slaves into revolt. This author is in agreement with Moore (1972, 2) who writes:

If Haiti has failed to progress economically, it is not because its inhabitants were lacking in unity, enthusiasm, or will-power at the start of their national career.

Rather, it was the combination of several factors (the key ones having been outlined), which resulted in underdevelopment in Haiti.

2.3 Structure of the Rural Economy

2.3.1 Agricultural Land

The current structure of landholdings in Haiti developed shortly after independence. After the revolution, former slaves erased from the land almost every inanimate symbol of European occupation. Cane fields were set ablaze and plantation infrastructures, including irrigation

systems, were destroyed. The newly created Haitian population no longer needed to remain in the plains, the former sites of the sugar estates. Instead, the people scattered to seize land and hold it, as described by Wood (1963, 8):

They pre-empted sections of the plain; they moved into the valleys and hills. Wherever they could find land which seemed capable of producing food crops, they settled and built their tiny thatch and wattle huts.

The influence of governments on the peasantry was for the main part weak. Freedom, which had its roots in the land, was precious. In the immediate post-independence period of 1806-1818, Haiti split into two provinces each with their own type of rule:

In the one reigned a freedom which could not string up the energies of an uneducated people to a sufficiently high tone of industry; and in the other, a discipline which amounted to oppression, was becoming gradually insupportable to an untrained, uncultivated, and but recently liberated mass. Bird (1867, 85)

Over time, political leaders were unable to coerce planters back onto plantations. Usage became land's guarantor rather than unenforced laws on books. The impulse of the common people was to acquire plots of land for themselves and to produce for subsistence only. State land was sold on easy terms. The relative abundance of land also made the casual arrangement of squatting possible. The treatment of squatters was lenient. There was no title to land. Because of the indifference of the state, peasants

were able to install themselves on vacant parcels, found families, and pass on the property to their children. The absence of primogeniture furthered the eventual evolution of a minifundia-type agricultural system.

While small farmers are heavily involved in production for sale, land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. Census data are unreliable as farmers are reluctant to provide complete information on their landholdings. Lundahl (1979, 51) estimates that the majority of Haitian farms are holdings of approximately 1.4 hectares per farm. In a sample population of the northern region (Figure 2.2), 45% of the population had land holdings equal to or less than the national average (Akman 1985). Holdings are often split into several plots which may be some distance from each other. Such dispersion in different ecological zones is advantageous as regional climatic conditions vary greatly and this provides some security against crop failure in any one area. It is clearly inefficient and problematic, however, for capital investment in land. Surveys which have tried to record landholding sites vary greatly in their results. Zuvekas (1979, 21) reports that 84.9% of farm households worked farm land adjacent to their homesite as well as other plots. Lundahl (1979, 52) reports that only 28% of all farms consist of a single plot around the hut; 25% of farm lands are unified holdings at some distance and the remainder are non-contiguous plots.

A cadastral survey has never been executed in Haiti. Even those with 'deeds' to their property have no way of legally establishing its location. The position of the landowner, therefore, depends on the recognition of his claim by the community. Securing a title to either inherited or purchased land involves considerable legal costs which

few farmers are willing to pay. Haitian laws of succession compound the problem, as they ensure that all children, regardless of age or sex, have rights to the property of their parents. Land can be subdivided informally among heirs who take turns farming the land and generations of decedents may farm a large block of land without knowing exactly its limits. Additionally, over time land is repeatedly redivided into smaller and smaller plots. Some plots lie idle because they are so small that owners abandon them. Land transfer is difficult without cadastral survey and other farmers do not utilize the vacant plots because of the traditional respect for property rights (Zuvekas 1979, 6). Furthermore, kinship pressure prevents sale of individual plots forming part of the larger familial land. Land is valued above all else because:

...gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. (Mintz 1974, 274)

Certain farmers lease land from private owners, manage land for others, sharecrop on a 50-50 basis, or lease land from the state. Government-owned land is normally cultivated by tenants or squatters who, due to the general confusion regarding land titles, do not pay any rent. In the sample population in the northern region, 67% claimed to be land owners, 11% were renters, 20% were combination owner/renters, and approximately 2% were sharecroppers and combination owner/sharecroppers (Akman 1985).

The intensive cultivation and deforestation of marginal land (which is generally higher up the mountains) by primitive methods over decades have resulted in the ruin of

once fertile farmland.

Haitian peasants often cultivate practically vertical slopes, using ropes to stop them falling off their lands, with the clearly detrimental effects that this kind of cultivation has on soil fertility (Lundahl 1979, 59).

The problem has become circular as a decrease in the supply of arable land leads to a removal of more trees which in turn leads to the decrease of arable land. Hence, the majority of the Haitian farming population now depends for its existence on soil classified as unsuitable for agriculture by the Organization of American States (Lundahl 1979, 57-8). This tendency goes unchecked because the demand for arable land and charcoal, the main fuel in rural Haiti, is high. As small farmers seldom own the forests where trees are cut down, there is little incentive to practise forest management. When incomes are close to subsistence, Haitian farmers probably discount the future benefits of erosion control at a particularly high rate to the point where no control dominates the alternative, where farmers jointly attempt to check erosion. Additionally, this tendency is reinforced by the absence of land titles and formalized contractual agreements between owners and renters--a situation which leaves all farmers vulnerable. Someone else may reap the benefits of one farmer's abstinence, or the planting of trees may make the land more valuable so that farmers are either evicted or faced with increases in rent.

2.3.2 Technology

The elaborate infrastructure, roads, bridges, and irrigation works constructed by the French were ruined during and immediately after Haiti's decade-long war of

independence. After this period, it proved impossible to re-establish the intensive agriculture on which the prosperity of Saint-Domingue had been based (Leyburn 1941; Rotberg 1971).

Variability in the length of the dry seasons is considerable and drought is common in many regions, yet less than ten percent of Haitian farmland is under irrigation. In the Département du Nord, Wood (1963) discovered crude irrigation systems in the Plaine du Nord and the Océan plain (midway between Cerca la Source and Saltadère). In the Pignon Plain farmers benefitted from the construction of an irrigation canal ten miles in length on the west side of the Rivière Bouyaha. This system was constructed in 1953 by the Service Cooperatif Interaméricain de Production Agricole. When Wood (1963, 124) examined this system it had already deteriorated considerably. The problems encountered were common to similar efforts which have been made from time to time throughout the country. Many irrigation projects have been started only to be abandoned due to physical complications (leakages, desilting of the canal) and problems of human control and responsibility. Sedimentation is a common problem, and this hampers efficient drainage. Few Haitians have full-fledged titles to individual plots, thus their security may be perceived as threatened if land increases in value due to investment in irrigation or soil conservation programs. In sum, while irrigation is presently beyond the technical and financial means of individual farmers, most group efforts to establish these systems have for the most part been unsuccessful.

In Haiti, formalized crop rotation is not practised, and only when land is thoroughly exhausted does it lie fallow for periods of two to five years. No measures are taken to restore or maintain soil fertility. Natural manure

is in short supply, and crop residues are burned. Standard cultivation practices do not include careful plant and seed selection or pruning of trees to maximize yields.

Tools are primitive, making field work strenuous. The basic tool is the machete. Occasionally, the long, broad-bladed hoe is employed. Plow and harrow are virtually unknown as is the wheelbarrow. Loads are carried primarily by women or men and only occasionally by donkeys.

Savings, which are scarce, are rarely converted into farm capital. Access to credit for farm inputs is difficult. Informal short-term sources of credit charge very high interest rates based on the risks of price and harvest failure. There is little long-term borrowing as the cost would be prohibitive. As for formal credit, borrowing costs often exceed the value of output generated by the credit. Capital therefore, is used only to a very limited extent; labour is used extensively.

2.3.3 Marketing

The open-market system is an integral part of Haitian rural life. The marketing system provides a functional daily outlet for the buying and selling of household necessities as seasonal and geographical variations result in diverse regional production and cropping practices. Haiti's agrarian base, the uncertainties of fluctuating stocks and prices, the dispersed, low and irregular demand for produce, the inadequate facilities and means for individual processing, preserving, storing and transport, all contribute to a situation where producers are forced to sell off their agricultural surplus as quickly as possible in the internal marketing system.

Markets are characterized by many small transactions, the use of many intermediaries, high investment of labour to save on scarce capital, and the use of personalized regular trading relations at all stages (discussed in detail in the following chapter). The non-existence of viable economic alternatives has encouraged a large number of individuals to engage in intermediary marketing activities such as bulking, breaking bulk, transport, packaging and processing, and numerous credit arrangements. Ingenious credit maneuvers and weighing procedures assist sellers in realizing their small profit. While the marketing system is reasonably free flowing, producers are heavily exploited by government policies which affect prices. Taxes on export crops, licensing arrangements, and government monopoly pricing on basic import goods are all extractive in intent (Mintz 1964; Lundahl 1983; Girault 1984). Many bulk transactions occur outside formal market structures to avoid these taxes.

Local markets operate at three structural levels: individual itinerant venders selling local produce; small markets (ti maché) along roadsides or at specific social or ceremonial events; and state-supervised and controlled markets in villages and towns. Market sites shift occasionally due to local circumstances or change in government policy. Market calendar is also regulated by the state (Underwood 1960). Staggering market days allows sellers to attend different markets during the week which helps increase their small margin of profit. Sellers arrive early in the morning and continue to sell until their stock is depleted or night falls and they must return home. Specialization occurs for certain crops, such as beans, and sellers will specialize by particular commodities. Transactions between sellers and consumers are individual and by item, mainly on a cash basis. Barter is rare and there is little credit. Bargaining is common no matter how

small the purchase. There is little price-fixing as it is a mark of incompetence for traders to return home with goods unsold. Profit margins are small as are stocks. Stocks are generally transported to the market by each individual trader. Marketing activity is predominantly female and few traders have operating capital.

In the Département du Nord interregional markets operate two or three days weekly, different days being used at adjacent towns. These markets are immensely important but have not been a strong urbanizing influence in rural areas. Most goods are exchanged with little realized profit so the opportunity for spinoff activity is weak. The location of markets is determined by accessibility and often reflects local deficiencies of specific products rather than an overall food shortage (Wood 1963). Intraregional markets are generally located on or near major trade routes and reasonably productive agricultural areas.

The internal market system in Haiti is more than a channel for the distribution of goods. It is a training center for future entrepreneurs where more successful traders can amass sufficient capital to invest in human resources (education of children), land, livestock, or other forms of commerce. It is also an opportunity for social contacts and for accessing information of a national and occasionally international character.

2.3.4 Transportation and Trade

Marketing procedures are such that goods are most often transported for long distances on the heads of peasants or on the backs of donkeys. Routes from inland areas to the coast are undeveloped. Rivers are not suitable for transport. Bridges are few and far between and rivers must

be crossed at selected shallow points during the dry season. Roads are poor or non-existent, so that motorized travel is minimal. There are no principal railway lines. Lack of port facilities, ships, and navigation aids--as well as shallow waters and reef obstacles--prevent intercoastal shipping and passenger service. International cargo must move by the few main ports or by the international airport in Port-au-Prince. For most products there is no grading or standardization, and packaging is almost unknown.

The major centre of trade in the Département du Nord is Cap Haitien. There are two good roads within the Département, the more important and in best repair being the highway linking Port-au-Prince to Cap Haitien. At Cap Haitien, this route winds westward to Limbé, and then southward to the Massif du Nord. A second paved road runs eastward from Cap Haitien through the northern plain (with a sideroad to Milot). This highway terminates at the border town of Ounamenthe. Secondary roads are usable throughout most of the year but many can be accessed only by large trucks or all-terrain vehicles. Trade in rural districts is generally carried out by a network of footpaths:

...twisting through valleys, snaking up mountain slopes, balanced on knife-edge ridges, run "grands chemins" often only a foot or two in width, and over then pass, on unshod feet, the animal and human carriers which provide the truly indispensable economic contacts. (Wood 1963, 21)

Most women in a sample population of the Département du Nord frequented local markets within 15 kilometres of their homesteads (Akman 1985). Some travelled more than 30 kilometres to reach the larger markets. It was common for women to spend more than two hours getting to markets

depending on the initial starting point and mode of travel. Fewer than half of these women used animals or public transport to reach markets.

2.4 Human Resources

Demographic information in Haiti is unreliable, particularly for rural areas, but certain approximations can be made from census material (Segal 1984). Life expectancy at birth is 55 years and the infant mortality rate in 1987 was 118/1000 (ACDI 1990). Twenty-five percent of the rural population have access to a source of drinking water and 80% of the population lives below the poverty level (Banque mondiale 1990). Physicians are rare in rural areas and nursing graduates often emigrate or work in areas unrelated to medicine after graduation. The basic mode of curing illness is by herbal concoctions and consultations with herbalists. Malnutrition and disease deplete human resources. Adults and children suffer from a variety of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, influenza, pneumonia, tetanus, amoebic and bacillary dysentery, and conjunctivitis. What appears to be lethargy in people is often due to sickness and/or hunger.

Illiteracy among persons over 15 years of age averages 77% overall (slightly lower for males than females), and reaches almost 90% in rural areas. Forty-five percent of children have completed primary schooling and the secondary school enrollment rate is 19% (male) and 17% (female) (ACDI 1990). Technically, education is free, universal and compulsory for six years from six to twelve years of age. Inadequate interest by the state, however, has resulted in shortages of qualified teachers, poorly built schools, and lack of proper equipment. The educational process is further hindered by the poverty of most rural families. Many cannot

cover the cost of clothing or books, and the opportunity cost (in child labour hours lost) is high. Malnutrition makes it difficult for children to learn, and additional hardships are created as schools may be located several kilometres from the family hut.

Another impediment has been the use of French, rather than Créole, as a medium of instruction. The use of Créole, the language of the masses, is supposed to be a sign of ignorance, poverty and inferior status. Children neither understand teachers nor have an opportunity to use French in the community. Teachers are reluctant to lapse into Créole as they are proud of their own scholastic achievement. On the other hand, Créole expressions such as c'est créole m'ap palé avé-ou, oui indicate that for the 'creole thinking' Haitian, French is the language associated with bluff, camouflage, indirection, and duplicity (Efron 1951-52, 212).

In the last decade, some school reform has been implemented progressively, commencing with the promotion of Créole to the official language-of-instruction status for the primary level in 1979. The proportion of the total school population being instructed in the reformed system has remained at about 20% and results have thusfar been disappointing. The use of Créole, however, is not necessarily a major limiting factor as there have been structural constraints, including irresponsible management in schools, which limited the reform (Locher 1988).

Haitian attitudes toward education have also prevented schooling from having a significant effect in rural areas. The cultural assumption is that literate people do not do manual labour. Not surprisingly, a 'brain drain' results as young Haitians view education as a means for leaving the rural districts to seek urban employment.

2.5 Folk Religion

Vaudou has been connected to the social and political structure of Haiti throughout its history. As vaudou is not rigid in its dogma, it has adapted to the conditions of the milieu and borrowed features from formally organized religions, such as Catholicism, brought to Haiti by the colonists and missionaries. During the period of slavery, the religion had messianic characteristics.

As early as the 16th century, Portuguese and Spanish slave traders brought slaves to Haiti. France continued this practice until the end of the 18th century. Slaves came from many different tribal regions of Africa. Upon their arrival in the New World, slaves lost ties of kinship as they were distributed randomly on plantations without regard to the various origins from which they came. Christianization was mandatory in the French colony but most slaves considered this to be 'white magic'. The memory of the African gods and vaudou remained, and slaves found a way to create a spiritual belief, based on these African religious concepts, responsive to their needs.

Initially, vaudou was a clandestine religion, forbidden by slave owners. Spiritual belief was expressed through the creation of charms, some of which adorned slaves (Laguerre 1973). Certain masters allowed recreational gatherings on Saturday nights and on these occasions slaves assembled and held dances of a social and sacred character which resembled African spiritual practices. As group consciousness grew, slaves began to work for their emancipation. Over time, vaudou became a political, racial and nationalistic messianism established in opposition to slavery.

Vaudou was the centre of unity and a training ground

for leadership. When the colonists realized the slaves might be using these social opportunities to organize revolt, these gatherings were forbidden. It was, therefore, the marrons who established the religion in a definitive form. Marrons, slaves who had escaped captivity, were mainly male. Women, however, were significant in this religion and it was common for a 'priestess' to play a central role in the dance. Laguerre (1973) suggests that Dahomean and Togolese dominated this group but according to Fouchard (1972, 222-23) while the group Guinean (Cote de Guinée and Cote d'Or) remained a considerable reservoir for the supply of slaves to Saint-Domingue:

...le groupe bantou (congos, angoles, mozambiques) est incontestablement en tête des importations et domine aussi bien dans les listes extrêmement suggestives du marronage que dans les arrivages et les ventes des chargements des nègres.

The political and messianic significance of vaudou were unifying factors in the struggles for liberation.

After emancipation vaudou became a familiar cult in the lakou (extended family locale). The vaudou practised openly by the marrons was more consistent than that practised secretly by slaves and it became the core around which the new syncretism, characterized by generalized West African folk religion and French Catholicism, was organized (Herskovits 1964). It was first based on extended family. Vaudou was practised in the lakou and was characterized by the extended family, indivisible land holdings and a patriarchal regime. As a familial cult, it symbolized the solidarity of the extended family, united Haitians with families left in Africa as well as with those killed in the war of liberation, and brought solace in times of illness.

Over time, vaudou lost its messianic and political orientation and became a dogma which varied according to local and regional particularities corresponding to various familial and regional traditions.

With the disappearance of lakou, the fragmentation of property into small parcels, and the decay of this type of patriarchal authority at the turn of this century, vaudou became an independent religion which expressed the solidarity of the village. It became the unofficially-recognized folk religion of the Haitian masses. While generally officially tolerated, it has at times been superficially attacked and suppressed by politicians and the Haitian intellectual community. A few years after the American Occupation, the Catholic church attempted to eradicate this religion. In the 1940s, however, this tradition began to receive strong counter-support by the Movement De La Negritude. This movement, which originated in the late 1920s (Prince-Mars 1927) affirmed the values of African heritage. Duvalier, who was part of this movement, firmly established a permanent place for vaudou in Haitian society. He manipulated vaudou to his own ends by first expelling the Catholic and Episcopal Churches, glorifying vaudou and designating himself as spiritual chief of the nation. Houngans, vaudou 'priests', were appointed Tonton-Macoutes, and in this way these individuals were given a double authority, religious and military.

Presently, vaudou refers simply to a type of dance which is not necessarily held in conjunction with religious ceremonial. When asked about religious practice, most Haitian rural dwellers reply that they are Catholic but also serve the lwa, 21 nations or types of lwa (Lowenthal 1978). The lwa, which live in a land called Ginê (derived from the French Guinée for Africa), are grouped in various categories

and are subdivided into a number of different kinds of subtypes which vary from region to region in Haiti. Each subtype or category has particular characteristics, physical (including female or male) and temperamental. Each category of lwa comprises a vast population of individual spirits, and individual lwa of each nation and subtype are associated with particular families of Haitians. The lwa are inherited from bilateral kin groups (mother and father) and have strong links to local.

Rural practices and beliefs are part of the folk-medical system including psychological aspects linked to spirit possession. Ritual activities enhance family solidarity and impose a set of moral sanctions concerning proper behaviour in society (e.g., zombie existence [Diederich 1983; Davis 1983]); and economic aspects concerning land and migration patterns (Lowenthal 1978).

Both women and men play an important role in vaudou (Weinstein and Segal 1984). Women are more active participants generally and some humforts (temples) are managed by a mambo (priestess) (Métraux 1959). 'Traditional healers', or specialists that existed prior to contact with scientific medicine are of both sexes depending on the specialty. Fam sai or matronn (midwives) are as the name implies, exclusively female. Medsen fey (herbalists) may be of either sex but are majority male as are vaudou curers, or shaman, such as boko, oungan, mambo (Coreil 1988).

2.6 Politics and the Rural Areas

Before the general election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide (7 February 1991), it had been estimated that less than one percent of the Haitian population was politically active in any meaningful way (Tata 1982, 86). The chief link between

the rural areas and urban government was through the chef de section (Comhaire 1955) and other government officials who collected taxes and held power through vaguely defined authority. Small farmers had no effective representation (Lundahl 1979, 350-2). Port-au-Prince dominates all the economic, political, and social activities of the Republic. For example, in 1980, Port-au-Prince accounted for 17% of the national population but accounted for 80% of the national budget, 90% of foreign trade and the bulk of government services and industry (Segal 1984, 317). The government has encouraged migration to the capital by concentrating administration and infrastructure investment in this one local (Anglade 1981). Currently, it is estimated that more than 20% of the total population resides in Port-au-Prince.

Lack of political power has resulted in decreased economic power for rural Haitians as they have been taxed in a variety of ways. Traditionally there have been exorbitant export taxes on coffee (Tanzi 1976; Girault 1981) and the main burden of import duties has rested on necessities consumed by rural inhabitants, such as cotton cloth, soap, flour, fish, rice and kerosene. Domestic production of goods purchased by the rural population has been subject to excise taxes which often exceeded those placed on luxury foodstuffs (Lundahl 1979, 391-6). In spite of all this taxation, barely eight percent of the government's operational budget has been returned to the rural areas (Tata 1982, 73).

Since the flight of Jean-Claude Duvalier (February 1986) administrations have been preoccupied with security and constitutional issues rather than economic development. Under the military-civilian regime which took over power (presided over by Lieutenant General Henri Namphy), a constituent assembly was elected in October 1986 and a new

constitution was overwhelmingly approved in a referendum on 29 March 1987. An attempt was made to hold national elections in November 1987 but these were cancelled after gangs of armed men attacked voters at polling stations, killing dozens of people. A second attempt at elections, January 1988, was boycotted by the main parties and marked by widespread irregularities. Not surprisingly, the presidential candidate declared as winner, Leslie Manigat, was deposed in June of the same year by a military coup. This administration (General Namphy) was itself overthrown in a further coup the following September. The successor, Lieutenant General Prosper Avril, announced that a presidential election would take place in the fall of 1990. The coming months saw the return of the worst human rights abuses of past dictatorships. The hallmarks of this administration were:

Deliberate suppression of popular organizations
opposed to military rule, the failure to crack
down on uniformed and paramilitary forces
committing murder and robbery and a slow,
practically negligible movement on the electoral
front....(Maguire 1991, 11)

Under American pressure, administration leaders were forced to leave the country in early March 1990 and power was handed over to the Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Major General Herard Abraham. On 13 March 1990, power was again transferred, this time to an interim government, which was presided over by Haiti's first female head of state, Ertha Pascal-Trouillot, a Supreme Court justice. On 7 February 1991, the long-awaited transition to a democratically-elected government was finally completed with the installation of the elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

During his brief tenure in office (eight months), Aristide made sweeping changes in the cabinet including the appointment of three women in the positions of foreign minister, finance minister and information minister. An emergency employment programme was established and a land reform programme promised. Donor nations pledged large aid packages as Haiti agreed to abide to the general terms of The World Bank economic reform package (e.g., reduction of the public deficit and reform of the public sector). On 30 September 1991, an army coup overturned the elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. An unelected provisional government, presided over by Joseph Nerette and an all-male cabinet, was installed by the military. A period of widespread repression has followed in which hundreds of Aristide supporters and others have been killed.

Political instability has effectively brought to a halt all development efforts in this country. The project under study, like many others in the country, had to be closed down in December 1991 after Aristide's removal from power. Since the early 1970s the annual increase in agricultural production has not kept pace with population growth. This has led to a growing import bill for foodstuffs and current account deficits which the administration cannot support. Aid flows have been curtailed to put pressure on the latest administration and the increased numbers of Boat Refugees fleeing Haiti is a measure of how desperate Haitians are to quit this poverty-stricken, politically oppressive country.

2.7 Haiti in Caribbean Context

Island societies in the Caribbean are marked by an insularity of communal life. While many share the fragile ecology of island environments, the Caribbean, as a whole, has no unified cultural foundation which has existed for

thousands of years. Indeed, the region is ethnically and culturally extremely heterogeneous (Mintz 1985).

Haiti is often included in 'Latin America' but is generally ignored by Institutes of Latin American Studies owing to its peculiar linguistic, cultural and ethnic features. As for the Caribbean, it is often overlooked in writings about the region published in English (Ellis 1986; Brierley and Rubenstein 1988; Besson and Momsen 1987). Within Commonwealth Caribbean studies, smaller, more insignificant islands receive more attention and there is a tendency to include Haiti in a category with the Dominican Republic and Cuba (Fagg 1965; Logan 1968) due to their geographical proximity and shared historical experiences.

In fact inhabitants of these islands have no strong identification with one another. Haitians and Dominicans are traditionally hostile to one another (Lemoine 1981; Latortue 1983; Weinstein and Segal 1984) and Cubans befriend neither one nor the other despite the movement of citizens between these countries as economic circumstances dictates (Pastor 1985; Richardson 1983).

Caribbean history has been one of colonies and slavery. The Caribbean islands were the first colonial acquisition of the Europeans in the new World. For about a century Spanish hegemony in the Antilles was unbroken. The Spanish were mainly responsible for the destruction of the aboriginal peoples and the exhaustion of the limited precious metal resources. Around 1600, European colonizing powers, France, Britain and the Netherlands carved up the region.

The common history of the islands of Hispaniola and Cuba includes occupation by aborigenes mainly of the Arawak language group. Both islands were first colonized by the

Spanish who by mid-sixteenth century migrated to areas of greater promise such as Mexico, Panama or Peru. Hispaniola and Cuba remained as sacrificial stepping-stones to the Europeanization of the New World, particularly for Spanish expansion to the continent. They remained undeveloped, used mainly for Spanish defence for the Americas until other colonizers wrenched Jamaica and most of the lesser Antilles including western Hispaniola (Haiti) from Spain. The French took formal control of the western third of Hispaniola via the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697.

The colonial powers used African immigration through the infamous slave trade to fulfill human resource requirements in islands in the Caribbean. They established sugar plantation economies based on imported slave labour. Each colonizing power established autocratic administrative mechanisms with policies set unilaterally by the respective metropolitan colonial offices overseas. Local legislative councils and assemblies had limited rights and power to shape policy.

Like other islands in the Caribbean, the main purpose of the colony in Haiti was to enrich the mother country. The island was viewed as a source of cheap raw materials, a market for the mother countries surplus products, and slavery provided a source of exploitable human resources. On the eve of the French Revolution, the total value of land, slaves, livestock, and farm implements was estimated to be higher than that of any other country in the Caribbean (Logan 1968, 86). The foreign government had unlimited power over public administration, finance, and justice in the colony.

Haiti's independence in 1804 preceded the other island states in some cases by over 150 years. Santo Domingo

(Dominican Republic) followed in 1844 and Cuba in 1902. Certain former British West Indian colonies, were granted independence relatively recently in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the Caribbean remains a region of political fragmentation. There exists the older republics such as Haiti, Santo Domingo (the Dominican Republic), Cuba, and post-1945 independent states such as former British West Indian territories. There are unincorporated United States territories such as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, French overseas départements such as Martinique and Guadeloupe, Dutch colonial possessions such as Netherlands Antilles and Aruba which are still governed by the Hague, and some remaining United Kingdom colonies.

After 1898, the United States of America became more interested in the region and international relations changed. American direct intervention in the region began at the turn of the century with the illegal creation of the republic of Panama in 1902-1903, followed by the occupation of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico and more recently, Grenada in 1983. Old colonial powers followed mercantilist policies and invested little in their Caribbean holdings but in the twentieth century, neocolonialism is in financial terms. Today, global powers pour massive subsidies into the region.

The goal for the United States has been to gain strategic control of the Caribbean, to minimise European influence and to make these countries safe for American investment. As well, European countries, particularly France and Britain (the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Cuba) have continued to take an active interest in Caribbean development owing to their investments in the region. Other countries, such as Canada, Germany, Venezuela and Mexico have also tried to maintain a strategic foothold

in this region.

The islands are linked both internally and externally. Migration streams across geographical, social and linguistic boundaries over the years, as well as contact with European colonizers and North American interventionists, have made these populations open and receptive to ethnic and cultural differences. This movement is reflected in an ideological pluralism in the region shaped by Europe, Africa and the United States. Ideologies range from American-style social liberalism, French communist and socialist ideas, the *négritude* movement and *noirisme* (Haiti, French Antilles), Black Power Movement (imported from the United States), socialism (Cuba-style), British Fabian socialism (labour parties in the anglophone regions) and Marxist populism (West Indies). Politically and economically the majority of the electorates on the islands are conservative and accept the status quo. Most voters have only recently been incorporated into the electoral process and have so far chosen the constitutionalist path for change rather than the revolutionary path, with the exceptions of Cuba, Grenada and Suriname (Lewis 1985).

Social pluralism in the region is also expressed in other ways. One finds, for example, particular gender distinctions within the region which vary greatly among islands according to colonial histories, external contacts, class and local (Mintz 1985, 7-8). Islanders also identify with former colonizers. Haitians, for example, are proud of both their French and African heritages. Pluralism is also marked in linguistic differences in the region.

Linguistic fragmentation of the region is divided between the four working languages of English, French, Spanish and Dutch. Various creole languages also exist. In

Haiti most Créole vocabulary comes from French. Mintz (1985, 7) explains the base of the creole languages:

As a linguistic term, it encompasses a range of mutually-unintelligible languages whose shared past consists of the fact that each one developed in response to a situation in which people speaking numerous different African, European, and other languages needed to communicate with one another.

As for similarities, the typical Haitian pattern of agriculture is shared by other Caribbean economies (Mintz 1974). Small plots of land produce numerous crops which are intermixed, planted and harvested in a sequence which coincides with marketing strategies. Variations in soil type, rainfall, floral cover, and altitude encourage diversification and many farmers have plots in different locations to respond to seasonal and crop difference.

There is economic discontinuity in these agricultural patterns between peasant production which is conservative and traditional (low risk), and marketing which is open and governed by supply and demand (high risk). This risk is somewhat buffered by strong personal relations among traders.

Other general characteristics relating to internal exchange are also shared such as the use of numerous intermediaries within the internal marketing system (many of whom are women), the use of a national currency in internal marketing transactions, a horizontal flow of most produce among small farmers and an outward flow of specialized produce to international markets through special channels which allows access to foreign currencies (Mintz 1959).

Additionally, in these agricultural patterns, farm income is usually supplemented by livestock raising, and small-scale commerce by predominantly female traders.

The state has taken over control of the life of small farmers in some countries in the Caribbean through control of specialized marketing structures that exist apart from internal marketing systems. According to Mintz (1959, 25):

Through control of licenses and permits, through decisions as to the number of intermediaries, and by other means, the state channels the movement of certain products outside the internal marketing system to serve its own ends and those of the classes which control it.

In the case of internal marketing systems in Haiti this is not the case as there is no monopolistic control on the sale of licenses for specialized intermediaries. Moreover, many intermediaries find ways to avoid licensing procedures. Haitian small farmers have resisted attempts by government pressure tactics to increase the production of export crops. This is only one of the peculiarities which characterize Haiti in relation to other Caribbean countries.

At independence, Spanish historical and colonial influence, scarcely affected Haiti's language, religion and culture. Unlike other colonies in the Caribbean, Haiti became a country with its own language, religion and culture, defiant and isolated from the outside world save for the French influence. "From 1804 until the United States occupation in 1915, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the Hemisphere" (Mintz 1974, 270). The struggle for independence, which many view with admiration, had a price

in isolation and abandonment.

During this period, a new socio-economic and political structure became firmly established and continues into the present. It is a system wherein an elite, who are markedly distinct from the rural masses, have retained control through the exploitation (mainly through taxation) of rural productivity. In recent years, external investment funds (mainly aid programmes) have made possible a more effective centralized political control by this elite who enrich themselves with monies set aside for programmes aimed at improving the lives of the rural population.

The rural masses, for their part, have responded to this authoritarian or totalitarian leadership which does not account for their needs, in their own negative way. They have developed a traditionalism of unusual firmness whose persistence reinforces the situation of socio-economic and political stagnation.

Due to its historical beginnings, Haiti remains an anomaly in the Caribbean context. Haiti surpasses most of the Greater Antilles in population density (Bazile 1975). By all standards of income and welfare, it is the poorest of the Caribbean societies, with the worst housing, health and education record in the Caribbean (GDP per head 374\$).

2.8 Haiti in International Context

Presently, Haiti, like other countries in the region, is firmly in the United States of America's sphere of influence. American interest and interference in this country began in the early 1900s, which was almost a century after Haitian independence.

At independence Jean-Jacques Dessaline (emperor from 1804-06) confiscated the land owned or managed by whites and mulattos and formalized a decree forbidding property ownership by whites on the island. The extermination and expatriation of whites led to the refusal of several major foreign governments to recognize or trade with his regime. Foreign investment was constitutionally forbidden from 1805-18 and difficult thereafter. External relations for much of the first half of the nineteenth century were tense as Haiti symbolized both racial equality and anti-colonism. Britain, Spain and other European powers with colonies in the Caribbean were apprehensive about the existence of a free 'black' state in the region. The blatant refusal of the United States to recognize Haiti's independence until 1862 was undoubtedly due in large part to racial fear and prejudice. During congressional debates in 1826, Senator Thomas Hart Benton declared that the peace of eleven slave-holding states:

will not permit black Consuls and Ambassadors to establish themselves in our cities, and to parade through the country, and give their fellow-blacks in the United States, proof in hand of the honors which await them, for a successful revolt on their part. (Logan 1968, 101)

In addition to its tenuous relation with the United States and major European countries, Haiti was also isolated from South America. Simon Bolivar, who had received financial aid from Pétion, President of west department of Haiti from 1807-18, for his own wars of independence, refused to recognize the independence of Haiti once his liberation struggles freed Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia from Spanish control (Bellegarde-Smith 1974). Hence, during the first two decades of independence,

Haiti remained isolated and under a continual threat of military intervention.

In the years to follow, Haiti played off one great power against another as there was no aligned block of Caribbean nations. At the turn of the century, when the United States became involved in this geographic region, it occupied Haiti from 1915-34. The Occupation brought few positive changes in Haitian society. It did, however, reinforce authoritarian power structures as the United States institutionalized the army (Garde d'Haiti) and the police (Lundahl 1989). Moreover, control became more centralized in the capital of Port-au-Prince due to infrastructural changes. More than ever before the rural areas became excluded from national political and economic policy. Moreover, the American Occupation meant an end to Haiti's policy of restraining foreign investment which had been a policy since the first independence constitution (see following chapter). American investments increased three-fold from \$4 million in 1915 to \$14 million in 1930 and small farmers who occupied land without 'title' were evicted from their plots (Weinstein and Segal 1984, 26). This is one of the factors which caused the mass migration of over one-half a million Haitians to Cuba and the Dominican Republic from 1915-29 (Bellegarde-Smith 1984). Another important factor was American recruitment of Haitians to work in their sugar companies in these countries.

Finally, the American Occupation institutionalized economic and commercial ties between Haiti and the United States, thereby minimizing German and French business and banking interests. Today, French interest is mainly cultural rather than economic. France is a minor trading partner and official aid is less than Canada and the former West Germany. Haiti also entered the dollar zone where it has

remained. Presently Haiti's relationship with the United States is focused not on trade and investment issues (its dependence on exports and imports is less than that of most of its neighbours) but to the human migration flows between the two countries. Haitian emigration to the United States as well as other countries has provided an important outlet for many Haitians.

Emigration has been a strategy for relieving serious imbalances in human-land ratios in this country since the turn of the century. In the past, there was a strong flow of migration from Haiti to the eastern province of Santiago, Cuba where Haitians found work in the agricultural sector, particularly cane cutting (Bazile 1975). Approximately 15,000 Haitians have remained in Cuba, the residue from this stream. There has also been a constant current to the Dominican Republic where some Haitians (mainly male) find temporary work in sugar mills and on sugar plantations (Lemoine 1981). Some of these persons remain in the country illegally, others are repatriated. The flow to the Bahamas was halted in the late 1970s when the Bahamian government began to crack down on illegal aliens (Marshall 1979).

In the latter part of this century, gaining entry to other countries in the Caribbean, the United States, Canada and France, has been difficult due to tight quotas, but many Haitians who cannot emigrate legally have managed to emigrate illegally to these countries. Today the principal flow is to the United States (New York City, Northern New Jersey and Miami). Canada accounts for the second largest flow of emigrants internationally. The flow to Canada is largely due to immigration policies in Quebec which favour french-speaking immigrants. Similar to Haitian immigration to the United States, the first wave to Canada in the 1960s was composed of professionals, to be followed in the mid-

1970s by skilled and semi-skilled workers. Primarily professional Haitians have also emigrated to France, Africa, Latin America, French Guyana and other Caribbean states.

Emigration from Haiti, which experienced a resurgence during the middle 1950s and continues to the present, was initiated and maintained by the Duvalier regimes. "Rough estimates of the size of the Haitian diaspora in 1980 vary between 700,000 and 1 million or 10 to 14 percent of all Haitians" (Weinstein and Segal 1984). Boswell (1982, 18-19) suggests that annual net emigration averages close to 40,000 persons with a total outflow of 600,000. Of the total outflow, about 400,000 are located in the United States (approximately 250,000 to 350,000 Haitians live in New York City and estimates of Miami's Haitian population vary between 20,000 and 70,000, of which approximately 55% have prior living experiences in the Bahamas), 115,000 are in the Dominican Republic, and 40,000 are in Canada (most are situated in Quebec).

The first migration movement to the United States which began in the 1950s was primarily a stream of professionals and entrepreneurs escaping the repressive Duvalier regime but by the 1960s and 1970s blue collar and semiskilled workers followed. Many came by air and gained legal entrance to the United States. As legal entry to United States tightened in the 1970s, alternatives were explored to escape enforcement. In 1972, the second current, that of Haitian refugees coming in boats to the eastern shore of South Florida, commenced. Once Haitians realized it was feasible to cross the Gulf Stream in a common sailing vessel, Miami became an attractive destination for many poorer Haitians.

In foreign countries, immigrant Haitians, like other ethnic groups, tend to congregate in ghettos due to cultural

and linguistic differences. Their ties to Haiti remain strong. Emigration has been largely advantageous for Haiti. First, there have been the economic advantages of remittances. Estimates of the total value of remittances are as high as \$100 million yearly (Weinstein and Segal 1984). As well, there is also temporary relief from overcrowding in urban and rural areas. Moreover, while there was a serious brain drain in this country when a large proportion of the educated and skilled population were forced to leave under the elder Duvalier administration in the 1950s and 1960s, these former emigrants have recently returned to Haiti with investment capital and valuable skills acquired in other countries. Finally, through migration flows, Haitians have been able to acquire knowledge concerning other social systems and migration has allowed contact with the outside world.

In 1948, Haiti joined the international community when it invited the United Nations to send a mission to survey the economy and recommend measures for economic and social improvement. In 1951, Haiti applied for membership in the International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Haiti was again isolated in the Caribbean during the Duvalier years (1957-86). The elder Duvalier used American paranoia of the spread of Castroism (including joining in a sanction vote against Cuba in the United Nations in the early 1960s) to negotiate substantial amounts of aid in the form of gifts, grants, and loans. This aid which became more and more military in nature enabled this regime to stay in power. Since the expulsion of Jean-Claude Duvalier in February 1986, the United States has retained control of Haitian political activity and is held responsible whether directly or indirectly for the naming on 2 June 1992 of Marc

Bazin as prime minister-designate to head a government of 'national consensus'. In the legitimate election of December 1990, Bazin won 14% of the votes against the 67% won by Aristide. During the election Bazin was favoured by the American embassy in Haiti.

Currently, there is a trade embargo imposed by the United States and the Organization of American States (OAS). Isolation is a theme which runs throughout Haitian history. Haiti does not belong to the British Commonwealth, has not access to the Caribbean Common Market (Caricom) nor is part of the Lomé Convention (trade/aid agreement between the European Community and a large group of former French and British possessions in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific). Haiti remains at the periphery of Caribbean blocs (e.g., Commonwealth Caribbean nations) at the United Nations and in the OAS. Ties with Latin America tend to be distant.

2.9 Summary

In 1804, the colonial period had left Haiti with few assets. It was unprepared technologically, economically, politically and socially for independence. Patterns of production had been skewed to serve the needs of the mother country and it was a colony, like many others, heavily dependent on foreign human and capital resources. Human and capital stock were depleted from the decade-long war for independence and its aftermath. After the immediate post-colonial period, it proved impossible to re-establish the intensive agriculture on which the prosperity of Saint-Domingue had been based. Fear of renewed foreign intervention created the need for a large standing army which absorbed much of the remaining male labour force and drained government revenues. In the years to follow, Haiti's control over its own financial resources was decreased first

by a crippling annual indemnity and preferential tariff arrangements which the France demanded in exchange for full recognition of independence, and second by the American Occupation.

Politically, after the departure of the French, Haiti was left with a paucacity of leadership and those with skills could not coerce planters back onto plantations. Large landowners deserted the rural areas in favour of the cities. Here they went into politics and in this way were able to transfer farming income to themselves by taxation of goods produced and consumed in rural areas. Politically powerful groups could not resolve their conflicting interests and revolution followed revolution. The rapid turnover of leadership obviated constructive political activity for Haiti's economic development.

Socially, the impulse of the common people was to seek freedom from all control. They acquired plots of land for themselves and produced for subsistence only. An indifferent state allowed peasants to install themselves on vacant parcels, found families, and pass on untitled property to children. Growing population resulted in a continual subdivision of arable land, and as landholdings became smaller and smaller, intensive cultivation and deforestation became necessary. Intensive cultivation has led to the ruin of once fertile land. Furthermore, inadequate interest by the state has resulted in a depletion of human resources by malnutrition, disease and illiteracy.

The main connection between the state (which has always held power through vaguely defined authority) and the masses is through taxation. When called upon (or hired), the masses have also assisted contending groups in their quest for power. For most of Haiti's history, the nation has existed

for the sake of the polity and not the reverse. It is essentially a private concept of state in which the distinction between public and private funds is blurred. The capital, Port-au-Prince, home of most politicians and the monied elite, is where government revenues are invested. Little has ever been returned to the rural areas.

Today, administrations are preoccupied with security and constitutional issues rather than economic development. It is another period of the return of the worst human rights abuses including widespread repression. Hundreds of individuals have been killed with many others left in hiding. Currently political instability has effectively brought to a halt all development efforts, including foreign aid assistance, in this country. There is also a trade embargo imposed by the international community to put pressure on this regime. Isolation is a theme which runs throughout Haitian history. The effect of isolation throughout history has been mainly felt by the mass of Haitians already living at a bare subsistence level. Currently, the coup leaders and the elite who support them have been barely affected by this embargo as they are able to engage in smuggling activities without sanction. Haitians desperate enough to attempt to escape this dreadful situation are currently intercepted by the American navy and sent to refugee camps or returned to Haiti.

In this general context of exploitation of human and land resources, extreme poverty and oppressive social relations, rural women and men continue to live their daily lives. In the following chapter, I discuss the particularities of these lives in rural Haiti. This information was collected in my first period of field research in this country.

Chapter Three

WOMEN'S LIVES, MEN'S LIVES AND GENDER RELATIONS IN RURAL HAITI

Introduction

In this chapter I present a review of my findings concerning the day-to-day lives of women and men in rural Haiti and I isolate the gender-based social power which exists in the Haitian rural context. The information recorded in this chapter was obtained through a review of historical and contemporary documents pertaining to the topic, informal discussions, and personal observation. My own research was situated in the Département du Nord. Other studies used in the following chapter were performed in different regions in Haiti. I am able to combine all these research materials because the elements discussed concerning the lives of women and men are fairly uniform throughout rural Haiti.

3.1 Context for the Study

3.1.1 Geographic Location/Département du Nord

The Département du Nord occupies approximately 4,100 square kilometres (15%) of the Republic of Haiti. In contrast to the social homogeneity found in the Département du Nord there are marked geologic, topographic, and climatic contrasts (Wood 1963). Included in this Département are sections of the country's major mountain range, a large coastal lowland, and an extensive interior plateau. There is a contrast of about 6°C (10°F) in the mean annual temperatures of the coastal and the elevated interior regions. (Mean temperature values range from 26°C [78°F] on

the coast to 20°C [68°F] on the highest peaks with the mean annual temperature range of about 7°C [9°F].)

Precipitation varies considerably within the Département between an annual mean rainfall of 86.94 cm (34.23 inches) and 206.15 cm (81.16 inches). There is an intricate network of streams in this region but all are subject to great fluctuation in level and none is navigable.

For administrative purposes, the Département is broken down into eight arrondissements. Arrondissements are further divided into communes and communes are subdivided into sections rurales. Whenever possible administrative boundaries follow physiographic features. The Département du Nord is administered from Cap Hatien.

3.1.2 Living Conditions in the Département du Nord

Little has changed in the material standards of the rural population over the past few decades. Dwellings are generally walled with mud-daubed wattle, roofed with grass or palm thatch, and generally floored with beaten earth. Huts are relatively small and interiors are partitioned (solid walls or curtained) into two or three rooms. Water is usually obtained from the nearest stream which, in the mountain regions, is often one or more miles from the homestead. Wells, cisterns, and holding tanks are non-existent. Sanitary facilities are rare.

At best, household furnishings consist of home-made tables and chairs, one or two beds and sleeping mats. Kitchenware is mostly calabash bowls or cheap imported enamel-ware, some cutlery and glasses. Nutritional intake varies seasonally and locally. Staples include beans, corn, manioc, plantains, bananas and sweet potatoes. Supplements

include peanuts, taro, squash, rice, tropical fruits and vegetables. Occasionally, chicken, goat meat or dried smoked fish is added to this diet. In the general area of Grande Rivière du Nord (one of the more fertile zones in the Département), slightly less than one-third of a sample population produced enough food on the home farm to feed the family at subsistence level, 20% stated consumption depended on the season (Akman 1985).

Households in this area have a mean number of seven occupants representing a wide range of relationships (Akman 1985). Some households are composed of extended kinship groups while others are boarding-house or cooperative arrangements among unrelated adults and children. There are also many combinations of the two.

The population is relatively stable. Eighty percent of a survey population in the general area of Grande Rivière du Nord had been living in the same rural section for more than two years (Akman 1985). Lack of mobility is mainly due to the difficulty of obtaining land in other areas as well as a belief that spirits are closely associated with the land. The lwa, bilateral kin groups, and land are inextricably bound together, through time, by features of rural folk religion.

3.1.3 Working Conditions in the Département du Nord

In the winter, summer and fall of 1990, I was able to establish my presence in the general community. I used this time to collect general information, through informal discussions with local residents and non-governmental organizations, concerning programmes for socio-economic and political change in this region. I sought expressly to discover whether these changes had caused shifts in the

power relations between women and men in these communities. I also investigated the nature of these changes. Periods were spent in Montreal reviewing documents pertinent to the study collected before and during this period of research.

Throughout this non-structured period of field research I was plagued by practical complications which delayed and hindered the work. In the following passages I share thoughts recorded in my personal diary which explain some of the constraints experienced in rural Haiti.

Personal Accomodations and Work Context

It is Friday, and after two days in Port-au-Prince waiting for my ride to the north, I am anxious to leave. As usual the journey north to Cap Haitien, the town which I have chosen as a home base, is long, difficult, and unremarkable but for the enormous sense of nausea I inevitably experience on the winding road up to Cap Haitien.

I am lucky to have accommodations with a Haitian friend, a small apartment (2 1/2) shared by three women. The blackouts have increased over the year due to a serious decline in the economic situation of the country which is linked directly to the political instability. In the past two decades the town has become electricity-dependent which means it relies on electric pumps for water provision. Alternatives such as hand pumps, outhouses, and so on no longer exist. Days can pass without electricity. After two to three days, the current may pass for a few hours and if, like me, you are working outside your domicile, you miss the opportunity to flush the toilet, take a quick

shower, and fill the water buckets for cooking and washing. I find searching for water both time consuming and energy draining. At this precise moment, we are commencing another period of blackout so I have about one hour left at the computer until my battery weakens.

Furthermore, there is a marked food shortage in town. The sudden stopping and starting of electrical current has damaged the town's supply of back-up generators. Consequently, food stores, are finding it near to impossible to continue operations as food quickly rots in coolers during these periods. Occasionally, I find little food to purchase and I am left hungry. Additionally, there are the endless flea bites, mosquito bites, and sunburn but all these elements I consider to be minor annoyances which have little effect on the research. There are more major problems which are slowing down the work process.

Political Situation

It is Monday and it seems that over the weekend, two of Duvalier's well-known expelled ex-ministers (Williams Regala and Roger Lafontant) have returned to the country, boldly passing through customs at the international airport, grinning and waving to passerbys. Many local Haitians are furious at their lack of shame and fear. The grass roots movement for peaceful, democratic elections rises to meet this challenge giving the government until Wednesday to act. They are calling for acting president, Madame Ertha, to step down or bring these men before the justice system for

their crimes against the state under the old regime.

At times of political tension, Cap Haitien is usually insulated from life-threatening events. It is also cut off from meaningful communication from the capital and no one knows exactly what these events mean for our day-to-day lives. Residents here, however, do not have a sense of detachment and they have decided to join in the manifestations planned for Wednesday. Street corner groups discuss the possibility of many more killings throughout the country and it is clear that people are very tense. For my part I ponder on the possibility of being shot for a research project concerning gender relations. I decide it is not a terribly heroic way to lose one's life and I manage to find some humour in this. Needless to say, the research is on hold until things quiet down. Meanwhile, I ponder on another serious problem, that of time constraint.

Temporal Setting

If you miss the 6:45 a.m. camionette to Baho (because you were chasing from unmarked truck to unmarked truck for one-half an hour trying to find the right one) you get to wait a long time for the next truck to leave going to this village. One dares not leave one's seat during the wait because departures are unscheduled and occur only when the camionette is sufficiently full, an arbitrary decision which varies from driver to driver. As time passes, I watch an assortment of passengers take their places. Some people are eating

breakfast, a gooey mixture of rice and beans (di ri et pwa) from calabash bowls. Tiny sacks of peanuts suffice for others. By 10:30 we are slowly edging our way out of this obscenely crowded public transport parking space. We move quite quickly to Grande Rivière du Nord after which the route gets more difficult. The road itself is in severe disrepair and the mid-day sun is already hot (which I had tried to avoid by starting out at 6:00 a.m.). I use the time to practise my Créole with a young male student. He demands the usual questions one asked of foreigners: marital status; number of children; work in Haiti; and so on. Most of the passengers listen carefully to our conversation. In a couple of hours, we arrive at Bahon.

In Bahon I am guided to the home of one of the older, more powerful community leaders and for a couple of hours we discuss certain projects. When I ask to speak to some individuals in the community, the conversation abruptly comes to a halt. Little luck for the research today.

Fortunately, I caught the same camionette that brought us to Bahon earlier (the last for the day) as it is still filling up (he may have waited expressly for me because no one loses a sure passenger). I am exhausted due to the stress of working in a foreign language and travelling conditions to Bahon but I know I must muster what strength I have left for the journey home.

As we head towards Cap Haitien, we are experiencing the full heat of the afternoon sun

which is blazing down on my neck in this semi-covered vehicle. At various stops along the route we take on more passengers, their sacks, baskets, boxes, massive bundles of plantains, live chickens, and goats. The smaller loads ride with us inside the vehicle (this includes the live chickens, one of which is nesting on my feet), the larger loads are thrown on the overhead cover. The seating area consists of long planks of unfinished wood, running along either side of the flat bed of the truck and one straight down the center. Those unfortunate enough to have to ride in the centre on a day like today, as packed in as we are, without much ventilation, are definitely at risk of heat stroke. There is no back support and due to the rough terrain we are constantly being jostled up, down, and sidewise. My body is getting a good bruising and my back and neck are becoming very sore. In imitation of the survival strategy of others, I wrap my arms around the backs of my neighbours which offers some support. Our thighs overlap and if I turn my head to the side I am nose-to-nose with my neighbour. Fortunately, I am being somewhat amused by the chicken on my foot.

The woman on my left is clearly also exhausted and probably hungry. She is one of the poorest of the poor. She travels with her son, a boy of about eight, who sorely needs a stitch job on an arm wound which is raw, open and deep. Infection has set in and it is not a pretty sight. I give her bandages which I happen to be carrying in my pack and discuss methods of cleaning the sore and covering it for a few days to keep it clean. She smiles, thanks me, and falls back to sleep. At one

of the stops, she buys a small bread bun from a merchant at the side of the road, gives it to the boy who eats it slowly and contentedly. She buys nothing for herself. As the afternoon wears on she and I both fall asleep. When I awake, I notice the chicken is unusually still. I ask the owner to give it a small kick to see if it is still alive. It is alive. I consider asking this person to do the same for me (just to check).

At one stop we take on a madan sara, a big woman who has six huge baskets of mangoes to be transported to Cap Haitien. We wait as she collects the smaller baskets from other woman which she then adds to her larger loads. The procedure of loading on her baskets is slow. A young man in a kneeling position moves the first basket from the ground to his head (with assistance), then in a semi-standing position moves the basket from his head to his arms. In a full-standing position, he passes the basket to the outstretched arms of another young man working on top of the camionette. He repeats this arduous process five times.

I have spent a considerable amount of time travelling in these conditions and find that it is always informative but very physically strenuous. This trip would have been more rewarding if more research were possible. Once home, I do my best to remove the dirt and dust from my body using what little water remains in the bucket. I just cannot imagine doing this every day of the week. Yet, this is how rural Haitians, in particular women, go to and from market, often several times a week.

This portion of the field work was the most strenuous but highly rewarding. The information gathered, and presented below, greatly assisted my observations and analysis when I studied the difference in involvement and interaction between female and male members in the cooperatives.

3.2 Prologue

The two most important domains within which all rural Haitian women and men confront each other are the gender-based division of labour, and the sexual. In these two domains relations between the genders are broadly expressed by sentiments which are either harmonious or conflictual. In daily life these four categories are not so clearly defined because the domains and sentiments overlap during social interaction.

The result is that interactions between the genders are neither simple nor predictable. This knowledge is significant because the ability to integrate women into development programmes which include both women and men is distinctly affected by this potentially contradictory phenomenon. During the course of the second research period in the study of the cooperatives, for example, it was not unusual for a respondent, of either sex, to favour female involvement in one instance, but not in another. Generally, there was agreement that the cooperatives would profit by the participation of both women and men, but women's participation was often made conditional. The complexity of relations between women and men in rural Haiti is now revealed.

3.3 Gender-Based Division of Labour

When asked about the gender-based division of labour most rural Haitians will state simply that men work in gardens and women work at commerce. Food production is perceived as purely a male activity, despite major contributions by women and children. Commercial activities are perceived as purely a female activity but certain roles in marketing are designated male. Over time, the involvement of women in direct agricultural productive activities has changed and seems to have lessened with declining agricultural productivity. Likewise, more men seek forms of alternative employment as wage labourers, in commerce, or through country-to-country emigration. Presently, all rural Haitians are scrambling to secure a meager livelihood in a socio-economic, political and natural environment which is inharmonious to a stable, healthy existence. In this context, however, women seem to have a disproportionate responsibility for a multiplicity of productive and reproductive tasks.

In family gardens labour is frequently diversified among household members. Survey results for six rural sections in the Département du Nord indicated that preparing the soil, planting, and weeding were predominantly male tasks for 49% of households surveyed but in 36% of households women and children assisted in these tasks (Akman 1985). Harvesting was done by the family unit in 67% of households; solely male labour was used in only 23% of households. The remaining labour comes from persons, female and male, outside the family unit (Akman 1985).

In terms of hours of work in the agriculture sector (livestock and crop production), however, various studies confirm that male hourly input exceeds female hourly input

and this proportion varies by region and season. In the region of the Artibonite, Donna Plotkin found that the women of 42 rural households worked 32 days/year fewer than their male counterparts (Anglade 1986, 136). The value of female labour is codified in a wage differential between female and male agricultural wage workers. Women earn between 60-75% of male salary for a day's work depending on the nature of the work and the crop (Anglade 1986, 137). In the survey of the Département du Nord, only one-third of respondents offered information concerning the stratification of wages between men and women. Of these, three-quarters paid equal wages to males and females while one-quarter paid men more than women (Akman 1985). In this same study, farmers hired more than five times the amount of male labour days than female labour days (Akman 1985). This is a broad approximation as the amount of labour hired per season varied greatly depending on the crop, weather, season, and available funds.

The heavy physical tasks of clearing, cultivating, and certain kinds of weeding, accomplished with tools such as the machete and hoe, are almost always performed by men. The purchase of agricultural requirements such as seeds, provision of water, harvesting, on the other hand, was most frequently done by women. Furthermore, many women are in charge of the jardin potager (dooryard garden) of the family. In reality:

La division sexuelle du travail agricole est souple, et souvent variable en fonction de la région; en période de point, ou quand l'utilisation d'une main-d'oeuvre externe devient difficile, les femmes participent à tous les travaux des champs, incluant le sarclage. (Anglade 1986, 134)

Furthermore, the emigration of men from certain regions has resulted in changes in these areas in certain traditional agricultural practices. In the past, a task demanding heavy physical effort was considered 'male' work. Utilizing a hoe, for example, was exclusively a male task and a woman found with this tool in her hand was considered 'inferior' (she had no man to do this work for her). Today, in some regions women can be found manipulating this tool. Women can also be seen performing 'male' tasks such as slash and burn field techniques and the production of charcoal.

Historically, women have always contributed to agricultural production. In colonial Saint-Domingue, among slaves imported from Africa, men predominated by over two to one, though this position was modified with the birth of creole slaves (Nicholls 1985, 122). In the decade prior to independence, women outnumbered men on many sugar estates owing to the fact that many men left the plantations as marrons or freedom fighters. Adult female slaves who joined the marrons is estimated at 15 to 20 percent (which is still significant considering the number imported from Africa relative to males) (Fouchard 1972, 289).

Under slavery, both women and men worked in agriculture as the division of labour was based on health and age rather than on sex. Furthermore, it was common for women throughout the region to form the main body of fieldhands after emancipation (Hall 1962; Craton 1978; Mair 1986; Reddock 1986). In Haiti, for example, in the immediate transition years from slavery to independence, Mackenzie (1830) and Brown (1837) found that the great majority of cultivators were women who, after the revolution, vastly outnumbered men. Most able-bodied men were removed from productive labour in fields for duty in the army and construction of

fortresses.

After independence, a large standing army took men away from agricultural work. Brown (1937, Vol. II, 281) reports that by the 1830s much of the agricultural labour was performed by women while men traversed the country drinking and smoking. Bird (1867, 319) still comments by mid-century, on the loss of male labour forced into an undisciplined army which was no longer needed for a foreign foe and where one-half of life was wasted in indolence, gambling and vice. Women in general dominated not only agriculture but also local commerce (Brown 1937; Bird 1867). They were active as coffee traders and they bought and sold imported dry goods (Mackenzie 1830). At the turn of the century foreigners continued to observe that women were the unremitting toilers and most productive members of the nation (Leyburn 1941, 201), and well into the 20th century women were still performing considerable labour in the fields (Simpson 1940, 501).

The absence of male labour in agriculture into the 20th century was mainly due to the fact that Haiti was greatly overmilitarized due to its continual revolutions. Most young men served in the army during their lifetimes. As soldiers, men were fed and clothed and lived a life of travel and leisure except during occasional periods of battle. Upon retirement, few were disposed to return to agricultural labour. Women had to take over the multiple tasks necessary to raise their families including cultivating, processing, preserving, and preparing and marketing garden produce. During and after the American Occupation (1915-34), this situation began to change.

Constitutional changes, proposed by the United States in 1917, were first rejected by the duly elected congress of

Haiti but later ratified in a popular plebiscite. The constitution was made acceptable to the masses through a free series of public entertainment and feasts. Congress, which was dismissed at this time, was not reconvened and instead a puppet government was installed by American naval officers who themselves ran the country. The new constitution departed from Haitian tradition in two respects. One was the creation of the gendarmerie as the only legal armed force (see previous chapter); the other was the granting of permission to foreigners to own property in Haiti. Both policies changed the lives of the rural small farmers, particularly the latter policy which allowed foreign investment in land.

Large parcels of land were turned over to American companies for plantation agriculture. Anglade (1986, 102) reports that there were 50,000 expropriations in the region of the north. Some farmers who were dispossessed of their land were mobilized to work on these plantations. Others sought work on American-operated sugar plantations in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. During the Occupation, the Americans also tried to re-establish corvée, a system of forced labour, for the construction of roads. Haitians, who had now experienced a century of personal freedom, resisted this movement both actively (open rebellion which cost some their lives) and passively (went into hiding).

Furthermore, during this period, the lakou, a socio-economic, political and spiritual structure based on kinship and family land, began to disintegrate. Women, who had traditionally received a fair portion of land within this family unit were given smaller and smaller portions as land became more scarce due to eviction or because it was continually sub-divided with each passing generation. This movement is discussed in more detail below.

The result was that women became even more specialized in commercial activity and spent less time in direct agricultural production. Today, agricultural work is perceived as a male domain. Men can be seen toiling strenuously in their fields and for many males this is their sole economically productive activity. Women are still found labouring in fields with men, although most engage in other economically and socially productive activities.

In recent years, the scarcity of cultivable land and declining agricultural productivity due to social and environmental factors (previous chapter) has resulted in a situation where women in particular are being eliminated from contact with the land. As women are not considered primary agricultural producers, they have fewer inheritance rights to land, less access to good land, and are excluded from agricultural information and training. Coincidentally, there has been a shift in relative market prices. Prices for export crops such as coffee and cocoa have decreased while prices for imported goods have increased. Furthermore, prices for internally produced goods have also increased as many are in short supply. The importance of women's commercial prowess, therefore, has been heightened and, with no economic alternative, more women are forced to seek economic opportunity in the internal marketing system.

The move of women to augment their marketing activities, however, does not decrease the significance of women's ties to land and agricultural production. Women's trading capital has always depended on the sale of crops produced on the home farm. The link between women's marketing activity and the agricultural activity of male partners remains strong. Seventy percent of total agricultural production is marketed and women decide which part of production will be sold and how the revenue which

accrues will be spent (Anglade 1986, 161). As households depend more and more on food purchased in markets over that produced on home farms, women have become "...un élément clé de la survie paysanne" (Anglade 1986, 131).

3.3.1 Marketing

Trading is an activity in which all rural women engage at some time in their lives. Women compose at least 90% of traders of primary goods produced locally or imported (Anglade 1986, 160-61). In general, women are expected to cover the bulk of household expenditures from the sale of garden produce. In effect, they manage the entire domestic economy and have historically tended to manage most of the household revenue. Marketing activities often produce a good part of household income necessary for clothing and educating family members, for ceremonial occasions and, most importantly, for providing essential goods, including foodstuffs, not produced on home farms. Women are in charge of the choice of seeds and plants, the quantities to sell or stock, and the management of money earned from the sale of crops. In fact, women are better informed than men on the market price for crops, for they are the ones active in commercial activities. For this reason, in the majority of rural households in northern Haiti, females decide which crops to plant (Akman 1985). When men say they "cannot live without a woman", it is to these basic domestic services provided by women that they primarily refer.

Experience in economic transactions on a daily basis is common to all rural women, young and old. Women venture to neighbouring markets to sell their garden produce in order to purchase basic household necessities. Marketing can be carried out by lone individuals, by individuals with non-kin helpers, or by highly structured female kin groups (Legerman

1961). In a kin group situation, women can determine price through group bargaining, and share information on the quality of the stock. Additionally, in these groups, women generally do not compete for buyers. These women will loan money or stock without interest to group members, buy for each other or sell for each other if one is sick. As for younger females (kin or not), they serve as company, guard stock, run errands and help carry loads. For them, it is also a period of apprenticeship. They are taught to buy and sell, assess quality and quantity, calculate value and recognize currency. Marketing occurs in multifarious ways depending on the ability to obtain capital, credit, and local.

A general precept in marketing is to keep capital working. Capital generally translates to stock. If capital is not expanding, it must be contracting and gaté lajà or majé lajà are expressions which refer to such loss (Mintz 1964). Stock is exchanged for money which is exchanged for stock in a series of rapid transactions. The goal is to realize a profit in a series of swift turnovers and no profit is too small to keep a woman from seeking commercial gain. For example, those who have credit arrangements with local merchants will supplement their marketing activities by purchasing products such as bread, oil and sugar in bulk which they break down and re-sell in small quantities. When this stock is depleted, the debt is repaid, the tiny profit retained, and the circuit commences again. Competition in trading is fierce, marketing activity intense. Scheduling may be an essential part of success. Marketing in Haiti requires intelligence, endurance, creativity, and resourcefulness.

Producers, female or male, selling in bulk (e.g., beans, coffee, cocoa) will on occasion sell from the home to

komèsat, local small-scale intermediaries, or sékrètè, assistants to a large-scale intermediary who scour the countryside for stock (Murray and Alvarez 1975). Women who transport produce directly to market have three potential categories of buyers which include private consumers, sékrètè and madan Sara (explanation below). Seasonal goods sold in bulk may be sold from the home to avoid transportation costs and market taxes, as well as competition from more aggressive sellers such as madan Sara. Higher profit is realized if intermediaries are minimized, however, so most produce is transported to markets by female members of the producer's family.

Many women have traditional places in a centralized, more or less permanently located market run by the government. Women, however, will also circulate among markets according to demand. Certain women circulate in the streets or just outside the village in order to dispose of their merchandise and to avoid taxes. Part-time merchants also sell directly at their doorsteps, on roadsides and at social gatherings. From a basket, on a wood table or on a sack on the ground, these women sell goods such as sweets, drinks, sugar, oil, canned milk, fruits and vegetables, spices, cigarettes, tobacco, matches, candles, thread, needles, woven hats, belts, kerosene and so on. Some sell cooked food which they prepare themselves such as cassava cakes, rice and beans, goat meat and snacks such as pralines and puddings. Revenues from these sales are low but, as the clients are numerous, this activity provides a stable if marginal income.

A group of women, known as révadèz, have enough capital to become involved in small-scale retail operations. They are usually initiated into trade by elder women who teach them marketing skills and introduce them to clients and

families (with whom they can lodge during journeys). These women will purchase produce in bulk in one location for quick resale in small quantities in street markets. Sometimes they will buy and sell along the route as they travel from a major area of production to central markets in the towns. They have not enough capital to employ others to seek out stock but depend instead on their own knowledge of sources in different regions.

A small percentage of women becomes relatively sophisticated commercial entrepreneurs called madan Sara (from a migratory bird of that name which attacks supplies of food, particularly millet). These women often start by selling small amounts of agricultural produce or dry goods (imported and locally produced) until they have accumulated enough capital to move to larger commercial ventures such as selling export crops to wholesalers or export houses. Some obtain their start-up capital through remittances from family members abroad. Even with some capital, most madan Sara rely heavily on borrowed money and stock given to them on credit.

Madan Sara act as both retailers and speculators, or middle-persons, often engaging in long-term informal contracts with small cultivators or more commonly other traders, to purchase stock when it is available, occasionally paying in advance of the harvest. Some also act as money-lenders for those in need. They buy in gross, rent a depot in the city, stock the produce for sale during a period when prices rise and are often assisted by intermediaries or employees. From the small farmer, to the driver of the camionnette, to the owner of the warehouse, or the official in charge of market space, these women establish regular transactions in a network referred to as pratik--clientel with which they have privileged relations

(Mintz 1964). These ties are established by making economic concessions, particularly in terms of price, quantity and credit. Traders must make concessions in price and quantity, and engage in prepurchase and postpurchase maneuvering (e.g., gifts) to create and solidify pratik relationships. The most successful of these women are those who devise strategies by which they can bypass other intermediaries and public marketplaces (taxes) in important transactions. The use of intermediaries also insures a source of supply and saves a great deal of crucial time.

Madan Sara have four classes of buyers including: mèt dépo, the owner of the storage depot; révadèz ; machan ti-panié, "little basket merchant" or ambulant small trader who sells door-to-door; and private consumers (Murray and Alvarez 1975). These women travel long distances, depending on their scope of transactions, by foot, on the back of mules, but most often by public transport within the country. Some purchase stock internationally by flying to Miami, San Juan, Puerto Rico, or Santo Domingo. Initiation in to these activities is mainly by other colleagues. Although most of these women are illiterate, they manage to cross borders and linguistic barriers in order to return to Port-au-Prince with suitcases, boxes, and baskets full of merchandise to be sold in local markets. As mentioned above, madan Sara rely heavily on some male intermediaries, suggesting that while limited and often indirect, men also play a role in the domain of marketing (Murray and Alvarez 1975).

First there are the mainly male sékrété, koutché and mèt dépo. The sékrété, is essentially a person who handles the capital of an intermediary and assists in the direction of the affairs of other persons. Sékrété are given money by the intermediary to operate in three different areas: the

regional sékrété buys stock regionally; the familial sékrété is a member of one's family who remains in the rural area to buy stock for the female intermediary; the traveling sékrété makes a tour of depots and nearby markets to buy stock. The koutché is a type of intelligence gatherer who reports on the location of produce or goods to the intermediary and arranges a transaction between the owner and the client. This person is not entrusted with money. The mèt dépo is an owner of a storage unit who seeks to purchase, for resale, the stock of people who use his depot. The mèt dépo later sells to révadèz or individual consumers.

Certain men are also involved in transportation (driver, money collector/arranger of passengers, and those who load and unload heavy goods). Men are also responsible for storage depots and the administrative tasks associated with markets such as policing and tax collection. Few women can afford storage in depots (exceptions are madan Sara and sellers of imported goods); most women who remain more than one day will guard their own produce by sleeping on burlap sacks beside their goods.

As for direct marketing activity, the processing and sale of meat is also normally a male task, although some women can be found selling meat in markets. Additionally, men, as well as women, sell imported goods in markets. It is also the prerogative of a man to sell his cash crop, cattle, or wood in bulk from the homestead. Generally, men use motorized vehicles or animals to get to market while women tend to carry produce on their heads (Locher 1975; Akman 1985). The loads in their baskets or trays vary in weight but most are very heavy.

Finally, there are male traders in export trade, but these activities are separated from the internal marketing

system on all levels (Locher 1975; Girault 1981). The spéculateur are middlemen who engage in the wholesaling of export crops. They have enough capital to speculate on price differentials over the year. Import-export commercial activities are also largely controlled by male 'foreigners', of European and Middle East descent.

Mainly, however, it is women who actively participate in marketing activities. Pacotilleuses, machan ti-panié, révadèz and madan Sara practise their commerce in markets, streets, on roadsides, at ceremonies, doors of business ventures, and in front of their homes. In this way, women find a source of revenue relatively stable but insufficient in the majority of cases (save for the madan Sara) to amass sufficient capital to permit them to invest and augment their commerce. This activity, however, has provided most women with the requisite basic skills to be potentially successful in commercial activities.

Coincidentally, decreasing agricultural productivity and the increasing importance of commercial activity has shifted power relations in rural households. The functions women fulfil in the economy and particularly in the financial affairs of Haiti, give them a potential power at different levels of society. The marketing system allows certain women to increase their status in the social system on an individual basis, rather than joint basis with their partner. Men, who have become assistants to successful female trading partners, find that their status is elevated on her rather than his success.

3.4 The Value of Labour Cooperation

The economic value of this form of female labour is formally recognized and codified in customary local

principles of conjugal property rights. Rights vary from region to region, locale to locale. At best, in stable, long-term unions, women's continuous domestic service is often recognized in their right to all wealth produced through agriculture or other productive activity of the man. In contrast, wealth produced through female commercial activity tends to remain the sole property of the women. This is regardless of the source of the original capital for commercial investment which can come from the male partner (Underwood 1960; Mintz 1964; Lowenthal 1984). Women who are successful commercially will occasionally invest in land or livestock but each partner has a limited ability to draw on each other's domain to subsidize his or her own.

In daily practice, the value of labour cooperation is widely recognized and extends beyond the conjugal pair. Labour cooperation can exist between mother and son, father and daughter, brother and sister and non-kin female and male individuals by formal agreement. While men labour in fields, build and repair houses, make furniture and engage in woodworking, weave (straw, rope), do leatherwork and iron work, women assist in field work, tend to all domestic duties including child care, do the marketing, process and prepare food for sale, engage in dressmaking and repairing clothing, and produce small household articles such as soap and brooms. Rural households are not fixed in terms of their personnel nor their internal organization.

3.4.1 Households in Rural Haiti

Adults and children change residences with relative frequency and ease, temporarily, semi-permanently or permanently. Households may be composed of: father, mother and their children plus children of either partner from other unions; father, mother and their children plus parents

of either or both, siblings of either, or one or more grandchildren; couples without children with other relatives of other siblings; one parent, temporarily separated, with children plus a grandparent, uncles and aunts, cousins; or incomplete families composed of widows and widowers, separated people, young men, plasé wives (in union with a man who has other unions) without children. Heads of households can be either sex and female-headed households may include a male mate. Within these possibilities the average number of inhabitants per household is seven (Comhaire-Sylvain 1961; Akman 1985).

Historically, family and social organization in rural Haiti was centered around the lakou, a compound consisting of several residences and outbuildings occupied by extended family members (Simpson 1942; Bastien 1961; Comhaire-Sylvain 1961). Extended family includes ascending and descending relatives of all degrees as well as the farthest removed collateral kin (sometimes even including adoptive family and godparents). Male heads, who had more than one socially acknowledged union, would sometimes allow the additional partners and their children to remain in the compound. More commonly, these plasé wives lived at some distance from the lakou tending other plots of the male partner's family land.

Ties in the lakou were strong due to the right of all kin to inheritance of the land. An adult woman, however, upon entering a union with a male partner, often left her habitation to live on his family's land. In this case, she delegated the care of her land to family members and her land might be shared collectively with her brothers for an agreed upon portion of the crop. If a land change such as a sale occurred, she could claim her part of the proceeds. A women could also elect to hire labour or to sharecrop with other male farmers. A man rarely moved to the property of

his female partner's family although some men would cultivate the female's land if the gardens were in close enough proximity and good relations existed with her kin.

The senior family member, or head of the lakou was generally male but Bastien (1961) found that the mèt, or head, could be female. This may have been because she was the widow of the mèt and her children were still minors. The head of the lakou had the most authority over the kingroup, to partition goods and land for cultivation amongst family members and often to act as intermediary between vodou loa and his family. At the death of the head of the lakou, all inheritors received some land but the eldest son received the most so as to insure his authority and power over the group. Generally, females had less status in the society. For example, they ate separately so they could serve men, they had fewer sexual privileges, and some were subject to socially-sanctioned beatings reserved for female partners (Simpson 1941; 1942; Comhaire-Sylvain 1961; Bastien 1961; Herskovits 1964).

After the American Occupation, the lakou began to disappear and adult individuals emancipated themselves from the extended family group to lead individual and independent lives. The authority of the eldest male decreased and, today, households of whatever combination of inhabitants may or may not have a male head. Yet, one presently finds that elementary and extended family are functioning units among rural farmers (Legerman 1975). Distribution and consumption of economic goods as well as the socialization process is normally regulated by rules underlying kin relationships. Furthermore, children still establish their identity whenever possible through the male parent due to the prevalence of patrilocality and the power invested in the male as head of the family.

Traditionally, because a woman often left her family land to live on the land of her male partner, her land could become of lesser importance to the new family unit. Furthermore, agricultural production in the strict sense became increasingly a male activity. With decreasing land availability but still according to custom, females tend to inherit land from their fathers but this is generally sufficient only for the construction of a home while males receive land sufficient to cultivate. In many instances, males covertly control the land occupied by their sister or female cousins. Women will leave family land to enter into union but upon loss of the union often return to their birth place.

Presently, at the death of the head of the household, there may be an equitable division of goods but property 'titles', or the more productive land, are commonly passed on to male family members. Customary rights are rarely questioned in the case of men. The absence of formal nuptial agreements and the cost of legal entanglement prevent many women from contesting property division after a death. Traditional customs of inheritance upon death or partition of land upon separation prevail. These customs, which favour men, have acted as a catalyst to the strong female exodus from rural areas where conditions are steadily worsening.

Inheritance laws have undergone change recently but have yet to be refined. These laws do not protect women in unions not legalized by marriage, which is 85% of unions in rural regions (Anglade 1986, 145). Additionally, women, in plase unions, referred to as fanm jadin or fanm an devo (occupying gardens in more isolated areas), frequently lose control over the land they may have helped cultivate for years, after the death of their partner. This is particularly true for those who have not borne children in

the union. When there are no children in the union, property often resorts back to the kin group. The rights of children to their father's land is significant in rural Haiti, hence relations of production are linked to the sexual domain.

3.5 The Sexual Domain

In sexual interaction, each sex employs strategies which reflect her or his own interests. Important differences of interest originate from the biological by-product of sexual relations as responsibility for children is not equal. Women tend to bear the major burden for childcare. While male children are left relatively free sexually, female children are closely observed as there are norms which prohibit sexual experience outside of unions, particularly for young women.

Women have on average six live births and breastfeeding is on average 18 months (Allman 1982). First conjugal union is calculated at 21.6, making Haitian adolescent fertility one of the lowest in Latin America (Allman 1982b, 239). High proportions of young rural women (15-24) are not in union and anthropological research suggests that these women do not have sexual relations (Bastien 1961; Allman 1982a; 1985). Conception is viewed as something beyond human control. It is something controlled by fate or God and many rural Haitians believe that evil forces are responsible for infertility (Stycos 1962). Generally, norms concerning appropriate family size seem almost non-existent and an inappropriate question for most rural Haitians, but Almann's study (1982b, 240) suggests that women desire an average total family size of three to four children. There is no gender preference.

Fertility is reduced not by the use of birth control

but by factors such as poor health and nutrition, venereal disease and social patterns, including the absence of adult males seeking work or in other unions. Women in unions without cohabitation have the lowest number of children and those in permanent unions the highest. At least one third of households are female-headed with no male consort in residence (Williams, Murthy, Berggren 1975, 1024). The tenuous nature of conjugal unions and considerable time spent by women out of active union (divorced, separated, widowed, single) combined with relatively late age at first entry into union have been suggested as important dampers on fertility (Williams, Murthy, Berggren 1975, 1030). Allman (1985) contests this view, as he found that while the proportion of women never in union is very high for women under 25, after 30 spinsterhood is uncommon. Furthermore, in spite of changes in partners and union types, women tend to remain in unions for extended periods. Once children are born, women's full participation in child care is assumed but the contribution of men will vary according to the type of union.

Couples having sexual relations on a fairly regular basis may be classified loosely into five different categories of union, rinmin, fiyansé, viv avèk, plasé, marvé all of which have high pregnancy risk (Allman 1985). In rinmin, a union which may lead to plasé, and in fiyansé, a union which may lead to marvé, partners do not cohabit and male economic support is slight. These unions are generally restricted to women under 25. Allman (1985) states that "...extra-residential mating is very common, and an almost universal practice in early unions among the vast majority of Haitian women (peasants and the lower class)".

The strongest unions, plasé and marvé are generally characterized by cohabitation and economic support for the

woman and her dependents. The male partner must undertake the cultivation of at least one garden plot for his female partner and provide cash resources sufficient to satisfy her immediate needs for daily consumption. Plaçage has a long history in Haiti and like marriage can be monogamous and stable. It is at least as common as marriage in Haiti and was originally chosen by most rural dwellers who: were suspicious of legal documents and civil officials; wanted to avoid the expense of weddings as well as the jealousy of neighbours who have not made the display; wished to avoid the influence of the State or Church to restrict partners; or wanted to compensate for a surplus of women (Leyburn 1941, 186-207). The weakest unions are viv avèk. Here partners do not cohabit and male economic support is insignificant. Generally less than 15% for all age groups are in these unions (Allman 1985).

In all forms of unions women often bear the major responsibility for children because male partners may be involved in more than one union. Men can be married with plase mates, have several plase mates, or have a plase union and viv avèk unions. Women in viv avèk unions may have more than one partner and this may also be the case for plase unions. Men are often absent from households because women outlive them or because of high rates of male out-migration. This means that male presence in the household is not necessarily guaranteed.

More men migrate to foreign countries, while more women migrate within Haiti. Twice as many women as men are involved in rural-urban migration (Anglade 1986, 149). Many women tend to move into Port-au-Prince from the countryside in search of job opportunities in light manufacturing industries, in assembly plants and in domestic work (DelaTour and Voltaire 1984; Locker 1984; Anglade 1986).

Rural women differ from urban women in several characteristics. In his fertility study, Allman (1982b, 238) discovered that there are differences in fertility rates for women in urban areas and rural areas (approximately four children compared to six for rural women). This difference exists even though the mean age at menarche for women is lower in an urban zone than rural areas: the percentage of women who had not yet had menses was 6.6% of 15-49 year olds in Port-au-Prince and 22.2% in rural areas (Allman 1982a, 352). In yet another study, Allman (1985, 36) found that for all age groups over 20 years old, women from urban areas are more likely not to have ever been in union than rural women: in urban areas 40% of the sample were never in union compared with 28% in rural areas and spinsterhood is somewhat more prevalent in urban areas for older women. In urban areas less than 30% of women compared to almost 50% of rural women are either plasé or marvé and the number of women no longer in union is especially high among urban women over 35 years (Allman 1985, 37). Urban women also spent shorter percentages of time in union than rural women.

Women generally have between one and four partners during their reproductive years and the interval between the end of one union and the beginning of the next may range from zero to several years (Allman 1985, 42). More than one-half of plasé unions in one study were second or third unions (Williams, Murthy, Berggren 1975). Movement between unions means that many rural women experience periods of time when they are solely responsible for families. It is not uncommon for Haitian women to become heads of households because either they are single, their partner has emigrated, or they are in the middle of a change of matrimonial status.

The instability of unions and the fact that women bear

the major responsibility for children means that women are more vulnerable than men in sexual transactions. Their vulnerability is magnified because their health is weakened by frequent pregnancies at rapid intervals. Additionally, many rural women work up to the moment before and immediately after the birth of the infant. This has led to a societal emphasis on women's dependence on men and on establishing paternity. Despite a complex reality of labour cooperation, a woman is "...entitled to material support from her mate in virtue of her sexuality, rather than in direct exchange for her own domestic and productive labor contributions to the conjugal unit" (Lowenthal 1984, 33). Commonly the notion of conjugality or union is expressed in terms of sexual exchange.

The ideal situation for most rural Haitians is a household where there are co-dependent partners and their offspring. In these households, a formal or informal contract exists based on an exchange of services. In these agreements, Lowenthal (1984, 22) explains that women's sexuality is explicitly linked with the productive activities of men and female sexuality is a women's most important economic resource: "...Chak fanm fèt ak von kawo tè--nan mitan janm-ni (Every woman is born with a kawo of land--between her legs). That is, her sexuality is comparable in value to a relatively large tract of land. Lowenthal found that women refer to their own genitals as interè-m (my assets), lajan-m (my money), and manmanlajan-m (my capital), a resource which can be exchanged for desired goods and services which men provide.

In principle, in these unions, the unique demand made of a woman is sexual fidelity, while men are expected to satisfy the basic needs of the woman which means to put her in a house and to establish some regular pattern of co-

residence (which may be partial). Specifically, there is an acute emphasis on women's sexual functions and fidelity as the source of her entitlement within the unit and not to the organization of labour relations. The result of this is an undervaluation of women's labour contributions to the domestic unit and consequently to her status within the society.

The emphasis on women's sexual functions and fidelity as her source of entitlement, and not the organization of labour relations, obviously has important implications for the status and relative power of women not only within the conjugal unit but also in society at large. Despite their active participation in all aspects of Haitian life, which often surpasses that of their male counterparts, women have been considered subordinate to men. This view, which was expressed by both men and women during the course of the study, was often used as explanation for women's absence from decision-making structures at cooperatives. It also explains the role of women in explicit political participation in the country at large.

3.6 Public Life

It is somewhat misleading to discuss 'rights' of a population where law scarcely touches their lives. Few women or men in the rural population have played an active part in formal public life. Yet, when local decisions have been taken, women's political role has been generally exercised indirectly through their influence on their male partners. This influence is not, however, to be underestimated.

Formerly, male and female rights were not equal. Women's rights were formally recognized with the right to vote in 1950 and eligibility to participate in municipale

elections in 1955. Full exercise of these civic rights, however, was only codified in the constitution of 1957. From this point on certain women have distinguished themselves as cabinet ministers. Until very recently, however, women remained relatively absent from explicit political activities. Exceptions to this rule include well-known women such as Madame Max Adolphe, a former mayor of Port-au-Prince and high officer in the Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale (Tonton Macoute) and Ertha Pascal-Trouillot. Additionally presidential wives have exercised enormous power through their husband's office. More recent historical examples include Simon Ovide Duvalier and Michele Duvalier.

During the period of my research, there were signs of a new awareness of women's social value and human rights throughout the country. Constitutional changes in 1987 have strengthened women's position in Haitian society and these were being supported by affirmative action programs undertaken by the Aristide administration. Under the Aristide administration women were slowly moving into the political arena.

Furthermore, there was a noticeable difference in women's attitudes prior to and after the official general election of 1991. Their comportment changed rapidly as they became more informed by the recently created rural radio network, community development workers, and literacy programs. With this new assurance and the support of the Aristide administration women were beginning to voice their ideas and opinions on local, regional and even national affairs. The speed at which women in Haiti are 'finding their voice' is undoubtedly enhanced by the respect Haitian women have traditionally held in society as managers of the entire domestic economy as well as other aspects of Haitian social life.

3.7 Summary

The gendered decision-making power in communities varies according to particular social formations and variation among individuals within these spacial structures. Generally, the division of labour favours men. Both women and men are involved in agricultural activities, including animal husbandry. In addition women have a multitude of other responsibilities (commercial activities, household management including domestic chores such as housekeeping, laundry, hauling water and foraging for firewood). The single household chore which is conventionally male is the gathering and cutting of heavy wood used for cooking and the construction and maintenance of the family dwelling. Furthermore, women bear the major responsibility for child care tasks.

Rural Haitians commonly separate male and female productive activities into two distinct domains. Food production is perceived as purely male work because male labour hours in the agricultural sector exceed female labour hours. Commercial activity is perceived as female work as marketing is almost exclusively a female activity. In reality, women play an essential role in agricultural production and the most important agricultural decisions are made by women. These decisions include crops to be produced, daily domestic consumption, and the division of the harvest for sale or private use. On the other hand, certain men play a role in rural commerce which, though more often indirect than direct, is nonetheless essential to the smooth operation of this domain. Moreover, the two domains are inextricably bound. It is clearly false to compartmentalize them. In rural areas all productive activities, agricultural and commercial, are closely coordinated as a large share of trading capital is derived from the sale of household garden

crops. The revenue derived from the production and sale of agricultural produce is shared by family members within certain limits (each partner has a limited ability to draw on each other's domain to subsidize his or her own). In categorizing the two domains as separate, however, there is a tendency to give more importance to male status and more social power to men, as few will contest the high social value that rural Haitians place on land and what it produces.

In my examination of the lives of women and men, and gender relations in rural Haiti, I came to realize that status, power and control are granted to individuals and gendered groups for a variety of reasons. Relations between the genders are complex, sometimes in harmony, other times in crisis depending on the issue at stake. There was no single rationale given for the prevalence of male supremacy in rural society but what became clear was that the influence of women is "...earned by hard work, while the man's strong position is guaranteed by tradition" (Nicholls 1985, 127).

I used the information provided in this chapter to assist my examination and analysis of relations between the genders in a system of cooperatives. In the following chapter, I describe the method or field techniques which were used for this research. In the examination of relations between the genders in the cooperatives questions revolved around two major themes. One line of questioning was used to extract information which clarified the nature of female and male involvement both at the general membership and administrative levels of these groups. The second line of questioning investigated means which would ensure that women have equal access to the development opportunities offered by the PCD Project.

Chapter Four

FIELD TECHNIQUES FOR GENDER RELATIONS RESEARCH

Introduction

In this chapter I describe the field techniques used to resolve the problematic where Haitian women are being moved to, or kept, at the periphery of one component of a country-wide development programme, a system of cooperatives (PCD Project). In principle, the PCD Project is based on social equity. In practice, involvement is not equal for female and male members. Specifically, women are being constrained by men from attaining positions of power on the administrative structures in most of the cooperatives.

I use the method to verify if gender relations are the factor causing inequitable opportunities for women and men in these associations. In the use of the field techniques I also critically examine the tensions, paradoxes and contradictions in relations between female and male members of these groups, and I explore strategies for change.

4.1 Background to the Cooperative Project

The cooperatives are receiving support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) as part of CIDA's country development programme. The Canadian International Development Agency announced on 13 September 1988 that all planning for government-to-government aid programs with Haiti would be terminated indefinitely due to the numerous coups and human rights abuses in this country (ACDI 1990). Since this time, CIDA has selected to channel aid to Haiti through Canadian and international non-governmental organizations and institutions, and

multilateral organizations. This program seeks to achieve a better balance among the goals of alleviating poverty, protecting human rights and promoting progress toward democracy in Haiti.

In 1990, projects of a cooperative nature accounted for nearly one third of the annual disbursements of the Haiti programme. CIDA's aid objectives are based on the following principles: to aid the poorest members of the population; to help people to help themselves; and to establish partnership between the two countries. According to Sicotte (1990, 31):

En rapport aux trois grands principes de l'aide canadienne il est bien-fondé de considérer le secteur coopératif haïtien comme un secteur potentiel de réalisation des objectifs du programme d'aide canadien.

The history of the cooperative movement in Haiti is recorded in an earlier study by Sicotte (1989) who suggests the movement originated in the year 1937 with the creation of an agriculture and artisanal cooperative at Sources Chaudes, Port-à-Piment, du Nord. This cooperative society was founded by a Haitian civil servant from the Ministry of Agriculture. The first savings and credit union was established by a curé in Vallée de Jacmel in 1946, fashioned (statutes, laws, committees) after the model of caisses populaires located in the province of Québec. Different versions of the story imply that the diffusion of these structures throughout the country was the responsibility of Catholic missionaries, Haitian laity, and/or Oblat priests.

The legality of these societies was officially recognized in legislation passed on the 22 April 1939 but future decrees concerning these societies suggest that the

state had no real interest in promoting them. Theoretically, there are no legal obstacles to the growth of a cooperative movement but in a Groupe d'Etudes en Développement study dated 1986, one found that of the 186 formally registered cooperatives created after 1954, less than one-third were still functioning. There were, however, at least 200 'pre-cooperatives' created after 1983 which had not yet obtained official recognition.

Most cooperatives in Haiti have been established with foreign financial and/or technical assistance. The Conseil National des Coopératives (CNC), established in 1974, has no real function. Like many Haitian governmental institutions, budgetary funds (when available) are allocated mainly to salaries with little revenue remaining for operation capital. Cooperative development has not been a state priority. For this reason, the precise situation of the cooperative movement has never been clear but, according to diverse sources, unofficial estimates place cooperative membership at about 40,000 persons. Of this number, most are located in the sectors of savings and agriculture. The remainder participate in artisanal, consumer, and irrigation associations. During the last decade, cooperatives represented about seven percent of coffee exports and ten to fifteen percent of cocoa exports, the former subsidized by United States Agency for International Development, the latter by the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (Sicotte 1989).

Data provided by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme in "Les femmes et leur participation dans le développement coopératif en Haiti", février 1991, show that the number of cooperatives in Haiti has tripled between 1980 and 1990. One-third of these groups have been established since 1987. Since this

time, the formal participation of women in these groups has increased.

The Programme de Cr dit au D veloppement R publique d'Haiti (PCD) was one component of Canada's international aid package to this country. The broad goal of the PCD Project is to augment the contribution of the cooperative sector to Haiti's economic development. Specifically, the program gives support to a network of credit unions and agricultural cooperatives in targeted regions of the north with a view to developing, strengthening and integrating their activities. At the time of contact, the PCD Project had been in operation for one year. The associations chosen to participate in the PCD Project were previously-established groups which were in need of restructuring, training and funding. In the first year of operation, the PCD Project has focused mainly on training members and administrators in cooperative rules and procedures.

Formally-structured cooperatives such as those involved in the PCD Project are an aberrant form of social organization in rural Haiti. Without international support it is doubtful if most of these associations would continue to exist on their own. Yet despite the numerous drawbacks of these groups (e.g., poorly trained management and staff, little or no standardized accounting procedures including statistical accountability, misappropriation of funds, marginal role in the economy), cooperatives in Haiti can serve to structure grassroot communities and offer an opportunity for self-development. Additionally, because cooperatives are based on concepts such as open and voluntary membership, democratic control, non-exploitation, equitable sharing of gains and losses, and mutuality, I found them to be an interesting and useful context in which to examine relations between women and men.

4.2 Field Techniques

In December, 1990, the second period of research commenced. In this research period I used two methods of inquiry. First, I used formal questionnaires to extract information both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The use of questionnaires enabled me to standardize and verify the subjective knowledge collected from female and male respondents (perceptions and intentions).

Second, to gain a significant understanding of the conflict and tension in gendered relations in the cooperatives, I engaged in interactive discussion meetings with a suitable group sample of the participant population. With this interactive approach, I was able both to understand and to initiate change in the current state of affairs. In the research I focused on the locus where the lives of women and men intersect in the cooperatives.

The most significant aspect of the method used to examine the locus of tension between women and men in the cooperatives concerned my active involvement in the interviewing process. Action research is particularly important as this method allows the researcher and the participants to focus on the dynamics of the gender relations process, to discuss the practical consequences of their actions, and to become involved in creative resolution of the conflict.

In this approach, field techniques must be performed in a manner which respects all participants and creates good conditions for mutual understanding and consensus between individuals coming from different societies. The successful use of the field techniques is directly related to levels of

human confidence and trust. I decided, therefore, that all communication with participants in this study would be: a) in the local language Créole; and b) with a national interpreter with whom they could enjoy a familiar rapport. (I am familiar with local customs in the Département du Nord, as I have worked in this general area periodically for almost a decade. Before the research began, I studied Créole intensively to improve my use of the language).

In December and January of 1991, I familiarized myself with the details of the cooperative associations, including all data previously collected on these organizations. As well, a preliminary draft of the questionnaire and general outline of research strategies were realized.

A month was allocated to the collection of data but first a week was spent on organizational activities necessary to prepare for the study and for briefing the national interpreter. All tasks and responsibilities for the fieldwork were clearly defined and divided between the two women on the team. Additionally, this period was used to discuss and rework the questionnaire, and translate it into Créole. One day was allocated to pre-test the questionnaire with a small selection of randomly chosen members. After this experience, certain questions were re-worded and additional questions were added mainly to clarify a subject being explored.

For example, the sole question pertaining to responsibility for children was changed to two questions. To understand fully the nature and consequences of female fertility it was necessary to ask: "How many children have you made" and "How many children do you have"? This subdivision clarifies energy and time expended in child bearing, and energy and time allocated to child rearing as

many children "made" are lost during pregnancy or before a year of age. Likewise, the literacy question had to be more subtle and explicit. This question was changed from "What level of schooling do you have" to "Do your children go to school"; "Did you have a chance to go to school"; (if yes) "What class did you finish in"; "Can you read and write"? Additionally, several questions concerning participation in the associations had to be managed in a manner which would expose the exact nature of the involvement of members. For example, in order to ascertain women's contributions to decision taking at the cooperatives, the question "Do women participate in the management and administration of the cooperative" was changed to "The president is a man, likewise the vice-president, why are there no women in these roles" or "why do women rarely occupy these positions" (if there was an experience of a female president or vice-president)?

The survey population included members of seven credit associations and six agricultural cooperatives associated with the project, in the Département du Nord (Figure 4.1). The credit groups were situated in the general vicinity of the following villages: Milot, Port Margot, Pilate (2), Carrefour-des Pères, Carice, Cap Haitien. The agricultural associations were located in the general vicinity of the following villages: Plaisance, Pilate, Dondón, Dosmond, Mont-Organisé and Carice (Figure 4.1).

The sample population was chosen from cooperative members according to the following strategy. Membership lists were secured from each cooperative association and these were sub-divided into female and male. Irrespective of the numerical importance of female and male members, equal numbers of respondents were chosen randomly from each sub-list. A random sample of 78 respondents, three female and

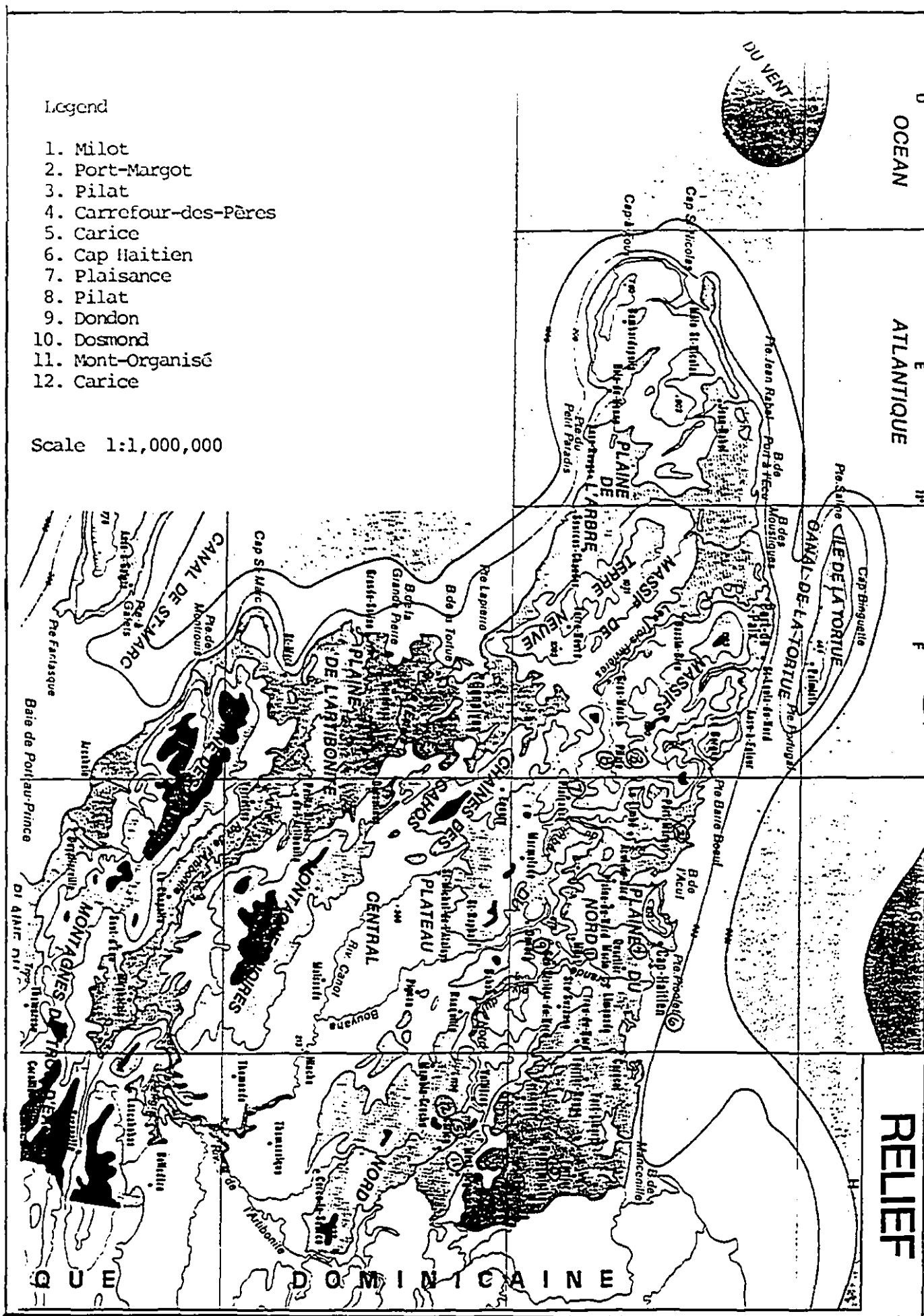


Figure 4.1 Location of Cooperatives

three male members from each association, was chosen for the administration of the questionnaire.

Additionally, several 'spares' of each sex were selected by the same random method, because membership lists are not 100% accurate. Membership lists are always in transition, new members join weekly, some leave the association, migrate to other areas, or leave the country permanently. Finalizing the list of respondents took several days and nights as lists had to be obtained, handwriting deciphered, and certain names verified as to sex. Furthermore, the subdivision of sometimes more than 1,000 names into sexual categories was time consuming.

It was left to the leaders of each group to situate respondents as area address is not specified on membership lists. Major assistance and strong support for the programming of daily activities was provided by presidents and various council members of each association. A project assistant/chauffeur, familiar with the region, transported the team to and from the different localities of the zone of intervention and he was very helpful in locating individuals and residences and in securing the confidence of our respondents.

A second group, of 83 respondents was chosen according to the following instructions which were enclosed in a letter delivered to the administration of each cooperative association (see Créole version Appendix A).

Advise the three women and three men on the list provided that we will visit them at their home in the morning or early afternoon (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) of _____;

If a woman or a man is not available or not willing to participate voluntarily, please chose a substitute from the second list provided. Begin at the top of the list of 'spares' and go down the list until you secure three female and three male respondents.

Provide a precise description of the location of the residence of all respondents selected for the study.

In the late afternoon of the same day, we will meet with the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer of the cooperative association.

We would like the President to invite two women, who are active members of the cooperative, to join us for this meeting. (Choose two women who are not on the lists of respondents.)

Please advise the four (4) council members and two female members (who are invited guests) of this meeting and arrange a place for this meeting.

The letter also contained a brief explanation of the objective of the study as well as an expression of our appreciation for the assistance provided.

Fourteen days were originally allocated for one-day visits to each cooperative associated with the project. This was reduced by a day when a decision was taken to remove one association from the study, an agricultural cooperative at Dondon which ignored repeated requests to submit the required membership list.

4.3 Data Collection

In the case study, I explore the possibility that gender relations are causing unequal opportunities for women and men in the cooperative development programme. In the examination of relations between the genders I ask a series of questions which a) clarify the nature of female and male participation both at the general membership and administrative levels of these groups and b) suggest means which will ensure that women have equal access to the development opportunities offered by the PCD Project. The responses to these questions provided information related to the ideologies, institutions, structures and practices that were creating and reproducing unequal ability to participate in the cooperatives, and oppressive power relations for female members. In the group sessions, the tensions, paradoxes and contradictions in relations between female and male members of these groups were critically examined and strategies for change explored.

Data collection consisted of the following steps:

- i) the administration of questionnaires

A brief questionnaire (see Appendix B) containing questions structured to respond to the concerns outlined in the objectives was administered in Créole to six respondents, three female members and three male members from each cooperative association. Respondents were generally, but not always (especially those of some distance from the village), forewarned of the visit. No one received a copy of the questionnaire beforehand.

The team left Cap Haitien around 6:00 p.m. daily in order to arrive at the destination, a pre-designated meeting

place in the specific village, before 8:00 p.m. A member of the administration of the cooperative association provided a guide who could help us locate our respondents. Mainly, respondents were surveyed at their residences. On several occasions, however, it was necessary to interview respondents at other places such as the market, food stand, ti-boutik, or work site. Some respondents could only be reached by footpath. As this was a drier season, we were able to cross river beds easily which is not the case during the rainy season when some of the rivers are impassable. Due to the time constraint, it was necessary to meet certain respondents, who lived more than one hour from the village (which meant more than a two-hour walk), in the village. Persistence in locating the 78 chosen respondents was fruitful as we had a near-perfect return rate. Seventy-seven questionnaires were fully administered. Towards the end of the study, heavy rains in the region made travelling more difficult (slower) and prevented access to selected respondents. Certain residents were inaccessible for the day as footpaths were dangerously slippery. For this reason, we had to return to one area a second day.

Generally, the interview took from 45 minutes to one hour. The interpreter administered the questionnaire while I recorded responses and guided the interview when necessary. I have sufficient working knowledge of Créole to understand most oral communication, particularly when it is topic specific. If I wanted something clarified or I had a new insight, I would instruct the interpreter to continue the discussion in a non-structured manner until I was satisfied we had sufficiently covered the topic. This generally occurred when respondents began to repeat themselves or demonstrated disinterest in further conversation.

The information gathered fulfilled two functions. It contributed to an association and membership profile and it was used to assist the second stage of the research procedure.

ii) informal meetings

A meeting was held separately with each credit union and cooperative associated with the project in a pre-selected site in the village. The only exception was the credit association in Carice as the administrators failed to attend two pre-arranged meetings (group in transition). Credit union meetings were mainly held in school or church facilities. Agricultural cooperative meetings were held at the cooperative itself which allowed me to examine the infrastructure, facilities and certain activities before the meeting. In this way, general pre-prepared questions became more specific.

At these sessions, participants included some members of the administration (predominantly male), and at least two women who were active members of the cooperative, as well as the two-women team. As we anticipated at the onset, it was necessary to allow limited changes to both the composition of participants and the discussion format in order to accommodate local customs which are less formal.

For example, on occasion an additional woman or two, who were not on the administration nor part of the two previously invited guests, but were anxious to participate, joined the group. Additional male members were not allowed to join the group spontaneously because males already outnumbered females on the administrative and management structures. Generally, formalities at meetings, such as who spoke when and how much, changed according to local custom.

The discussion format was carefully structured to access information in a manner which respected all participants.

The interpreter animated all council meetings. I coordinated and directed the discussion both indirectly, through her, and directly once sufficient trust was created at the meeting. I simultaneously recorded in writing responses to questions and other relevant observational-type information.

At these meetings, I first collected information about the involvement of female members and male members in the cooperative. Then, with the participation of all present at the meeting, we discussed the difference in the roles played by women and men. I was able to guide this discussion in a manner whereby I could standardize and verify responses during this informal discussion because I had been informed beforehand of the situation by individual female and male respondents.

Through this discussion the current state of relations between female and male members of the cooperative was more clearly understood. I then used systematic reasoning and exposition to juxtapose the power dynamic in relations between the genders in cooperatives with opposed or contradictory facts from the reality of their day-to-day lives. I was able to isolate these contradictions because I was well informed about the value placed on labour cooperation and female contributions to rural life from the first period of my field research. Finally, we discussed means by which tension and opposition to equal participation by women could be achieved.

The information collected at these meetings illuminated the subject under study particularly once I was able to

initiate the dynamic discourse between female and male members. The meetings were held at the end of the day after the administration of individual questionnaires and lasted a minimum of two hours. In general, we were told participants enjoyed the meetings and several invited us back for another session. At two locales, however, where the discussion became tense because the male leaders did not favour having their authority questioned, it was necessary to resolve the conflict as amicably as possible and discontinue direct discussion between female and male members. On these occasions, I used less direct techniques to gather the necessary information. That is, I implicated myself more in the discussion and had members speak directly to or 'through' me rather than having female and male members confront one another.

The remaining days were used to accomplish the third procedure.

iii) return visits

Return visits to selected female participants of the discussion meetings were made one to two weeks after the initial meetings in order to discuss changing insights on the issues brought forth in the first session. The information gathered in this manner allowed me to become informed about creative after-thoughts and contributions from casual conversations which occurred after the meeting between respondents and other women in the community. It was also an opportunity to learn about the possible repercussions initiated by our discussions.

Surprisingly, in my opinion, repercussions were mainly positive, particularly where the discussions had been most heated. Additionally, it was not uncommon for other members

(mostly male) who saw us in the village to stop us for an informal conversation. The two issues which surfaced in all these conversations were: 1) that respondents (at the general membership and administrative levels) felt they had been given a chance to 'speak up' without reservation; and 2) that part of their level of comfort derived from the fact that all conversation was in Créole.

Throughout the research process, including processing of data, all procedures were critically examined with the goal to eliminate bias based on sex. Data were collected and interpreted according to gender difference and all effort was made to avoid the use of a double standard in my interpretation of data. Finally, throughout the enactment of the study and in my analysis of the information I accepted biological variables of sex as only one among several explanatory variables for social behaviours. I admit, however, that the objective of the study is in itself a sex bias.

The data were reviewed, processed and formalized into text during the months of April, May and June 1991. The information collected from the members of the two cooperative networks, the participants at the informal discussion meetings, and the selected individuals from the return visits is presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5

WHERE THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND MEN INTERSECT

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze relations between the genders in the cooperatives. In the investigation of the political territory where the lives of female and male members in the cooperatives intersect, I discover how and why a system of gender-based social power (gender relations) causes unequal opportunities for female members in the cooperative development programme. I then explore possibilities for more equitable involvement by all members in the cooperatives.

I begin with a description of the social composition of the cooperatives. I then present a documentation of the involvement of female and male members in cooperative functions and discuss the meaning of this involvement. This is followed by a review of the information collected concerning a major conflict of interest by gendered individuals pertaining to power positions in the cooperatives. The mechanisms which cause oppressive conditions for women are examined and analyzed. Finally, these mechanisms are juxtaposed with the reality of day-to-day life in rural Haiti and strategies for change are reported.

5.1 Social Composition of Cooperatives

A general profile of female and male members in the two cooperative networks is revealed by a synthesis of the information provided by approximately 160 members. Of these, 77 (39 female, 38 male) were questioned privately on an

individual basis (Questionnaire Appendix B, Section of Introduction, general questions). The remainder were queried as participants at the informal meetings (Questionnaire Appendix B, Section 4, 1.5)

It was found that there are neither major structural barriers nor institutional constraints to membership by interested individuals in the cooperatives associated with the PCD Project. Membership in the credit unions is divided equally between women and men, and female membership in the agricultural cooperatives is steadily increasing. Presently, when compared to men, women are not as well represented in the agricultural cooperatives as the credit unions either at the general membership or administrative levels (Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Traditionally, the agriculture cooperatives have limited their focus to aspects related to male activities in this sector. Men dominate these associations. Those agriculture cooperatives which are shifting their traditional emphasis from coffee to the production, marketing and processing of other crops such as beans and corn, and with a mandate to include female-related agricultural tasks, are attracting more female members. The two cooperatives that continue to retain a strong paternalistic structure are not seen as interesting to potential female members. One cooperative, which has been recently re-structured and is perceived by members as a particularly democratic institution has more female than male members (Table 3).

Rights to membership and an increase in female membership cannot be equated to representation on power structures. There is male control over the administration of most these associations. In the credit union network (Tables

Table 5.1
Credit Unions according to Membership

Caisse Populaire	Membres (individus)	Femmes	Hommes	Femmes (% du total)	Hommes (% du total)
Leve Kanpe à Milot	244	129	115	53%	47%
La Renaissance à Port-Margot	93	47	46	51%	49%
L'Espérance à Pilat	87	44	43	51%	49%
L'Avenir à Carrefour-des-Pères	257	117	140	46%	54%
Saint-Hélène à Carice	799	396	403	50%	50%
Fraternité à Cap Haitien	206	117	89	57%	43%
Total	1686	850	836	50%	50%

Table 5.2
Credit Unions according to Administration

Caisse Populaire	Conseil d' administration		Conseil de surveillance		Conseil du crédit		% du total	
	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H
Leve Kanpe à Milot	1	4	3	0	2	1	55%	45%
La Renaissance à Port-Margot	2	4	-	-	-	-	33%	67%
L'Espérance à Pilat	3	1	1	2	0	3	40%	60%
L'Avenir à Carrefour- des-Pères	0	3	1	2	1	2	22%	78%
Saint-Hélène à Carice	1	8	0	3	2	1	20%	80%
Fraternité à Cap Haïtien	2	5	1	2	1	2	31%	69%
Total	9	25	6	9	6	9	33%	67%
% du total	26%	74%	40%	60%	40%	60%		

Table 5.3
Agriculture Cooperatives according to Membership

Coopérative Agricole	Membres (individus)	Femmes	Hommes	Femmes (% du total)	Hommes (% du total)
Bassin Clair à Plaisance	75	41	34	55%	45%
L'Espérance à Pilat	1600	530	1070	33%	67%
Gabart le Vaillant à Dondon	369	76	293	21%	79%
Perpétuel-Secours à Dosmond	119	48	71	40%	60%
Frères Unis à Mont-Organisé	324	84	240	26%	74%
Sainte-Hélène à Carice	509	203	306	40%	60%
Total	2996	982	2014	33%	67%

Table 5.4
Agriculture Cooperatives according to Administration

Coopérative Agricole	Conseil d' administration		Conseil de surveillance		Conseil du crédit		% du total	
	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H
Bassin Clair à Plaisance	0	4	2	3	-	-	22%	78%
L'Espérance à Pilat	2	2	1	2	2	1	50%	50%
Gabart le Vaillant à Dondon	0	5	0	3	0	2	0%	100%
Perpétuel- Secours à Dosmond	2	9	0	3	-	-	14%	86%
Frères Unis à Mont-Organisé	1	10	-	-	-	-	9%	91%
Sainte-Hélène à Carice	1	4	1	2	1	2	27%	73%
Total	6	34	4	13	3	5	20%	80%
% du total	15%	85%	24%	76%	38%	62%		

1 and 2) where total membership is divided equally between women (50%) and men (50%), women are clearly under-represented at the administrative level in all but one of these associations. Excluding this one exception, which is a unique case, the average female composition at the administration level is eighteen percent (18%) in the five remaining groups.

This is likewise the situation in the agriculture cooperative network (Tables 3 and 4) where women compose one-third (33%) of total membership but the female composition at the administrative level is nine percent (9%) in five of the six groups.

While there are no specific barriers to entry in the cooperatives associated with this project, there appears to be a self-selection among individuals who become actively involved in these formal cooperative associations.

All female members of the cooperatives are involved in some form of commerce. In contrast, however, to female members of the agricultural cooperative who all worked in gardens and at small commerce in the markets, some female members of the credit unions were managing small stores (ti boutiks). Several were seamstresses or teachers. Similarly, most men in the agricultural cooperatives were occupied with gardens and livestock while men in the credit union network were more commonly employed as carpenters, masons, technicians, teachers, or tailors.

As for the credit unions, in general, they seem to be more attractive to female and male individuals who live in the nearest village or urban center and who seek productive work in the formal or informal sectors. Their links to family land tend to be more indirect. Many agriculture

cooperative members have insufficient assets to engage in financial arrangements, such as credit unions, which involve relatively long-term saving plans. Integrating more of the explicitly farming population in these savings and credit groups depends on the success of the agriculture cooperatives in informing and training their members.

Female membership in the cooperative networks appears to be inversely related to women's major responsibility for children. That is, membership increases as child duties decrease. The average age of female members of both networks is 47, within an age range of 23 to 80 years in the credit union network and an age range of 27 to 75 in the agricultural cooperative network. The mean age of female members in the credit union network is higher (48) than in the agricultural cooperative network (44). The mean age of women at the birth of their first child is 23 for credit union members and 22 for agricultural cooperative members. The average number of children per female respondent of both networks was five (5).

In comparison to female members, male members of the credit union network are on average younger (41), while male members of the agricultural cooperatives are on average older (57). The mean age of male members in the credit union network is much lower (38) than in the agricultural cooperative network (57). Men in the credit unions had on average three (3) children and men in the agricultural cooperatives had on average six (6) children.

Specifically, we notice that participation is higher amongst older women in the credit union network, where the mean age of females members is much higher (48) than that of male members (38). A significant minority of relatively older women deliberately opt out of permanent unions and

depend instead on the labour of their adolescent sons or wage labour for any engagement they want to retain in agricultural production. They then devote their own time to commercial activities. Female independence from unions is greater for women in urban areas.

Literacy appears to be a factor of importance to membership in these associations and illiteracy is less common in the credit union network. Rates of illiteracy, however, are not nearly as uniform as national statistics suggest. Rates of illiteracy for members varied by network and by sex. Illiteracy rates for members in the credit union network (33% for women and 24% for men) are much lower than in the agricultural cooperative network (56% for women and 59% for men).

5.2 Involvement by Members in Cooperative Functions

Individual respondents were asked to clarify the nature of involvement (female/male) in their particular credit union or agriculture cooperative association at the membership and administrative levels. They were asked a series of questions (Section I, 1.0 Questionnaire Appendix B) pertaining to: length of personal membership, rules of adherence to the association, training procedures, responsibility for training, participation at meetings, elections for administrative posts, participation in election procedures. They were also asked about the general nature of female and male participation in the association at the management (Section I, 1.2,) and membership level of the credit unions (Section 2, 2.2) and agriculture cooperatives (Section 3, 3.1).

At the time of the study, the PCD Project was in its second year and organizations were undergoing major re-

structuring. In the first year, attention was focused on the organization and operation of these institutions. Administrative policies and procedures were being redefined and members were being trained for participation at both the general and management levels. This period was also used to assess the needs (operation capital, accounting materials, equipment such as trucks and grinders, as well as additional infrastructure such as ti-boutiks).

Questions, therefore, pertaining to participation focused mainly on involvement in training sessions, and at meetings, including in voting procedures. Additionally, attention was given to understanding the general role of women and men in the management and administration of the cooperatives. The existing situation of members in each cooperative association associated with the PCD Project is documented below. The inconsistency in information presented for each cooperative is related to the level of functioning of these groups. Some cooperatives were in full operation while others were still undergoing restructuring.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE LEVE KANPE, MILOT

a) GENERAL COMMENT

Women constitute 53% of the 244 individual members in this credit union. Additionally, there are eleven associations. Only one woman, however, is a member of the five-person administrative council. On the other hand, five of the six positions on the surveillance and credit councils are occupied by female members. A man is president of the credit council.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

In contrast to male members who apprehended the particulars of credit union procedures, female members admitted that their comprehension of the operations of the credit union is weak. For both, however, attendance at meetings and participation in elections was irregular. One woman described meetings as "noisy" because "many people ask questions and there are lots of discussions". She added that they are "always telling women what to do". Later in our conversation she allowed that when she does not understand certain issues, people took the time to explain them to her. Another woman described her experience at meetings thusly: "she listens but she neither understands nor remembers what she hears". She admitted that although she used the credit union, she really had no understanding of the rules.

c) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

All members concurred that many women belong to the credit union. One woman elucidated that women would partake more actively "if they were more economically independent".

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE LA RENAISSANCE, PORT-MARGOT

a) GENERAL COMMENT

This credit union has a total current membership of 93 which is almost evenly split between women (47) and men (46). Men form two-thirds of the administrative council. The president and one councillor are women.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

Only one member, who was a past-president, stated that

he was well versed on credit union rules. Most respondents were not comfortable with the instruction they received before becoming members of this credit union. Additionally, many mentioned that their attendance at meetings was sporadic. One female member admitted that even when she does go, she does not participate in discussions "because she has a poor understanding of the issues".

c) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

One women, who no longer partakes in credit union activities, told us that she lost interest because she was confused by the rules. She would ask for clarification and "one person would tell her one thing and another person would give her different information". Several members suggested that many women in the community do not join because they are not well informed about the function of the credit union.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE L'ESPERANCE, PILATE

a) GENERAL COMMENT

In this credit union, total members number 87 and membership is divided almost equally between women (44) and men (43). Administrative duties are apportioned as follows: women occupy three of the four seats on the administrative council and there is one woman on the three-member surveillance council. All three posts on the credit council are held by men.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

All members understand the principles and rules of the credit union. They attend meetings regularly and vote at

elections every three years.

c) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

Women are as interested in the credit union as men because "many women here are in commerce". This village is relatively more developed, in terms of infrastructure, than other cooperative locations and has an active business community. Women are major players in commercial activities in the village. They are familiar with financial procedures and in need of investment capital for their business transactions.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE DE L'AVENIR, CARREFOUR-DES-PERES (KPAK)

a) GENERAL COMMENT

Individual membership in this credit union is 257. There are 117 female members (46%) and 140 male members (54%). Additionally, there are 45 associations. The administrative council is 100% male dominated. Representation on the credit and surveillance councils is two-thirds male.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

Generally, members are not well-informed as to the functioning of the credit union and many admitted that they misunderstood the rules when they joined. Several stated, for example, that when they were unable to obtain loans "they felt deceived because they had not realized that the credit union only lends money on the amount in your book". Due to this feeling of deception, participation at meetings has decreased for most members. Elections occur according to the rules and one respondent said that the council changes

with each election.

c) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

Members explained that women's initial enthusiasm dampened because there is no more money to borrow. According to one female respondent, "women are discouraged because the information they received from the leaders at the beginning about the system of loans does not match what they see happening now".

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE SAINTE-HELENE, CARICE (KPSEK)

a) GENERAL COMMENT

The total individual membership of 799 is evenly distributed between women and men. There are also 35 member associations. On the administrative council, men occupy eight of the nine designated positions. All positions on the surveillance council are held by male members as is the post of president on the credit council. Women fill the two remaining places on the latter council.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

The magnitude, heterogeneity, and geographic spread of the membership is reflected in the disparate involvement of members in the activities of the credit union. One male member told us that he was well-informed regarding credit union procedures while other men implied that their comprehension of the rules, regulations and activities of the credit union was inadequate even though they attended meetings. Female members indicated that they had received some basic instruction concerning the system of savings and loans but their attendance at meetings was infrequent.

According to one woman, the administration "only invites people who can afford to deposit and borrow large quantities of money". There was a divergence in responses concerning the system of elections but most members suggested that the voting process was inauthentic.

c) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

The numerical importance of female membership is an obvious expression of women's fundamental interest in the functions of the credit union. The responses we received from several female members, however, suggested that for many women there is little follow up after this initial step.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE FRATERNITE, CAP HAITIEN (CPU)

a) GENERAL COMMENT

Total membership is 206 of which 117 (57%) are female members and 89 (43%) are male members. Five of the seven positions on the council of administration are held by men. The secretary and one councillor are female. Men occupy two out of three seats on both the credit and surveillance councils.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

All members displayed a good comprehension of the operations of the credit union. Attendance at meetings differed by sex. For women, participation was occasional; for men it was frequent. One female respondent volunteered that all members are encouraged to assist at meetings where issues are openly discussed. Elections are held according to democratic voting procedures.

c) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

By all accounts, many women in the area are eager to become members of this financial institution. One woman related that she was induced to join by her husband who demonstrated to her the advantages of membership in the credit union.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DE BASSIN CLAIR (CUCOC), PLAISANCE

a) GENERAL COMMENT

A recent list indicates that women account for 55% of the total of 75 members. The decision-making structures, however, do not reflect the composition by sex of the general membership. Men occupy all four positions on the administrative council and the five positions on the lower councils are divided among three men and two women.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

All respondents had received informal cooperative training. Women said there are no impediments to their full participation at meetings. All members are familiar with democratic voting procedures.

c) ACTIVITIES AT THE COOPERATIVE

All work is voluntary. Women fill bags with earth, and water the seedlings which the men plant. In the cooperative garden, the men prepare the soil; both women and men plant, weed, and harvest. Both put coffee in sacks. Together they discuss what to do with the crop.

d) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

Presently, many women in the community are expressing an interest in joining the cooperative as it has become popular for people to met tet ansam (participate in cooperative action). In order to increase female membership, they suggested having a campaign to motivate women and to educate them in cooperative values. They said that women can be recruited just by "explaining the positive aspects of collaboration and proving its value through successful cooperative activities".

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DE L'ESPERANCE (COCAES), PILAT

a) GENERAL COMMENT

Recorded membership is approximately 1600. Male membership (1070) doubles that of female membership (530). The four positions on the council of administration, however, are split 50\50 between women and men. Additionally, the surveillance council consists of a female president and two males while the credit council has two women (one of whom is president) and one man.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

Female members (both long and short-term) do not remember receiving cooperative information. They are not active members and one felt it was impossible to change some members of the administration who "stay there always". Some male members were only somewhat informed, while others were very well informed on cooperative rules. The longer-term male members were more knowledgeable about the concept and activities of the cooperative. They suggested that elections are held every three years and everyone can vote.

c) ACTIVITIES AT THE COOPERATIVE

Generally, we were told the cooperative is there just to market coffee and one member remembered a time when the cooperative gave seeds to members. Some respondents confused credit union activities for those of the cooperative. Interest in the cooperative seems to have waned since the demise of the CCH (Centrale caf ti re haitienne) and cooperative activities have temporarily come to a halt. According to certain members the cooperative only encourages men. One member summed this up saying: "All the activities are controlled by men and women do nothing."

d) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

One man said he favoured having many female members in the cooperative because "if a man is stuck he can count on the woman". In order to increase the participation of women it was suggested that members would have to invite other women in the community to meetings.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DE GABART LE VAILLANT (CACGAVA),
DONDON

a) GENERAL COMMENT

Total recorded membership is 369 of which 293 (79%) are male members and 76 (21%) are female members. The administrative council consists of seven positions all held by men. Men also occupy positions on the two lower councils.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

Women generally do not have much cooperative training

and do not seem to be actively involved in meetings. One long-term member explained that she no longer attends meetings because they were "a waste of time". Another long-term member has never attended a meeting because her husband always goes and he tells her what has been discussed. A third woman, who took over her husband's share about three years ago when he died, said she goes to meetings occasionally and knows a lot about the cooperative but she has never voted and is not sure what this would entail. The men, on the other hand, seem to actively participate at meetings, are familiar with cooperative rules and have voted in the past. While some members said that the board never changes, others said some council members have changed. The general impression given by members of both sex is that discussion is only theoretically open at meetings for "although everyone can talk, this does not change anything". Another added that "there are cooperative rules but they are ignored." We are told that decisions are made by the administration and "if people do not agree they threaten to kick you out". A long-standing male member confided that in the past decade he knows certain members of the Board of Administration who have been "forced to resign under threat of life."

c) ACTIVITIES AT THE COOPERATIVE

There were major discrepancies in the responses to this question. This can, in part, be explained by the length of time one has been a member and the level of participation in cooperative affairs. Some women told us that the cooperative operates only as a marketing structure for coffee. Certain male members, however, said that the cooperative received foreign assistance for the purchase of four hectare of land on which they grow corn and beans. According to one member the garden is only for men. Women provide food for the

workers. Two other members, one woman and one man say that women also work in gardens at the cooperative. A similar but alternate story is that the cooperative used this foreign money to buy land for a nursery but "as few members have enough money to buy plants only the big shots have an opportunity to use this facility". Some say that credit is available to members with sufficient funds in the cooperative.

d) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

Primarily it is single women who attend cooperative meetings. Among married couples, it is usually the husband who participates "for both". Women, here, frequently become members when they inherit shares from a deceased father or husband. It is suggested female participation could be increased if members walked from house to house and talked to women about the cooperative.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE PERPETUEL-SECOURS de DOSMOND
(CAPESEDO)

a) GENERAL COMMENT

Membership has stablized at about 119 members, 40% of which are women. The membership breakdown by sex is not reflected in the composition of the decision-making structures. Men dominate the administrative, surveillance and credit councils. One position on the credit council is occupied by a woman.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

Female members who have recently joined the cooperative indicate that they know the rules and participate at

meetings. They have not yet had an opportunity to vote. One female member of a few years stated that she spoke out so often at meetings "they asked her to become a member of the council." The male members were well-versed in cooperative training. They frequently or always attended meetings and all had participated in elections.

c) ACTIVITIES AT THE COOPERATIVE

Members told us that all work was voluntary at this cooperative, which functions today primarily as a marketing centre for peanuts and corn. Members of either sex bring their crop to sell to the cooperative. The owner dries, sacks, weighs, and stacks in piles her\his own produce. The manager, a male member, supervises these activities. Men plan the meetings. Women sweep the floor and tidy the rooms. Only the watchman receives a salary.

d) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

Many women have recently joined this cooperative and many more are watching its progress and considering becoming members. One newer female member was especially enthusiastic about the cooperative and she has encouraged others to join. Some suggested that more women could be recruited by a door-to-door campaign in which women would be invited to attend a course in cooperative training.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DES FRERES UNIS de MONT-ORGANISE
(CAFUMO)

a) GENERAL COMMENT

Today's pre-dominantly male membership (74%) totals 324. Men hold virtually all the positions on the various

councils despite the presence of 84 female members in the cooperative. One women retains a post as counsellor.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

All members, female and male, in the sample population were informed about cooperative principles and activities. Two respondents, one female and one male were past presidents. All members interviewed participate actively at meetings which are held bi-monthly and they vote regularly in the yearly elections.

c) ACTIVITIES AT THE COOPERATIVE

The cooperative has retained its original function as a marketing instrument for coffee, a place where members can sell their crop after harvest. These transactions along with all activities related to the storage of this crop are managed by a salaried employee who is male. Additionally, there is now a cooperative garden, machinery for grinding grains and processing coffee, and a small male-operated hardware store which sells galvanized steel, garden tools and clarin (alcoholic beverage). The garden is worked collectively by female and male volunteers who are divided into four groups of thirty persons each. Other female members provide food for these workers, a task which is also voluntary. Two men are paid to operate the machinery for grinding rice, coffee, and corn. Women sift through the residue and collect the grains that circumvented the process which they then use for home consumption. Recently the cooperative has obtained machinery to wash coffee and two male members will be remunerated for this task. Female respondents inform us that women who clean the cooperative are given a meal. In sum, there is no paid work at the cooperative for women.

d) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

One woman thought that low levels of female membership can be accounted for by women's involvement in childbearing and childcare. Men explained that male participation is greater because over the years it was men who developed this cooperative which was originally based in coffee, a "male crop". Today, one man related, more and more women are joining the cooperative. This movement began when some women who were without husbands joined. When the men saw them they realized "it would be wise to bring their wives here so they would be able to take over when he (the husband) dies".

When some female respondents were asked why they are excluded from paid employment at the cooperative, they responded that men operate all the machines because "in this culture men are always in charge of these things". Some male respondents argued that there are no jobs where they could pay a woman. Others conceded that women are able to run the machines "if men gave them the knowledge". One man reasoned that here "men are more active and stronger than women". The coffee bags, for example, are too heavy for women. Female respondents disagreed and stated that in fact they can manage these tasks but that men "just all think they are best". Men controlled even the commercial activities at the cooperative, tasks which are traditionally executed by women.

LA COOPERATIVE STE-HELENE de CARICE (COSAHEC)

a) GENERAL COMMENT

This agricultural cooperative currently has a total of 509 members. While women form 40% of this total they are not well-represented at the administrative level. Only one

position out of five on the council of administration is occupied by a woman and there is one female present on each of the three-member surveillance and credit councils.

b) TRAINING, PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS, VOTING

All members have received cooperative training and entered in an election process. Older members claim that sickness prevents them from attending meetings as often as they once did but participation is customary among younger members.

c) ACTIVITIES AT THE COOPERATIVE

All members dry, weigh and sack their own coffee which has been cleaned and picked through by women. All members stack rice. This work is voluntary. A salaried male employee operates the machine for washing the coffee and manages the small store. Another man grinds the rice.

d) FEMALE PARTICIPATION GENERALLY

While many women belong to the cooperative some say it is a "waste of their time". According to them, the activities here are for men only. They would rather do something else "to make money".

5.3 Involvement Differs for Female and Male Members

When the information concerning involvement of members in each cooperative was integrated, it was found that in the credit unions, female members in two-thirds of the groups associated with the project are poorly informed about the services and functions of their credit union and female attendance at meetings is irregular in all but one group in

the network. Male members, by comparison, are better informed and attend meetings regularly in one-half of the groups associated with the project.

In general, women seem to lose interest in the associations where men control major decisions. For example, utilization of the services of the credit unions varies by sex (Table 5). Female members have more savings in two-thirds ($2/3$) of the groups but have less access to loans, both in number and quantity. Yet, reimbursement is slightly higher amongst female members and most respondents stated that women are better credit prospects due to their familiarity and interest in monetary issues and their heavy involvement in the commercial sector of the economy. Furthermore, women are more involved than men in the traditional system of savings and credit known as solde which can be viewed as a precursor to the credit unions (see Appendix C).

Certain female respondents offered that a male power elite often decides how loans will be distributed amongst members in their association, and this elite tends to favour their male friends when according loans to members.

Participation also wanes among both females and males when members find information difficult to understand and training sessions too draining. (This issue is discussed in more detail in Sections 5.5 and 5.7 of this chapter).

In the agriculture cooperatives, female members in one-third of the groups associated with the project signified that their training in cooperative rules and procedures was inadequate. In two-thirds of the groups, women attended meetings regularly. By comparison, male members in all groups exhibited competence in cooperative instruction and

Table 5.5
Credit Unions according to Services

Caisse Populaire	Membres		Epargne		Capital Sociale		Prêts (% du total)		Prêts (selon sexe)		Montant Original		Rembour- sement (selon sexe)	
	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H
Leve Kanpe à Milot	53%	47%	23%	77%	48%	52%	54%	46%	46%	44%	52%	48%	24%	13%
La Renaissance à Port-Margot	51%	49%	57%	43%	50%	50%	43%	57%	45%	61%	41%	59%	25%	18%
L'Espérance à Pilat	51%	49%	76%	24%	54%	46%	52%	48%	27%	26%	55%	45%	29%	0%
L'Avenir à Carrefour- des-Pères	46%	54%	55%	45%	30%	70%	49%	51%	22%	19%	26%	74%	30%	29%
Saint-Hélène à Carice	50%	50%	32%	68%	43%	57%	34%	66%	6%	11%	38%	62%	5%	1%
Fraternité à Cap Haitien	57%	43%	52%	48%	58%	42%	48%	52%	38%	53%	43%	57%	25%	30%
Total	50%	50%	43%	57%	50%	50%	47%	53%	22%	55%	44%	56%	23%	20%

most attended meetings regularly.

Lower involvement by women is mainly due to the relatively recent inclusion of 'female' activities in these associations. It appears, however, that when encouraged to join these cooperatives, women become keen participants. The cooperatives in the study are institutions which were established over several decades. The oldest cooperative at Dondon was first established in 1955 and the youngest at Dosmond was established in 1981.

Over the years, these institutions have been assisted by various international organizations. The cooperatives have been used primarily as marketing devices for coffee and individuals in the community have used these structures to sell their crops when prices offered at the cooperative were more interesting than those offered by the speculators. Prices were often higher at the cooperative due to the elimination of traders (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1) in the internal marketing system. The cooperative infrastructure (building, operational costs, machinery, trucks, land rent), however, was normally subsidized by an international organization (secular or non-secular) and when the project closed, the operations of the cooperative slowed down or halted temporarily until another international organization offered their assistance. In general, the cooperatives are not self-sustaining.

During the study, most of the cooperatives were being re-structured to include activities other than the marketing of coffee. The long-term goal is to make the cooperatives more profitable and independent of foreign assistance. As the project had only been in full operation for one year, many planned operations, which include activities for women, have not been realized. Specifically, where cooperative

gardens were in operation, female and male members tended to work in these gardens in work teams, mixed or homogenous (all female or male). Respondents were comfortable with the division of labour between the sexes, likewise, with the partition of the fruits of this labour.

A minority of female members were concerned about male control over the few salaried positions and assets in the cooperative but the majority accepted this as normal for these associations. Yet, as new activities are being integrated into the cooperative structures, women expressed a desire to be given full control over some of these domains.

The agriculture cooperatives in this study were formerly established to enhance the production and sale of coffee (see The World Bank reference, Chapter One, Introduction). In general in rural Haiti, it is men who control the production and marketing of this crop. At the time when the international community decided to encourage and support the establishment of these institutions, they were favouring development opportunities for men. Support, which specifically favoured female development opportunities, was virtually non-existent. In so doing, the international community both discounted and underestimated the importance of Haitian women's major contributions to the agriculture sector. This action created inequitable development opportunities for women compared to men in communities in rural Haiti.

Today, policies designed by the international community to integrate women more fully into agriculture institutions in Haiti, reflect the spread of the feminist movement globally and the effects of Haitian migration movement (Chapter 2, Section 2.8).

5.3.1 The Changing Status of Women in Haiti

The changing status of women in Haiti is part of a general movement of democratization in this country (Chapter 2, Section 2.6). Informal assemblies of women began meeting after the departure of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. Women, from many communities, began to gather together to discuss issues particular to their lives. Some of these groups were formed by community members themselves; others were shaped by non-governmental organizations. Today, structured associations for women can be found in most areas. Many are managed by specialists in animation.

At a broader scale, some women have established their own formal cooperative structures. One of these groups has recently applied for membership in the Union des coopératives du Nord (UCONORD), the umbrella group for the agricultural cooperatives associated with the project. Women in at least two other areas we visited had already formed female-exclusive associations within their mixed credit unions.

According to several respondents, "female self-help groups are one instrument by which women can move out of the shadow of men". Many women exhibited a willingness to form their own groups so that they could implicate themselves more fully in projects such as the one used for the study. The following examples illustrate this point. On the return visits, one to two weeks after the informal discussion meetings, we spoke with several women from different villages. In two of these villages, relations between women and men in the cooperative were clearly not harmonious. Female leaders in the community had already initiated a series of activities with a view to forming their own cooperative associations.

On the one hand, women in the zones affected by the project exhibited more interest today than in the past in acquiring the knowledge and skills which will enable them to play a more vital role in the associations of the two cooperative networks. On the other, one notes that a new openness to allow women into these institutions does not always transfer to power sharing between female and male members.

For this reason, relations between female and male members in the cooperatives are at times conflictual. Conflict arises when political power between female and male members favours men. Specifically, tension is based on the relative exclusion of women from major decision-taking posts in these organizations.

As mentioned above, in the credit union network where total membership is divided equally between women (50%) and men (50%), women are clearly under-represented at the administrative level (18%) in five of the six associations. This is likewise the situation in the agriculture cooperative network where the female composition at the administrative level is nine percent (9%) but women compose one-third of total membership.

To understand how and why women are excluded from positions of power, a series of questions was asked which pertained to the concept of male privilege in these structures. By their responses, respondents explained the ideologies, institutions, and practices that create and reproduce inequity between female and male members in these associations.

5.4 Gendered Conflict of Interest Over Cooperative Control

Individually, and at the discussion meetings, respondents were asked to justify the status quo, particularly concerning the lower status of women. When questioned on an individual basis, it was not possible to examine the dynamic of conflict in gender relations, but this information was used to inform the research in the discussion meetings where the focus was on this issue. At the discussion meetings gender relations practices were more observable. Respondents were asked to respond to a series of provocative questions (Questionnaire, Appendix B, Section I, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4) which pertained to the movement of women into leadership and decision-taking roles in the cooperatives.

For example, respondents were asked to explain: "why leaders (president and vice-president) are almost always male"; "why this should or should not be changed"; "what qualities and skills are necessarily required to achieve these posts"; "whether there is a difference between women and men in capability as pertains to these qualities and skills"; "why the respondent would or would not want to be president", "why the respondent has or has not voted for a women at previous elections", "if women exist in the community who could fill these positions", "how women can be trained to achieve this goal"?

Not surprisingly, this broad range of individuals (approximately 160) held many different opinions concerning gender relations in the groups supported by the project. Their responses are summed and then analyzed in the following passages.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE LEVE KANPE, MILOT

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

One female member speculated that some women are afraid of the responsibility while others are simply not qualified because they lack the necessary training for administration. She explained that for a woman to lead the credit union she would have to be "brave, strong, and affirmative but most of the time women are afraid of men". (This statement was confirmed in a response made by a male respondent who said that "when men speak strongly, women back down".) A similar sentiment was expressed independently by a second woman who said that any woman who aspired to a decision-making role at the credit union "must be be very confident and know how to defend herself". She implied that there are women who could administer the credit union today but they needed encouragement because "women are scared to take the first step, they are too shy". In yet another isolated conversation a female respondent told us that "women here have no rights and men are always controlling their lives". In her view, even if they try to elect a woman, "the men will block it". The perception of male members is that females are not qualified to be on the administrative council and each offered grounds for his view. One said women were not capable because "they are more illiterate than men". Later in the conversation this person modified his opinion because he realized that his sister had more talent than himself to undertake a leadership role. He related that she has a diploma in education and is presently the directrice of a school. Another offered that "unlike men who have no fear, women are always afraid of major responsibility". When asked to clarify the notion of "major responsibility" he replied that this is "an overload of tasks". A third cause came from a man who said women have no

leadership ability because "they are not open and friendly".

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

At the informal meeting male council members complained that when it came to commitments of this nature, women were not serious enough to be reliable. Moreover, they added, many women lacked self-respect, that is, they would not honour their debts. Several stated that women were not suited for administrative positions because they were afraid of responsibility.

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Some countered the male leaders' justifications by asserting that certain women were serious and they were qualified to lead the credit union. One female member argued that when they did vote for a woman in the last election she did not win because in this zone "men feel superior to and are always arguing with women". Another reasoned that women were afraid to speak out because men would call them "radical" and make them feel "guilty".

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE LA RENAISSANCE, PORT-MARGOT

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

Women, in general, indicated that men do not constrain female members from taking a leadership position in the credit union. Several pointed out that the president is female. One female member implied that she may be a special case as she is well-educated and confident whereas some women she knows are afraid of the responsibility. A male member contested this view as in his opinion there is "no difference in ability here for members--both women and men

have the same need for more training". Other men agreed that women are just as capable as men to lead and one added that some women have the same amount of time as men to work on the council. We are told that the current president had the support of many members in obtaining her position because "members only care that their leaders know how to administer the credit union".

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

One woman reflected that there are not more women on the council because "these people must understand accounting and credit". In her opinion men have more knowledge of these issues. According to a male member, men are more interested in the credit union than women. One member speculated that women here, in general, lack motivation and are afraid of responsibility.

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Certain members stated that it is not only women who are not motivated because the lack of enthusiasm is general in the community. Council members attributed this to the fact that they are all employed full-time and therefore have little opportunity to provide adequate training to others.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE L'ESPERANCE, PILATE

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

Male members agreed that any woman who is properly trained could become president and serve on the various councils. There are some women who have administrative positions presently. According to one man, members would vote for any woman "whose general comportment is correct,

that is the way she speaks, introduces herself, and presents herself". Another added that she must have confidence in her capacity to do the job and be someone they can trust. Female members agreed that there is no barrier preventing a woman from becoming president as long as she has "competence, values, knowledge, and training".

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

Justification was not necessary at this credit union where administrative opportunities are equal for women and men. There is a male president because "there was no female member with enough time to become president". In the past a woman was president and "she performed well".

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Members agreed that many women need more instruction to become president but this is also valid for men. Some women are currently qualified and would accept this challenge but they are otherwise occupied.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE DE L'AVENIR, CARREFOUR-DES-PERES (KPAK)

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

The notion of women directing the caisse was treated with skepticism by some members of both sexes who could not imagine women ever having sufficient knowledge for this task. When asked why women could not possess this information, we received various answers. According to one man, "women do not persevere". One female member considered that some women have too many children; another offered that women lack motivation. Certain male respondents allowed that men here are jealous if women are active at

decision-making levels because "they will have close personal contact with different men and they will be going out alone to meetings". In contrast to these restrictive views, several members, most of whom were female, were of the opinion that women had the potential to be directors but, as one stated, "it would take a women with courage and strength because some of the credit union leaders are bullies and they will not give women a chance". Another said that she had voted for many women in the past but the men always won. The validity of these comments was confirmed by male participants at the informal meeting. They assured us that "even if female members empowered themselves and voted for women, they would not be able to supersede male leadership".

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

The two most-offered reasons for the absence of women from administrative positions were that women lacked the necessary training and that women were afraid to take this responsibility. Additionally, council members gave us a variety of other causes for this phenomenon. According to one male member, "the goal of women is to earn money and they will not waste their time on work that is voluntary". A more elaborate motive was presented by a man who argued that women need men to organize and manage associations because men have more cooperative experience. He explained that "in the context of collaborative field work (combite), for example, men are accustomed to working together but women just provide meals for the workers". Other grounds for male control ranged from lofty--"according to the Bible, the man is the head and superior to women"--to basic--"men's work in gardens is hard and heavy and if women go to meetings, men will not get fed".

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Female participants at the informal meeting concurred that, in the past, socially accepted traditions often precluded them from partaking in administrative activities. Some women described the barriers as covert because while men did not directly block women from seeking administrative positions, men found ways to make it difficult for women to supplant men once men controlled decision-making activities. For example, several women maintained that "the councilmen were secretive and would not share their knowledge with women". According to them, the men do not want women to have this type of education. Moreover, one avowed that the men who have information "choke" (mislead) the ones who do not know. We were told that women with leadership talents lost interest in the credit union because they sensed that men preferred to manage it by themselves. These women expressed a willingness to engage in administrative responsibilities and to undertake the necessary specialized training. As one concluded, "the status of women has changed in many countries, including Haiti, and now we know we are entitled to this".

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE SAINTE-HELENE, CARICE (KPSEK)

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

In general, male members demonstrated a willingness to endorse capable women in the community who are interested in obtaining administrative posts. Several pointed out, however, that women are being hindered from fuller participation by certain councilmen. According to some, the council is reluctant to give women the instruction and without this they can never be on the board. Furthermore, it is the council that "offers people a post". Most women we

spoke with were not very familiar with the inner workings of the credit union. They surmised, however, that as there were female members who had enough knowledge for administrative tasks, "it must be the male leaders who keep the women in subordinate positions". A female respondent pointed out that the one woman who has been on the council for a long time is qualified to lead the credit union but they will not promote her "because they need her where she is".

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

Council members (male) explained that they do not invite more women to participate at the administrative level because "women do not feel at ease presenting themselves". Moreover, one man added, women are not invited to run for council "because they do not show up for meetings."

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Female members contend that women who have sufficient motivation and adequate training will always find time to fulfill their responsibilities. Several maintain that capable women are being blocked from advancing to higher posts by male directors.

LA CAISSE POPULAIRE FRATERNITE, CAP HAITIEN (CPU)

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

Several female members suggested that formerly, it was not fear of men which restricted women from accepting these challenges, it was rather women's own lack of confidence in their ability to perform these tasks. According to some male members, women have been encouraged by the council to partake in administrative activities, but most manifested a

preference for staying home and attending to domestic duties rather than going out to meetings and courses. Female members assured us that women have recently undergone a change in attitude and they now have the courage to strive for these positions. Generally, male members agreed that there are several women here who are competent to lead the credit union. They denoted that as long as a woman is adequately trained, men will vote for her.

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

We were informed that female members could easily have been selected for administrative posts because there were many women at the election meeting. Most of this group chose, however, to vote for men. According to one male member, this happened because "men have strength but women will bend". He elaborated by adding that "unlike men who are rigid in their attitudes, women can be persuaded to change their ideas (can be manipulated) by men". Another argued that members usually elect male directors because "the notion of male superiority is entrenched in Haitian mentality". Yet another man reasoned that the council had to be male because women lacked certain essential leadership qualities. In his opinion, "women were not focused sufficiently on the credit union; they had difficulty expressing themselves; they lacked discretion; and, moreover, they were often tardy". A male councillor added, "it is always the men who volunteer for these jobs because women never have the courage to find the time to sacrifice themselves like men do".

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Women clarified that the primary reason most female members allocated these tasks to men is that women have not

sufficient time. They admitted that even when female members are offered these opportunities, they tended not to accept. One women, presently serving on a council, said this task is more difficult for her than for her male counterparts. By illustration she explained that "she too has full-time employment outside the home, but unlike the men, she is responsible for all the domestic chores". Generally, participants at the informal meeting agreed that women remain in the domestic domain because their attachment to the home is deeply embedded in traditional views concerning "a woman's place". Moreover, they acknowledged that references to women's incompetence as directors appears to stem from the same source. In the past, submitted one man, families prioritized male children. Consequently, many people still accept that women lack some fundamental strength that is unique to men. Female participants at the informal meeting granted that it is now appropriate for more women to engage in these activities.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DE BASSIN CLAIR (CUCOC), PLAISANCE

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

At the informal meeting the male-dominated discussion was dotted by candid comments from the women who interjected forcefully at appropriate moments. Men say that "they are happy when they see women succeeding". The younger men, in particular, seemed quite willing to accept a more active role for women in leadership and decision making. Moreover, they would like to have women on the council "as some women are more experienced than men". Women, for their part, stated that they are not afraid to take responsibility and are willing to participate in the administration of the cooperative. There was general agreement that the president can be female or male, but must be a person with

intelligence, with ideas, a strong person of action, who knows how to speak out and represent the group. Members of both sexes say there are many women like this in the cooperative.

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

The council is male because "women are busy with children and do not show up for meetings". Women do not vote for other women because "they know women are too busy". Several members informed us that women are capable but not prepared. As one man explained, "women have no interest in the council because they have had no training". When the cooperative was first established "women were not informed."

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

One woman replied that she is busy with children but if she were chosen as president she would "take the position and organize my life around this". Another said women are as capable as men but do not participate on the council because "they do not have as much money as men" (which buys time in this case). Men have more income because they are able to take formal employment opportunities which exist outside the home. On the other hand, women cannot leave the home so they must do many small tasks to make ends meet.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DE L'ESPERANCE (COCAES), PILAT

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

A male member told us that since Haiti's recent positive experience with a female president, women are getting together and becoming stronger but before they can lead the cooperative, they will need more training. Another

man offered that the one instructing women should be male because "even though women would love to have a woman, a man would be much better to teach them". Certain male members expressed a desire to see women succeed--a sentiment which others confirmed when they stated that men "will not block the activities for women". In response a woman offered that she was reticent to take on the load of administrative work because she felt it was too heavy for a women with small children. Other women, however, were anxious to become more involved but were adamant in their conviction that women and men must be separated. If they are not, "men take all the decisions, get all the benefits, and guard all the activities".

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

According to some members the president cannot be a woman because "women cannot do anything" and "women do not function as leaders". For a woman to be president "she would need more instruction". One male member told the story of a woman who was president but could not do the job. "She was too arrogant and outspoken--they had to calm her down." He added that "women must learn how to express themselves in public, that is, know how to deal with people." This story was repeated under separate circumstances by a female member who said that there was a female president before at the cooperative and "all the women believed in her but she let them down--a leader must be serious."

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Women replied that there is no female president because "people do not value women here". We were told that to become a leader a woman must have knowledge and confidence in her capacity to do the job and some women here have these

qualities. This view was confirmed by a male member who related that the credit union had a female president. She was voted in and found to be so capable that they wanted her to stay as there was no one to replace her.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DE GABART LE VAILLANT (CACGAVA),
DONDON

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

Women expressed a strong interest in decision-taking roles. They are not afraid of the responsibility and those that do not feel adequately prepared (lack both general education and cooperative training) expressed a willingness to learn. One such woman said she would find the time even with children. In her opinion, "women with knowledge can be leaders and are often more responsible than men". There was general concern among female and male members that the council would not permit a woman to take a leadership role. One male member said that for a woman to become leader she would have to come from another district. If the woman were from this area "they would use sanctions against her". We were told that women seeking administrative positions would have to receive instructions from someone who would really teach them but the people who are on board now will NEVER do this ("they will not even allow many men on the council"). Another offered that a woman would have to be well informed and "expect to fight this system". Yet another said that they definitely need a change but it would require "a strong woman." Many male members supported the idea of a woman as president. As one concluded: "It would be better because she will do a better job. Women are less greedy and therefore less corrupt."

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

We were informed by the council that women cannot become administrators because they are illiterate. One embellished this reason by adding that "women have nothing to say--they don't open their mouths." Women, who emphatically contested this comment, pointed out that there were some knowledgeable women in the group. The men replied that "women who are strong and can read can join the council but they must first receive instruction from the council". Certain council members were very insistent on this last point.

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Women expressed displeasure at having their cooperative and administrative training under the control of the board of directors. Women said they preferred to group together to teach themselves about cooperatives through their own experiences. They would like to learn "the same way the men did" which was "by the help of an outside expert". Furthermore, they would rather take their instruction from women. They wanted to create and keep separate female cooperative activities and administrative structures.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE PERPETUEL-SECOURS de DOSMOND
(CAPESEDO)

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

An active female member explained that in the past, men never overtly constrained women from participating to a higher degree. Women were always invited but "their time had not yet come and now it has come". Women are presently more committed to make time for these activities. One women

confirms this when she responds that she will find time "even with 10 children".

One women related the story of a recent election where the female candidate lost to a male candidate. She surmised that voters may have considered that the woman has children and so she might be late for meetings. She clarified that women with children are more restricted than men as husbands do not help with children.

Female members reported that many women here have the capacity to become leaders and today their chances have increased because female membership has enlarged and women who previously voted for men are now willing to support women. An alternative view unfolded in the comments of one of the founding male members. He thinks that a leader must not only be knowledgeable and capable but must also be able to "speak up". He knew of only two or three women like this in the cooperative. He added, however, that if a woman were capable, the men would vote for her. Another man was convinced that women can direct only groups for women and that "men must stay as supervisors over all". He expanded with an illustration of a woman who is not well-enough informed about cooperative procedures and must turn to men with more years of experience for advise. One elderly man admitted that in the past he never considered the possibility of having a woman on the council. He did not think they were capable. He agreed that it is time for women to participate more because "if you miss a woman you miss a lot". This member knew several women ("at least ten") at the cooperative who have presidential talent but they will need more specific training in the adminstration of the cooperative. Other men agree that women should be part of the administration and it would be "egocentric" to block women. "After all", says one member, "it is just a favour to

the community, it is not salaried employment."

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

According to various members of the council, women are not part of the administration because they are preoccupied with children and other domestic chores. One man explained that women have "neither the time nor the desire for the responsibilities associated with these decision-making structures". We were told that women do not show up when invited whereas "men make more sacrifices to attend". Another justification for women's absence from these positions is that women cannot perform certain functions because they cannot read and write. Further, women do not know enough about the principles and functions of a cooperative.

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Until recently, women told us, "they never thought they had the capability to be involved in these activities". They underestimated their level of general competence and were not well-informed about their rights. Today many women have the courage, the capacity and strength to lead, but only a few are qualified to do so. Women agreed that before they can take high-level leadership positions they must be well-informed about the cooperative and must receive administrative training. They need to have the same knowledge that men have in cooperative management. As for their role in childcare, women are prepared to arrange their daily program in order to be available for instruction. It was said that when women are motivated "they can find others in the community to help with their children". They spoke of potential solutions for nursing mothers. Moreover, the recent creation of men's groups in the community where

leaders induce men "to assist their wives and encourage them to augment their skills" has enheartened women.

LA COOPERATIVE AGRICOLE DES FRERES UNIS de MONT-ORGANISE
(CAFUMO)

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

A male respondent stated that women who are capable, that is strong, devoted, willing to do the work, and able to speak up, can hold leadership positions. Some men contested this view. According to them, men in this community are ahead of women. Men can "go out at any time and are therefore able to assume more of this type of responsibility". Women, on the other hand, are at home with children. Female members would like to see more woman on the council. To be able, woman "must have good cooperative training, be wise, calm, and know how to read". One revealed that in the past "old women were scared" but now young women are joining and there are those among them who have the skill. Last year the cooperative had their first experience with a female president. Today this woman is head of the education committee because she does not have to go to as many meetings and she is expecting her third child. It is her opinion that not too many women want to be president because it is a big responsibility "and more difficult" for women because they have to take care of the house and the children". Generally, she adds, husbands do not want their wives to be administrators.

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

The male administrators said that women are absent from the decision-making structures because women cannot leave the house and children to come here "to do a favour for the

community". It is difficult for women, they added, "as it is not paid employment". Some members suggested that women are afraid of the responsibility; others considered women to be "too soft".

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

One women answered with the following caustic comment: "men just think they have a vein which makes them stronger than women". Others explained that some men, for example, "do not think it is right for a woman to go out alone to meetings in Cap Haitian". A woman offered that men simply "do not value woman in this society". Men do not want a woman to be president. They say "it is a man's job and women should stay home with children". She adds, "women obey because women fear men". We are told that in Haiti women have never had a place in society, a situation which is only starting to change. Women had never before challenged the conventional view that men were stronger and therefore more capable to lead. Instead they acquiesced and "lowered themselves" to men. It is only in the last two years that women have become strong and now they understand that they are equal to men.

LA COOPERATIVE STE-HELENE de CARICE (COSAHEC)

a) FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS, POSSIBILITIES

Some female members stated that men have always controlled decision-making at the cooperative. As one illustrated, "since the beginning only men talk--woman don't talk". Others said they would definitely support a woman as leader but she must "be strong, knowledgeable, know how to speak up and get along with people". Among the few women receiving administrative instruction presently, one admitted

that she would vote for one of the other women in this group as president but she herself "is still too scared to run". One male member said for a woman to be president "she must have courage, be humane, and capable of working with people". He would definitely vote for women if given the chance.

b) RATIONALIZATIONS FOR A MALE COUNCIL

A man offered that he does not know why more women are not on the council but "it has always been like that". Another added that "men have always headed the cooperative and no man is ready to change that". The perspective of a third councilman was more elaborate. He explained that men end up with these advantages because "Haitians struggle to subsist and it is the men who have to work their brains to find new routes which they are always fighting to attain". Others concluded that most of time they vote for men "because women are not talented enough". One individual surmised that women are not interested because "there is no money involved in this job". Another suggested that men take more time to attend meetings "but women do not make enough effort to contribute". A woman countered that women are not involved because "they have too many children and women are afraid to take on additional responsibility". The female council member said she backs male candidates "not because she values men more but because she is sure there are things men know that she does not know".

c) RESPONSE TO THESE CONSTRAINTS

Female members reflected that women will need more training before they can lead the cooperative. Presently certain women are taking instruction from male council members on cooperative procedures and these women assured us

that "they will be ready to take part soon". Another mentioned that things will change because "women are advancing now".

5.5 Mechanisms Which Cause Oppressive Conditions for Women

The results of the investigation of the gendered conflict of interest over control in the cooperatives reveals the mechanisms responsible for unequal conditions and oppressive power relations between women and men in these organizations. The responses demonstrate that there is a system of power in most of the cooperatives which clearly favours men. One sees that this power is reinforced by ideologies, structures and practices which can create oppressive relationships for women.

First, general trends in the recorded responses are listed, clarified and analyzed. While responses could be catagorized as separate, in reality, all factors are highly inter-related.

The above testimony strongly suggests that the status quo is primarily maintained and justified by traditional ideologies and institutions in Haiti (secular and non-secular) which suggest that women are inferior to men. Specifically, in the cooperatives, women are excluded from administrative and management roles in these organizations because it is thought females lack fundamental leadership qualities which are unique to men. While these ideologies and institutions are slowly changing, many respondents still subscribe to the principles that women should have fewer rights than men, and that a woman's primary responsibility is to her partner and to her children.

As these notions are more fully explained by repondents

it becomes clear that these views are based on physical aptitude. While there is mutual respect in labour cooperation, women are considered subordinate to men because they are more vulnerable due to biological differences. Respondents offered that women are dependent on the muscular superiority of men for heavy physical tasks in field work, the gathering and cutting of heavy wood, and the construction of the family dwelling. Men rely equally on women's contributions to the family unit. The relative muscular weakness of women, however, which is heightened due to their role in child bearing, is highlighted as a human liability which outweighs female assets which women express in their marketing ventures such as physical endurance, vivacity, resilience, daring, originality, and general commercial know-how.

The importance of land to rural Haitians reinforces male prerogative, as men, in general, control the rights to land use through customs of inheritance which favour male family members. This has resulted on a societal emphasis, expressed by the respondents, on a woman's dependence on a man and a de-emphasis on her major contributions to the domestic economy. Additionally, in Haiti, where the abuse of physical power has a long tradition of being tolerated, male domination is necessarily accepted, albeit not enjoyed.

In practice, male privilege in the cooperatives is maintained by direct physical action intended to intimidate women (raising of voices and threatening physical posture) and indirect techniques such as limiting women's access to information, instruction and discussion at the cooperatives. Male authority has been tolerated as women are relatively overemployed due to their domestic chores, particularly child rearing, and their commercial activities. Few women have been willing to prioritize the time needed to become

involved in additional tasks at the cooperatives, as to do this, women must find assistance from other female community members who are likewise overoccupied.

The accepted view that a woman's primary responsibility is to her partner and children facilitates men's control of women's movements, contact and communication with outsiders. Respondents report that in this way, men do not have to take their responsibility for children, women are available to serve men's needs, and male jealousy is appeased. (As to this latter point, certain respondents admitted that males disliked female partners having unsupervised contact with other males in the community, including foreigners.)

As few men will assist women on a pre-defined basis (Chapter 3, Section 3.5) with child rearing tasks, which includes extensive domestic chores, women cannot leave their homes as liberally as men to attend meetings and participate as fully in the operations of the cooperatives. Additionally, women are generally more occupied than men as they are also absorbed with commercial activities essential to the survival of the family (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1).

With this heavy time constraint, women are hampered from involvement, particularly at the administrative level. Few women are able to gain sufficient experience, knowledge and training to engage in many of the specialized tasks of their cooperative associations. Most respondents agreed that, women have been disadvantaged relative to men in accessing information about the function and administration of their cooperative associations. Time and energy are not the only barriers, however, as women also lack motivation to attend training sessions.

In the past, educational and training sessions in the

cooperatives were mainly given by men, who did not encourage women nor attend to their special needs. Female and male respondents were almost unanimous in agreeing that women are more stimulated by female instructors. Women are more confident and more at ease with other women. Additionally, previous courses were often faulted for being too complex and brief (not repetitive). As women have more productive tasks to perform than men, they have less leisure time and are thus more tired when it comes to learning activities. Exhaustion is exacerbated due to child bearing and child rearing, particularly as many women in rural areas are malnourished.

Furthermore, while certain women were keen to access knowledge about the particular administrative procedures of their institution, many more women showed enthusiasm for sessions of instruction in commercial management. Presently, these courses are not offered by the PCD Project. In the agricultural cooperative network, male preference remained for technical training in land use which has commonly been part of the assistance package.

In the literature on women and development, it is often suggested that women have special needs in terms of time of day or place for training sessions because of their domestic responsibilities. In the study it was found that there were no special requirements by respondents for day, time of day, or place for training sessions. Villagers showed some preference for late afternoon meetings but those living outside these centrally populated areas (usually in the mountains) stated that, if meetings are held in the village, they can only attend in the morning. Marketing days, laundry days and so on did not figure as major constraints to those who wanted training sessions.

Assurance was given that once a schedule is fixed, interested parties will arrange their routine to accommodate attendance at training sessions. Frequently recommended sites for these sessions were the ones inhabitants are familiar with such as a church hall, the cooperative building or a local school. Most recognized the cost in terms of economies of scale to requesting sessions in more isolated zones.

Finally, due to a history of male domination in social organizations such as the cooperatives, and the general exclusion of women from associations such as agriculture cooperatives which focused on 'male' rather than 'female' activities, many women are still not convinced that they will benefit from the activities of these male-governed groups. Therefore, women are reluctant to participate more seriously in these associations. Furthermore, few women aspire to management positions because there are few female role models to encourage them in this direction. Specifically, women want to be assured that energy and time put into attaining these goals will not be in vain.

To conclude, I found that trends in responses were fairly consistent between the two networks when respondents were asked to justify the status quo, particularly concerning the lower status of women. The trend for members to isolate and rationalize the status quo based on one of the three points, traditional ideologies and institutions, women's major responsibility for children, or male domination is almost universal in the networks. Traditional ideologies and institutions, and male domination were emphasized marginally more in the agricultural cooperative network. Members from all groups in both networks implied that women needed more specialized training; and, in one-half of the associations of both networks, lack of

motivation on the part of women was cited.

Two additional issues were seen to aggravate the general situation for women, mainly in some of the agricultural cooperatives. First, members from four different groups (two-thirds of the network) pointed out that their cooperative was a male-association at origin. Secondly, respondents representing three separate agricultural cooperatives (one-half of this network) mentioned there was an overall absence of democratic practices. (This issue was also raised in one credit union association.)

5.6 Myths Versus Reality/Tension in the Cooperatives

At the end of the day, in the format of mixed-group meetings, respondents were asked to discuss the presence of male prerogative in their cooperative and potential for change (Questionnaire Appendix B, Section 4). The questions were much as described above but in order to respect the sensitive nature of the subject, female and male respondents were allowed more latitude to express themselves and to direct the discussion to points which were of particular interest in each specific association.

When gender relations in the cooperatives are juxtaposed to the reality of rural life where female contributions are admired, respected and highly valued by men, there is a glaring contradiction. When this contradiction was exposed, few respondents could justify or deny a less-than-equal right to women to become involved in all functions at the cooperatives, including the most powerful. Once this idea was accepted, it was less difficult to discuss strategies to resolve the conflict between female and male members in the cooperatives.

Due to recent constitutional changes and discussion throughout the country concerning basic human rights, and given incentives to favour women provided by the international community, most women and certain men were agreeable to question openly male power structures in the agriculture and credit institutions. These respondents were willing to accept the idea that there must be equity between the genders in the cooperatives.

Additionally, due to changes in the relative status of women in Haitian society and the inclusion of 'female' activities in these structures, women are encouraged to demand fuller participation in the cooperatives. Underlying this new motivation is conviction that it will be more difficult for men to prevent women from taking this action. It is more difficult, because women now question female subordination in male-created socio-political structures. Furthermore, women are more willing to confront men because their self-esteem and knowledge of their rights have been heightened due to the creation of female self-help groups throughout the country. In the group discussions we first discussed myth versus reality.

The myth that females are inherently inferior, auxiliary, or an accessory to males did not carry much weight when members were made to examine the idea versus the reality of labour cooperation in their communities. Most were willing to agree that this ideology is perpetuated by men who want to retain power positions where possible. Female and male respondents agreed that women are maneuvered and manipulated (easily according to some) into a subordinate position through various direct and indirect means. Most male respondents were embarrassed and humbled when having to admit that they have used these strategies to rationalize and justify what is in fact unreasonable because

they do acknowledge the major contributions that Haitian women make to their economic and social lives. These conversations were generally treated lightly by respondents and did not create much tension.

Tension increased when power positions were questioned but I found that conflict in the cooperatives is not based simply on male domination of the most powerful positions. Power derived through the holding of positions of leadership most certainly allows one greater status in the community as well as control and access to funds in these organizations. Those that hold power, are reluctant to yield to others which means that there is already in existence a fierce struggle among male members for these positions. Indeed, very few male members who want to attain these positions manage to do so because, like women, they lack the skills, training, information and contacts which are necessary. Sometimes, training and information are withheld by the power elite, other times men are not able to sacrifice the time necessary to implicate themselves further in activities which lead to acquiring the skills and knowledge. Yet, while the power elite is few in number, it is mainly male. Women, when included in administrative structures tend to take secondary roles.

For example, in the five credit unions and four agriculture cooperatives where women have a presence at the administrative level, they mainly hold positions as secretaries and treasurers. They are much more present at the level of credit management (Table 2). Women are given these positions when their skills are superior in quality to most of the general membership. In these cases, the women are essential to the smooth-running of the cooperative operations.

It is important to clarify that high-level leadership requires strong commitment, time, and energy which many members lacked. Aside from increased status and the possibility of gain from corrupt behavior, which is condoned in only a few of the organizations, the holding of these positions is perceived as a social service rather than a profitable activity. As men have relatively more leisure time than women, female members allow male members to dominate these posts. In general, there was little incentive for women to fight to attain the main leadership position of president. Likewise, women have been satisfied to receive information second-hand from their male family members as they had little incentive to prioritize time for meetings when the benefits of active membership are slight relative to time spent in normal commercial activities.

To sum, I found that tension between women and men in the cooperatives is due to subtle rather than overt male domination. Rural Haitians understand and appreciate the essential contribution that women make to their society. It was not difficult, therefore, for members to agree, in principle, that fuller involvement by women in the cooperatives was a reasonable and necessary action. How to involve women more fully in these organizations was the final point of discussion at group meetings.

5.7 Strategies for Change

Respondents in the credit union network easily agreed that it was irrational to exclude women from administrative posts. This is because women have traditionally dominated the financial sphere in rural Haiti both in private and public realms, specifically in households, markets, and solde.

This was not the case in the agricultural associations, where the traditional focus has been on 'male' activities. Here, it was more difficult to get members to accept the idea of female leadership even after contradictions between gender relations and the reality of women's lives were exposed and accepted. First members had to agree that restructuring of the cooperatives is necessary due to the pressing need for innovative change in the rural sector which will require creative input and labour from both female and male Haitians. Then they were willing to move on to creative solutions to equitable participation.

Several ideas were discussed to enable women to benefit from and contribute more to the cooperatives. First, as women have been disadvantaged relative to men in accessing specific information about the function and administration of these associations, they will now have to be favoured in accessing specialized knowledge, training and experience to engage in certain specialized tasks relevant to these organizations. Furthermore, women have to be encouraged to attend meetings and training sessions themselves rather than relying on second-hand information which they receive from male family members. Female respondents assured me that they could reorganize their lives in order to bypass the constraints of time and energy to participation if they are a) sufficiently motivated (first strategy) and, b) not prevented by men from partaking in these activities.

Secondly, to overcome male domination of information, there is consensus among women that educational training programs must be sex exclusive, this includes female instructors. Course content and delivery has to account for female fatigue, that is, information has to be concise and repetitive. Moreover, content has to be slanted to female interests. Women are willing to learn about the

administrative procedures of these institutions but are generally more enthusiastic about instruction in commercial management. The two subjects can easily be integrated.

Thirdly, it is obvious that specialized training alone is necessary but not sufficient for equitable participation between female and male members. There is a tendency for female interest in these groups to wane when women are prohibited from meaningful involvement. Where male resistance is strongest to female participation in specific associations, in the short term members agree that women need their own structures. Female-exclusive associations which already exist, are allowing women to gain experience within a context where they gain knowledge about their own needs and, most importantly, self esteem. In the medium term, many of these groups will be able to join forces on equal footing with male groups in the area, which many respondents agreed was more in keeping with the concept of labour cooperation in their communities.

Fourthly, certain aspects which concern motivation as pertains to training sessions are as much a common problem as a gender-specific barrier for members. There is a general feeling among respondents that many members, female or male, become confused and lose interest because instructional skills amongst locals are limited and teachers are not well-informed about each specific topic.

On the other hand, most endorsed oral presentation in training courses through the use of their local language. We were informed that high levels of illiteracy prevent the efficient use of densely written materials and the absence of electrical current eliminates options such as videos. Some members indicated that pamphlets containing images and simple phrases in Créole would be effective as teaching

tools even for the illiterate population. Individuals explained that this is one way for many to familiarize themselves with written words and parents are not reluctant to ask their children for assistance. How to satisfy this demand for instruction in Créole given the paucity of skilled local instructors is not simple. Members' preferences for trainers differs.

For example, respondents stated that the nationality of instructors is also a factor to motivation in training sessions. Slightly more than 80% of all respondents (73 responses were recorded to this question) were partial to Haitians as instructors, who are seen to have the advantages of language (Créole) and familiarity with the customs of the country. Of this larger group, 30% (12 women and 10 men) signified that it would be more beneficial if Haitians were paired with foreigners. The remaining 18% who selected foreigners for this job did so because they were convinced that Haitians have more respect for outsiders. According to these informants, Haitians take foreigners more seriously as the latter are perceived to have better information, and specialized training. While there was little discernible difference by sex among the above choices, there was marked regional variation. The best solution seemed to mixed team (women for female members) containing local and foreign instructors.

Finally, in cooperatives where there is an overall absence of democratic practices, where a small male elite control and do not share information and contact with experts, all members suffer. In this regard, female and male respondents expressed concern about the lack of salaried positions in the cooperatives and control by an elite over these positions. This was a minor source of conflict between women and men in the cooperatives as it was perceived as a

general power problem rather than one which was gender specific. There has already been some work in the first year of the PCD Project to correct this. Policies and practices have been initiated which should ensure fairness to members in the associations implicated in the two cooperative systems.

5.8 Summary

The ideologies, institutions and practices which create inequality between female and male members in the cooperatives are causing increased tension in these associations. Women want to benefit equally from this development opportunity. Women are now willing to confront men with their concerns and are pushing for a metamorphosis in gender relations. Members are willing to accept, at least in principle, a transformation in gender relations which will lead to equal power sharing among female and male members. The speed of change is hastened because members acknowledge a need for active participation by female and male individuals due to the crisis in the economy as a whole. Change will be further hastened when physical force, most commonly applied by men, is no longer considered acceptable and tolerated by the community at large.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Gender relations are the ideologies, institutions, structures and practices that create and reproduce unequal socio-economic conditions and oppressive power relationships between women and men. Gender relations are the different ways of structuring gender which reflect the dominance of different social interests. Gender relations are the societal norms and social constructs that ensure the conformity known as female and male natures. Gender relations are fluid over space and time because there are elements of choice and transformation in these relations.

The results from the case study demonstrate that gender relations are causing unequal opportunities and oppressive power relationships for female members in the agriculture and credit cooperative development programme in rural Haiti. In the cooperatives, I exposed a terrain of female exploitation by examining the locus of conflict over power between female and male members. In this manner, I investigated exactly how and why a system of gender-based social power (gender relations) was driving women from the center of the cooperatives to its periphery. I also explored strategies for change.

This example shows that gendered social equity in localities undergoing development is possible, and women and men can benefit equally from the opportunities offered by our development strategies. This research also contributes to a greater understanding of the power dynamics which exist where the lives of women and men intersect.

6.1 Concerning Gender Relations in Rural Haiti

I discovered that the gender-based division of labour and sexual domains are the two fundamental areas where rural Haitian women and men confront each other. In these two domains relations between the genders are broadly expressed by sentiments which are harmonious (power is equal) or conflictual (power is one-sided). In day-to-day life these domains and sentiments overlap.

The result of this overlap is that interactions between women and men are complex and complicated. Ultimately, however, men retain the power. Both the division of labour and sexual domains favour men in rural Haiti. This is particularly the case, because women bear the major responsibility for child care tasks.

In day-to-day reality, Haitian women and men applaud the link between women's commercial activity and the agricultural activity of male partners. The value of labour cooperation between the sexes is widely recognized and respected. Conflict arises mainly because the gender-based division of labour domain and the sexual domain are intertwined.

Male domination and the tension this causes occur due to a difference in goals and actions in the sexual domain. In the most stable or "honest" unions, a woman is entitled to a primary lien on the male partner's overall future productivity and to the support of their offspring in exchange for exclusive sexual access. As discussed in Chapter Three, however, many other types of unions exist and multiple union types complicate relations between the genders. As explained, the transaction of sexual relations does not necessarily implicate the partners in a union which

endures. Even where rules are more concrete in the stronger unions of plasé and marvé, male presence in the household is not necessarily guaranteed, nor is his fidelity.

Moreover, there are unions in which men are not necessarily responsible for the woman nor for her offspring. Movement among unions makes women relatively more vulnerable than men in sexual transactions as women are primarily responsible for children. Thus expectations between women and men in sexual transactions differ. It is in the sexual domain that the real tension exists between the genders, because care of children is unequal and men desire to control and dominate women's lives due to the need to establish paternity. Inevitably, when discussion became tense, respondents returned to this basic point.

Male social power is reinforced by the creation and reproduction of ideologies, structures and practices which (on occasion) create oppressive relationships for women. The fundamental ideology that men are superior to women is reinforced in both secular and non-secular realms. During the period of research, I discovered that this idea is reinforced by various structures and institutions. One example of a structural rigidity which constrains women is the parcelling out, or appropriation of land (the material good most highly valued in rural Haiti) to men. Another is the high significance placed on large families. This ideal goal makes women more vulnerable physically than men and it is a major limiting factor to the realization of female potential. Finally, in the non-secular realm, Christian belief reinforces the notion of male superiority.

In practice, the idea of male privilege is protected by physical considerations. First, the greater physical strength of men gives males more social value than women

because strength is necessary in this context where technology is virtually non-existent (see Chapter Two). Second, physical strength has augmented male power because it can be translated to physical force. As illustrated in Chapter Two, physical force, if not highly valued, is certainly socially accepted in this country.

In reality, female and male lives are inextricably interwoven in rural Haiti and neither is more significant to daily survival. When male privilege is juxtaposed to the reality of rural life where female contributions are admired, respected and highly valued by men, there is a contradiction. When this contradiction was discussed in the cooperatives, few respondents could justify or deny a less-than-equal right to women to participate in all functions at the cooperatives. This fact made my research inquiry particularly fascinating. Additionally, once this was acknowledged by respondents, it was not difficult to resolve the conflict in relations between the genders in the cooperatives.

It was not difficult for members to agree, at least in principle, that fuller participation in the cooperatives by women was reasonable and necessary because their economy is in distress. In a situation of declining agricultural productivity rural Haitians are seeking solutions to their economic problems and the cooperative networks which offer credit, information and training are viewed as a possible solution by those who implicate themselves in these organizations.

6.2 Reflections on Gender Relations, Social Power, and the Geography of Development

Traditionally, geographers examine inequity in

societies in a general manner. This dissertation emphasizes the significance of delving below superficial appearances of unity or dissent in order to explore the complexity of human relations. In this way, the work contributes original ideas and methods which will assist future studies of the transformation of spatial patterns which are inequitable. Specifically, as pertains to conflicts of interests of a socio-sexual nature, gender relations must be examined.

A follow-up of this research would be both informative and useful as a comparison. As well, comparative studies can be enacted globally where systems are undergoing rapid socio-economic and political change.

When questioning social power such as gender relations, a researcher must be particularly sensitive, respectful and knowledgeable. I found that my respondents were angry and sad when gender relations were discussed. Women were hurt when their exploitation was openly revealed, and men were confused and embarrassed. Haitian men truly value the contributions Haitian women make to the society as mothers, sisters, daughters, and partners. Yet, the men found it hard to give up the power they had, particularly because they have so little control over their socio-economic and political lives (Chapter One).

As a regional context to study gender relations, I found Haiti to be particularly interesting and very successful. As alluded to in the above paragraph, relations between the genders in rural Haiti are intriguing due to their complexity. Haitian women are as much an anomaly as the country itself. The female experience in this country is one where women hold enormous power in important economic spheres. The contradiction, therefore, between this reality and ideologies, institutions and practices which result in

women's subordinate position to men is both baffling and fascinating. Furthermore, the Haitian women and men encountered during the study were wonderfully open, kind, full of humour, and sincere in their desire to be helpful. It is always a pleasure to spend time with, and be part of, this resilient and resourceful population.

Finally, as concerns the geography of development and social power, I think similar concepts and methods could be used to study opposing interacting social forces within changing systems, other than those of a socio-sexual nature. These methods can be used to study other groups which are pushed to the periphery because they hold different preferences and practices to mainstream groups whose framework is the one considered acceptable and allowable in the society. This includes, for example, racial minorities, immigrant populations, and class categories.

When examining power, it is useful to reject essentialist thinking about humans because such theories are often flawed and can be politically dangerous (commonly associated with ideologies of oppression). In reality, life is more diverse and complex. Power within systems is commonly diffused and fractured. Most importantly, because power is a social construct, it is provisional and dissolvable.

One of the goals of this work has been to demonstrate that there is flexibility in human choice rather than preset limits to human possibilities. In the cooperatives, we were able to question gender relations, and discuss changes which alleviated, at least temporarily, the tension between female and male members.

6.3 Conclusion

In dynamic development there are periods of order and disorder. In periods of instability, new realities, including new identities, become possible. Generally, limitations on the fullest expression of human potentiality are created not by hormonal or genetic disposition but by the poverty of the specific environment (in the fullest sense), and by repression imposed both through the use of force and subtly by dominant individuals or groups.

The question of how to attain equitable development, whether in rural Haiti or other countries, is significant to those concerned with social justice. Researchers and strategists, with these concerns, must benefit from the opportunities which these periods of development offer to inform themselves in order to establish appropriate policies which are more just. In this way, all interested individuals can contribute to the new social order.

In the future, more applied work will be necessary so that appropriate strategies can be designed for the full integration of more vulnerable groups, such as women, in country development. Participation by individuals often depends on their ability to recognise and use their skills and capabilities for their own development and the development of their communities. In general, this translates to a concerted effort to augment human resource skills and self-confidence to the point where these individuals are able and willing to accept decision-making roles in their communities. Coincidentally, there must be strategies or public policies which enable these individuals to have equitable opportunities.

APPENDIX A
MEN SA KI POU FET

- 1) Avèti twa Fanm ak twa Gason ki enskri sou lis la, ke nou ta renmen rann yo ti visit lakay yo menm le maten vè inè nan laprè midi de _____
- 2) Si yonn nan ^{Gason oubyen} medam sila yo pa ta disponib o pa kapab patisipe oubyin pa vle patisipe nan rankont nap fè ak li-a, sil vou plè, chwazi yon lòt ^{Gason o} Fanm nan menm lis la. Pa ekzanp, wap kòmanse depi anwo lis la e wap kontinye jiskann ba jiska's ke ou jwen twa Fanm serye ki pou patisipe.
- 3) Nou ta renmen gen yon bon jan adrès Kay moun ki pral patisipe nan etid ke nap fè-a.

Vè twa zè de laprè midi nou ta renmen fè yon reyinyon ak Prezidan, Vis-Prezidan, Sekretè ak Trezorye Koperativ la pou pale sou mwayen ki ta pibon pou pèmèt Fanm yo entegre yo nan aktivite Koperativ epi jwenn yon jan pou yo patisipe ak tout fòs yo nan Koperativ sa.

Nou ta renmen ke Prezidan invite de (2) Fanm (se pa menm Fanm nou te pale ak yo deja-a) Fanm ki manb Aktif nan Koperativ la pou patisipe nan reyinyon-an.

Sil vou plè

- 1) Avèti 4 manb Konsey ak 2 Fanm ke Prezidan-an chwazi pou patisipe nan reyinyon-an.
- 2) Prepare yon kote pou reyinyon sa fèt, tanpri.

Nou ta renmen remèsye ou pou tout èd ke wap banou pou ke etid sa fèt. Nou espere rankontre ou kan menm.

Mèsi ankò.

*8:00 hr. a 6:00 hr.
maten laprè midi*

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTION

Lide koperativ se ekzatemman sa Pe Titide di nou nan diskou li---
TET ANSAM. Le ou prcdwi ansam, le ou mete ti cob sou kote ANSAM,
ANSAM. Le yon sel moun travay, li bouke pi vit ke le plizie moun
ap mete ansam pou pote chay. Eske se vre ke yon sel dwet pa manje
kalalou. ANSAM ANSAM, sa vle di tout moun, gason ak fanm,
granmoun, kou jen moun. Ke se selman gason ki mete cob sou cote,
eske se vre?

Nap viv ansam nan yon memm kominote. Se memm jan le tout moun nan
yon sel fanmi, gason ak fanm met tet ansam pou fe jaden, yonn ede
lot, konsa jaden an bay anpil manje. Se memm jan tou le gason ak
fanm met ansam pou mete yon ti cob sou kote, sapral pemet kes la
vin pi lou.

Madam ki sou kote'm nan ta renmen konnen poukisa fanm yo pa gen
anpil aktivite nan kes la ke gason yo. Se tojou plis gason yo ki
manm kes la. Eske se paske gen plis gason ke fanm nan kominote-a?
Osinon poukisa?

Madam sa ki bo kote'm nan ak mwen memm, le nou tap viv Kanada,
nan Montreal, nou remake ke anpil fanm met TET ANSAM pou yo ka
vin non selman mamm, men pou yo men-nen aktivite nan kes la, sa
vle di, yo nan konsey administrasyon, yo se sekrete, yo se
administrate et gen de le gen fanm ki rive vin' direkte. Kounye a
mwen ta renmen pose ou kek ti kestyon.

Anvan mwen koumanse ak kestiona-a mwen ta renmen di nou tou ke le
etid ke nap fe kounye-a ap fini, na voye yon rapo bay chak lide
koperativ\kes la epi de la lide-a pral men-nen yon gran
diskisyon sou pwoblem ke nou te pale le rankont sa yo ak tout
moun nan kominote-a kite patisipe le sa-a. Nou ta renmen asire
nou ke le anket sa-a pral fini, madamm sa-a pral fe de fason aske
gen yon bagay ki fet

KESTYONE POU ANKET

REPRESANTAN

DEPI KONBYEN TAN OU NAN KES LA?

KI SEKSYON RIRAL BO ISIT LA?

KI JAN OU RELE?

KONBYEN PITIT OU GEN-YEN? GASON FI

KI LAJ PREMYE PITIT OU?

KI LAJ OU?

ESKE OU VOYE PITIT OU LEKOL? ESKE OU TE GEN CHANS AL LEKOL?

NAN KI KLAS OU RIVE? ESKE OU KON LI AK EKRI?

ESKE OU FE JADEN?

KI KOMES OU FE? KISA WAP FE?

SEKSYON I: KIJAN NOU PRAL FE

1.0 Eske ou deja patisipe nan yon serkl detid?

Men sa yon serkl detid ye:

Li eksplike kijan kes popile-a fonksyonnen;

Li eksplike kondisyon ki pou pemet ou vin'n manm
(pa sosyal, ou fet pou gen 18 an);

Li eksplike responsabilite soubo paw

(respekte lajan ke ou prete, patisipe nan reyinyon
yo, fe depo chak semenn).

Si non. Poukisa?

Le ou te koumanse nan kes popile, kisa yo te di ou?

Konbyen kob pa sosyal la ye?

Eske ou vin' nan reyinyon yo?

Eske yo kon' fe eleksyon nan kes popile-a?

Eske ou vote?

Eske ou janm vote pou yon fanm?

1.1 Eske gen anpil fanm nan kes la? Si nou konsidere jan fanm yo travay anpil, kijan nou ta fe pou ede yo resevwa fomasyon ke yap beswen pou pemet yo patisipe nan yon koperativ (kes)?

Sa vle di pou gen piis fanm nan koperativ la (kes), kijou nan semen nan ki ta pi bon pou nou ta resevwa fomasyon sou koperativ (kes)?

- a) dimanch
- b) samdi
- c) lendi, madi, mekredi, jedi, vandredi
- d) aswe
- e) lajounen

Ki le ki ta pibon nan jounen an?

- a) midi - 2ze
- b) kilot le

Ki kote ki ta pibon pou fe fomasyon pou koperativ (kes)?

- a) koperativ (kes) - la memm
- b) mache
- c) legliz
- d) sal pawasyal
- e) ki lot kote anko

Kisa nou kafe pou ede fanm yo apran sou aktivite koperativ (kes)?

- a) semine
- b) video televisyon
- c) distribisyon papye
- e) ki lot jan

Ki kalite moun ke ou kew kita pibyen plase pou fe fomasyon ak motivasyon?

- a) Ayisyen
- b) Etranje\yon blan
- c) Yon moun tankou'm dyaspora

Kisa kita pi bon pou mete aktivite nan fanm yo, pou motive yo? Yon fanm parey ou, oswa yon gason?

- 1.2 Le wal nan reyinyon yo, eske ou we ke gen anpil fanm ladan'1? Nan moun ki dirije kes la, eske gen fanm ki ladan'1?

Presidan-an\se yon gason
 Vis presidan-an\se yon gason
 Sekrete-a\se yon gason
 Trezorye-a\se yon gason
 Poukisa se toujou gason, se pa janm yon fanm?

Poukisa pa gen plis? Eske se paske yo

- a) pa gen tan
- b) eske se paske yo pe dyob sa-a kalite responsabilté poukisa yo ta pe responsabilté sa-a sa-a
- c) eske se paske yo pa kalifye

- 1.3 Ki kalite aktivite nou ta bezwen men-nen pou pemet fanm yo patisipe yo nan konsey administrasyon koperativ (kes)? Pa ekzamp, pou yon fanm ta vin' prezidan kes la kisa lita bezwen plis?

- a) fomasyon nan administrasyon
- b) fomasyon nan koperativ (kes)
- c) plis konesans sou ko-op
- d) ki lot fomasyon yo ta renmen resewa

- 1.4 Ki kalita fanm ou ta chwazi ki pou ta vin' prezidan kes la? E kijan nou pral chwazi li?

- a) yon fanm ki kon' pale
- b) yon fanm van-yan
- c) yon fanm ki gen konesans

Eske ou ta renmen vin' prezidan kes la?

Eske gen fanm nan kes la kita kapab vin' prezidan kes la?

Poukisa ou pat vote pou li?

Kijan you ta fe pou yo ta jwen yon ti tan pou yo fe dyob sa-a?

SEKSYON 2: ANALIZ SOU SITYASYON FANM YO NAN ZAFE EKONOMI AK KREDI

- 2.0 Eske ou nan sang (sold)?
- a) Kisa ou vlé di pa sangl
Kisa sangl la ye'
Poukisa nou fe sangl
Kisa nou fe ak kob sa-a
 - b) Kijan li fonksyonen
Ki regleman sangl la
Konbyen tan li dire
 - c) Kyes ki responsab kob la
Kyes ki oganize sang la
Kijan yo chwazi moun
Ki pou patisipe nan sang lan
Eske gen fanm ak gason nan sang lan
 - d) Ki es ki kap mamm
Ki es ki kap patisipe
Konbyen moun ki kapab patisipe ladan'l
 - e) Eske gen anpil group-sangl nan kominote-a
Konbyen moun pa group
Eske gen anpil moun ki patisipe nan sangl la
Eske se yon bagay ke yo fe nan kominote yo
Kouman moun yo fe konnen ke sang'l la eksizte
- 2.1 Kisa ou fe ak kob ou ekonomize-a?
- 2.2 Eske ou jann panse mete'l nan yon kes?
Poukisa? Ou mett kob nan kes la?
- 2.3 Ki es ki ba ou kredi kounye a
Eske ou kon prete kob nan kes-la?
- 2.4 Ki pwoblem ki anpeche fanm resevwa kredi?
- a) lejislatif (ou marye)
 - b) kob
 - c) pa jwen ase enfomasyon

SEKSYION 3: ANALIZ SOU SITYASYION FANM YO NAN ZAFE KOPERATIV
AGRIKOL

- 3.0 Ki kalite aktivite ke se selman fanm yo ki kapab fe'l nan jaden?
- 3.1 Ki aktivite fanm yo ap men-nen nan koperativ koun-nye-a epi kijan yo rele fanm sa yo: ouvrye, se benevola yap fe?
- 3.2 Ki kalite gwoupman ke fanm oganize, tankou pa ekzamp "sold", lwe kanyon pou ale nan mache, ale nan larivye ansam, le fanm ap fe manje pou kombit. (Kijan nou rele bagay sa yo) noumen nou rele sa, OTO OGANIZASYON, paske se oumemm ki pran inisyative sa, se noumen fanm ki deside met tet ansam pou oganize nou.

AUX DIRIGEANTS:

- 1.0 Kijan nou pral fe pou pemet fanm yo met tet ansan pou yo byen konpran aktivite komèsyal e kouman yo ka patisipe nan realizasyon aktivite sa yo:
- 1.1 Ki mwayen nou kab amelye pou pemet nou asire ke fanm yo byen entegre nan yon oganizasyon ke pwofesyon ap apiye
- 1.2 Bon jan aktivite nou dwe realize anvan ak fanm yo.
Egzamp: fomasyon sou koperativ ki pral pemet nou kreye bonjan kondisyon kipou fe yo patisipe nan aktivite proje ak entegrasyon yo nan estrikti koperativ (kes)?
- 1.3 Ki pwoblèm ki kab anpeche fanm yo fe pati nan konsey administrasyon kes popile ak nan oganizasyon SOKEPNO?
 - a) tan
 - b) fomasyon
 - c) ki lot pwoblèm anko
- 1.4 Ki pwoblèm kita anpeche fanm yo patisipe nan diskisyon ak desizyon nan zafè koperativ ak zafè UCONORD ki solisyon yo ta kapab pran?
 - a) Eske nou bay madam yo kredi?
 - b) Eske nou oblije mande mari you signen pou ba yo pèmasyon pou yo resevwa kredi sa-a

ESKE NOU CAPAB GEN LIS MENM KONSEYO SIL VOU PLE

APPENDIX C

TRADITIONAL FORMS OF SAVING AND CREDIT IN RURAL HAITI

Most rural Haitians are familiar with the notion of credit. Credit with interest rates around 50% is obtainable from loan sharks and speculators. Some borrow money from formal lending institutions such as credit unions, government-sponsored programs, NGOs, and banks. Interest rates range from approximately 12% to 20% on these loans. Loans with varying rates of interest can sometimes be obtained from family or friends. Additionally, individuals who are 'responsible' (repay their debts) can usually obtain interest-free credit from local merchants for items such as soap, oil, sugar, or bread. These grants normally must be repaid within a week. Certain retailers will include a carrying charge (around 10% of initial asking price) on purchases which are paid on a time plan (over a period of a few months).

Many individuals signified that credit is intrinsic to their way of life. This point was emphasized by one man who maintained that in a subsistence economy like Haiti "if you do not sell on credit, the merchandise can stay in your hand and rot". According to several reports, most people repay their debts eventually.

In the departments of the north and north east there is no evidence to suggest that discrimination on the basis of sex exists in the granting of credit. On the contrary, many inhabitants of these regions attested that women as a group were slightly favoured as recipients of credit because of their regular participation in commercial activities.

The principal factors for obtaining any advance were applied equally to women and men. These were the following: one must be known personally by the benefactor; one must be reputed to honour commitments of this nature; and, one must be assumed to have the capacity to reimburse the debt. On formal loans, signatories are required as insurance in case the borrower is not able to repay the amount. This regulation holds for all individuals regardless of sex. In situations where one spouse is illiterate, the other will be asked to sign on behalf of this person. Again this rule applies to either sex.

Among the variety of saving and credit systems familiar to most rural Haitians, there is one concept which could be viewed as a forerunner to a system of credit unions. This is the solde (in some areas referred to as a sanql).

Solde

Haitians describe solde as "a way in which groups of people put money together to regulate spending". As characterized by many, it functions much like a short-term saving and credit system. The principle is for the group to amass a lump sum of money to be allocated to participants on a rotational basis according to specified rules.

Women tend to use their amount for commerce. Some, for example, buy clothing in bulk which they then sell by the piece; others buy commodities such as oil or kerosene in large measurements to be reduced and sold in smaller units. Men often use their savings for garden expenditures, to invest in animals and/or land, or to purchase building materials for their homes. As well, both use these funds for general household expenses (in urban areas it was used to pay household rent). It was not uncommon for individuals to

deposit a portion of the lump sum from the solde in their account at the credit union. Additionally, many reserved a share to repay solde debt.

The incidence of these groups in a given area seems to depend on factors such as regional attitudes (solde do not abound when ties among community members are weak or where individuals are not 'serious', that is, they do not honour their payments) and income level (solde do not exist where earnings are relatively inferior). In vicinities where solde prosper, the practice is normally widespread.

There are various ways in which groups are assembled. Commonly, participants are invited to join by the 'head', the person who manages the money and activities of the group. Sometimes, several individuals will decide themselves to form a solde and they will select their own leader. Occasionally, solde members are permitted to sponsor friends into the group but generally entrance is subject to the approval of the 'head'.

Group size may be small (8-20), medium (21-49), or large (50-80). Some groups are exclusive according to sex; others include members of both sex. All participants, however, must be individuals who are: "honest, responsible, serious, socially cooperative, self-respecting, inhabitants and well-known to others of the immediate community, and of course, able to pay".

The system is relatively uncomplicated but highly structured. All participants are familiar with the operations of their particular organization and acknowledge that one must strictly adhere to the rules or accept censure, at the least, from other members of the group and occasionally also from the community at large. Members

display discretion in discussing the activities of their group with people in the community who are not directly involved. The principles guiding members pertain primarily to the amount and schedule for deposit and withdrawal.

Solde members make their deposits and receive their withdrawals according to a broad range of formalized arrangements which are unique to each group. The deposit required varies greatly as demonstrated by the following examples: \$.40 daily; \$.20 to \$.80 weekly; \$1 to \$2 weekly; \$10 weekly; \$20 monthly; \$30 monthly; \$100 monthly. Members will "take their hand" (withdraw a specified amount when it is their turn) on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis. This credit must be fully reimbursed within a fixed period of time--usually one week or one month. No interest is charged. In some solde, members withdraw sequentially; in others two or more members withdraw at one time.

In the study an example was given of a relatively sophisticated variant from the standard forms. This solde, which had been managed for several years by the same woman, was extremely large (~80 participants). The sum of money for deposit and withdrawal differed among individual members and as many as six individuals removed money each month. Solde, such as this, which have known success can operate continuously for years. The group may remain fairly consistent with minor changes. Some appoint a new 'head' annually. Frequently, individuals who have been problematic during the course of the 'round' will not be invited to participate again. Some solde stop temporarily when commerce is slow or the harvest is meagre.

There are individuals who simultaneously exploit the systems of solde and formal credit unions in order to profit from their particular benefits. Many users regard the solde

as an efficient form of short-term saving and credit for ordinary day-to-day expenditures. This credit is interest-free and in some groups, deposits as low as \$.20 are permitted (which some indicated would not be accepted at the credit union). Moreover, there are those who appreciate "being forced to save" by group pressure. Credit union savings, on the other hand, are viewed as long-term investment assets which serve as collateral for more significant loans.

This information was collected from respondents during the study (Questionnaire Appendix B, Section II, 2.0, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4).

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