
*Haitian Bean Circuits: Cropping and
Trading Maneuvers among a
Cash-Oriented Peasantry*

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For several decades anthropologists working in the Caribbean have been explicitly aware of the need to look beyond the confines of the communities which they study, to take into consideration major national and supranational forces which have shaped and influenced local life (e.g. Smith 1956: chap. 8; Steward 1956:6-7; Padilla 1960:22; Manners 1960:80-82). But at first glance the situation of the people of rural Haiti appears to be somewhat exceptional in this regard. Analysts of rural Haitian society appear to be more impressed by the isolation of the peasant's life than by his involvement with events and people outside his community.¹

This paper is in part an argument against the incautious use of the word "isolated" to describe the situation of the Haitian peasant. During the twenty-one months we spent in a hamlet of the Cul-de-Sac Plain in the Western Department of Haiti, our initial feelings of radical isolation from external events gave way to an increasing awareness of how deeply certain crucial features of the behavior of the villagers were in fact shaped by (and had consequences for) the behavior of people outside the community. Though

The information upon which this paper is based was collected while one of the authors was doing research in Haiti (near a town herein given the pseudonym Les Bayahondes as an Overseas Population Intern in the Department of Population Planning of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and the other author was employed under a brief contract with the Instituto Interamericano de Ciencias Agrícolas (IICA) in Haiti to gather information on the marketing of beans. This paper is an adaptation of a report submitted to IICA on termination of fieldwork. The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of the abovementioned institutions. With respect to this paper, special thanks are due to Dr. J.M. Montoya Maquín, Representative of IICA in Haiti, and to Mr. Jerry LaGra; Agricultural Economist of that same institution, for their assistance and comments.

the interventions of foreign economic agents, or even of national institutions such as schools or health services, are measurably weaker in rural Haiti than, for example, in any other island society of the Greater Antilles, the Haitian peasant cannot be said to live in self-contained communities. The residents of the village where we did our fieldwork were brought into significant contact with people outside their community—with people even in distant parts of Haiti—through the energetic operation on a national scale of what is generally referred to as the "internal market system" (Mintz 1959 and 1960a). Though Haiti as a national polity has been—and to some degree still is—relatively isolated from external involvements, the different regions within Haiti itself are linked to each other by active trade networks. The agricultural activities of our male informants were largely oriented toward various trade outlets, and most village women earned a substantially independent livelihood through their activities as professional intermediaries in the internal market system. Thus, despite its relative physical isolation, our community was not isolated in any important functional sense, and critical aspects of peasant activity and peasant concerns could be comprehended only by reference to this supracommunity market system.

This posed a basic fieldwork problem. Several major research topics we were interested in pursuing, such as domestic organization, land tenure, folk medicine, could to some degree be investigated within the confines of a single community. But the fundamental involvement of village residents in external trade networks, and the physical absence of economically active females from the community during lengthy periods, made it imperative that we obtain a necessary minimum of basic information on certain strategic marketing patterns whose principal locus lay outside the community itself. Although we were fortunate in having at our disposal a corpus of literature which dealt with the Haitian internal market system,² several key market-oriented maneuvers and concerns which we identified in the village were not dealt with specifically in the literature, and some basic information on these was needed to shed light on certain features of domestic life in the village.

We therefore decided to enlarge the physical scope of our research and to follow villagers outside the community as they participated in community-external market activities. But our observations of the market system were highly focused; we restricted our questioning and observation to those phenomena and situations which directly involved (or impinged upon) members of our com-

munity. The women in our community dedicated themselves principally to the purchase and resale of beans, carrying on this trading activity outside the community. We followed several women as they went to Port-au-Prince and other parts of Haiti in their trading activities, and we approached the internal market system in part by concentrating on the production and distribution of beans, this being the commodity in which intermediaries from the village tended to specialize. Beans were also one of the cash crops grown by the males of the village, and we were thus able to explore the factors guiding the production and initial disposal of this crop.

In the following pages we will describe the major channels through which beans were found to move from producer to urban consumer; identify the various intermediary types who participate in this movement; give some idea of the alternatives, obstacles, and general opportunity structure within which each of these intermediary types functions; and describe the major strategies and maneuvers which the various traders actually employ in their operations. Though our goal was ethnographic coverage of the entire sequence of bean movement—from bush to urban kitchen—our information is much more complete for some segments of the chain than for others. And though four different surveys were carried out in the village at different points in fieldwork, providing various types of economic and social data on the entire research community, presentation of quantitative data will not be attempted here. The data-base for the following pages consists of the corpus of descriptive notes made during lengthy observation of agricultural and trading activities (with some actual participation in the latter by Alvarez) and a further corpus of several hundred pages of verbatim transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews with cultivators and traders.

The Producer of Beans

Given the fundamental importance of beans in the trading activities of the village women, it will be useful to begin our analysis of the process by which beans become available for marketing by discussing the decisions involved in the choice of beans as a crop, the technology in its production, and the factors determining its disposition. These decisions and activities are carried out by market-oriented peasant producers.

Despite their popularity as a food item, beans are not, for many peasant families in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, an invariable element

in the daily diet, especially at certain times of the year. During most months, beans have to be purchased by the inhabitants of this region for home consumption. The high cost of beans relative to equal but more filling quantities of millet and cornmeal induce many families, particularly those with many children, to do without beans in periods when they are especially expensive.

Thus the major role of beans in the lives of the Plain is clearly that of a source of cash income. Beans are planted more with a view to sale than to home consumption, for in many ways they are an excellent cash crop—one that is fast growing and pays well per unit of land. Under present technology a hectare planted in beans in the region of Les Bayahondes will produce a harvest of some 1,200 pounds. Though no peasant in the community has a hectare of beans, several have planted a quarter of a *carreau*,³ which could bring about \$50.00 if the beans are sold immediately after harvest—and even more if retained until prices rise after the post harvest glut.

In these terms beans are a more attractive crop than the sugar cane and sweet potatoes which cover most of the cultivated area south of Les Bayahondes. They are even more attractive than rice, which takes longer to grow and requires much more labor. Only plantains and green onions are more profitable per unit of land than are beans, if one considers the crops grown in the research area.

The proper question to ask, then, is not why the peasantry grows beans in the Plain, but rather why many peasants do not. There are three conditions which can induce a local peasant not to grow beans. The first is the lack of adequate land. If sugar cane and sweet potatoes are the principal products in many parts of the Plain, it is because the land is suited to no other locally grown crops. Beans are planted only on land free of the salinity which plagues so much of the soil in that region.

Second, the peasant may possess adequate land but will not plant beans because he lacks sufficient water. Beans have very high water requirements relative to most other crops grown in this area of the Plain. The peasants explain that in the mountains (*nâ mòn*, i.e. most other parts of Haiti) beans can be planted where there is no irrigation because the land there is *tè frèt*, "cold earth." This means that the beans will take somewhat longer to grow (a full three months), but the yields are more assured and the beans will do well with rainfall alone. Even if the rain is not abundant, the beans will still give some yield; they will rarely be completely destroyed because of insufficient water. On the Plain,

the situation is otherwise. Most of the land is "hot earth," to use the peasants' classification system. Beans will be completely destroyed if they are not irrigated frequently and abundantly. Many bean crops have been lost for precisely that reason, and a farmer will hesitate to plant beans unless the plot of land is one where the water is *lib*, that is, available in abundance at all times. If the water for a given plot is scarce, the farmer will plant sweet potatoes, or possibly eggplant, instead of beans.

Finally, there are suitable plots of land which have not been planted in beans because the peasant lacks capital to buy seed. Most crops grown on the Plain are planted from seed or stem cuttings which are not purchased. Cane is planted from stalks cut in neighbors' gardens. Sweet potato cuttings for planting are also obtained free from neighbors' gardens. Rice for the next planting is usually stored in calabashes. But beans cannot be stored in this fashion, given the existing level of technology. The peasants believe that there are "products" which can be sprayed on the beans to keep them from spoiling in storage, but they have never used these substances. Some have the custom of sprinkling charcoal ashes over their beans before storing them, and this reportedly keeps beans for a long time. But the majority of bean planters have to purchase their seed. Unless the bean crop from the mountains has made beans available in abundance, the scarcity at planting time in the Plain will push up bean prices. In December 1972, for instance, peasants of Les Bayahondes were paying about \$0.16 a pound for bean seed, which was considered very high.

We did not hear of or find any cases of peasants borrowing money to buy seed. Most loans (by either males or females) are made either to begin trading or for life-cycle crises (especially funerals). The peasants we knew do not invest much cash in their agricultural activities and rarely go into debt because of their gardens. Bean seed must be paid for in cash, and if the peasant does not have the cash available, he will probably plant sweet potatoes instead, since stem cuttings can be obtained free.

Some cultivators have worked out ingenious "storage" methods for beans which utilize interregional climatic differences and differences in planting times for the several zones. In the mountains near Les Bayahondes, the bean harvest comes in late November or early December. The farmers in the mountains will not plant beans again until March. They cannot store beans from the December harvest for the March planting. Some of them seek out peasants on the Plain who will be planting beans in early or mid-December. They lend bean seed to these farmers, who after the

harvest of their crop in late February or early March return the same amount of seed to those in the mountains. By this time the mountain farmers will have begun to prepare their plots for the March planting. Thus, the mountain farmers have effectively "stored" their December beans for planting in March, and the Plain farmers have secured free seed. The number of farmers who enter into these arrangements is probably small.

This arrangement epitomizes our assertion that the Haitian peasant is not isolated in his community. Though isolated as a group from the outside world, the Haitian peasantry of one region depends on the crops—eagerly awaits the crops—produced in others. The peasants of the Cul-de-Sac Plain in June 1973 were talking about the bean crops that would be harvested later in the year in other parts of the country, forcing down the current unprecedented high prices and enabling the people of the Plain to eat more beans. The different regions of the country, then, are closely linked, and a firm basis of the linkage is the internal market system.

We have indicated that the quantity of beans which a given region will produce for distribution within the internal market system is largely a function of soil, water, and capital availability. So popular are beans as a cash crop that market fluctuations do not appear seriously to affect the quantity of beans to be planted. That is, peasants do not seem to ask themselves how well the beans from the previous crop sold in determining what percentage of their holdings they will allocate to beans for the current crop. Instead, it is assumed that beans will sell well, and the area dedicated to them will be determined by the aggregate effect of the factors listed above.

Once the peasant has decided to plant beans, the next decision he has to make concerns the variety of beans he will plant. Out of the very long list of bean varieties present in Haiti, those known to the farmers in the Plain are the following:⁴

Common Name	Botanical Name
Poua rouj	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> (red bean)
Poua noua	" " (black bean)
Poua blâ	" " (white bean)
Poua pistach (also called "poua sèt sémèn")	" "
Poua valèt blâ	" "
Poua valèt noua	" "

Common Name	Botanical Name
Poua sinistré	" " (pinto bean)
Poua bè	" "
Poua kòk	<i>Phaseolus sp.</i>
Poua kôgo	<i>Ca janus indicus</i> (congo bean)
Poua d'chous	<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>
Poua êkoni	<i>Vigna sinensis</i> ("unknown" bean)
Poua jérisalèm	<i>Vigna chrysanthus</i>
Poua palmist	<i>Andira jamaicensis</i>
Poua frâs	<i>Pisum sativum</i>
Poua nouris	<i>Dolychos ladrae</i>

The peasants are aware that there are gross regional climatic considerations which make some beans more suitable for planting in one region than in another. For example, congo beans are known to do poorly in the Plain. Not only do they give lower yields than in the mountains, but animals reportedly have a strong predilection for these beans, which makes it unwise to plant them in quantity in regions such as the Plain, where gardens are no longer surrounded by fences as they used to be in times past.

But outside of these limitations, the choice of which bean to plant is said by the peasants to be a matter of personal preference. If one cultivator plants red beans and his neighbor plants black beans, informants attribute it to *lidê moun-nâ*, the person's own choice, and deny that differences in soil-type determine such differences in cropping choice with respect to beans.

However, closer questioning indicates that there are at least two practical factors which some producers take into account when choosing which variety of bean to plant: (1) the speed of growth and (2) the amount of land which a given quantity of seed will plant. Stated succinctly, a bean variety will be preferred if it grows fast in relation to other varieties and if a *gro-mamit* (a common tin measure containing about five and a half pounds of beans) of that variety will plant more than a *gro-mamit* of another variety.

For this reason many peasants of the Plain plant a small red variety called *poua pistach* (also called "seven-week bean"). This variety has two advantages. In the first place it has a short growing period, as the name indicates, which lessens the period in which it is exposed to damaging winds. (In the Plain beans reportedly have few problems with pests or illnesses; it is the wind which destroys many crops.) The shorter growing period of this bean furthermore makes it require one irrigation less than most other

varieties, which is an important consideration for a cultivator who fears he will not have sufficient water for his beans. Furthermore, the small grain of poua pistach means that a given quantity of this bean will plant more land than a given quantity of other, larger varieties, thereby reducing the per-unit-land seed cost.

The disadvantage of poua pistach is a lower market price. But in many cases the above mentioned advantages induce peasants to choose them, even though their market value will be lower than that of other beans. While such considerations may explain the popularity of one bean variety in the Plain, we are not sure of the true determinants of the relative importance of different varieties of beans in peasant gardens and in the internal market system.

When the beans are harvested, it is the peasant himself and members of his family who must take the beans through the entire initial processing procedure. With the exception of poua d'chous and poua frâs, no beans are sold in the pod. To harvest the beans, the peasant pulls up the entire plant, rather than picking off individual pods. The plant is transported to the peasant's house, where it is stored for three days. Thus any unripe beans can ripen in their pods while still on the plant. The beans are then given an initial sunning: they are spread out in the peasant's *lakou*⁵ directly on the ground, and occasionally turned over, during an entire day. The leaves wither and fall. Late in the afternoon the beans are again carried into the house or the storage depot in the peasant's compound. The next day the process is repeated and the beans are then ready for shelling. This operation is also done directly on the ground in the peasant's *lakou*. Males with long heavy poles rhythmically pound the entire pile of plants; the beans pop out of their dried pods and remain on the ground. Those that fall far from the pile are gathered by children in small plates, but the bulk of the beans remain under the plants. The plants are then removed, and the beans are winnowed by shaking them in a large flat wicker tray (*layé*). They are gathered and placed in *sak-pay*, huge wicker baskets made for carrying loads on animals. Having been gathered in the *sak-pay*, the beans are measured out by the peasants into large sacks. Each sack will contain about 40 gro-mamit of beans, that is, between 200 and 220 pounds. The sacks will be sewn closed and stored until the beans are to be sold.

The next decision the peasant must make concerns the quantity and timing of his sale of the beans. This decision does rest with the peasant household. In other settings, where credit relationships have managed to bring the peasant under direct control of out-

siders, the harvest may come under the outsider's control as well. But in our research community we found—with the exception of sugar cane—little direct control by outsiders over the peasant's cropping and marketing decisions. And in matters of credit, it is commonly the peasant who extends it to undercapitalized intermediaries, rather than the contrary.

Some qualifications must be attached to this portrayal of the independence of the Haitian peasant, however. Though the peasant does not in general receive outright cash loans for his cropping activities, there is a disguised and disadvantageous form of lending which occasionally takes place in relation to the peasant's crops (in this case, his bean crop). Well-to-do intermediaries, anticipating the coming bean crop, will seek to induce the peasant to sell all or part of his crop *sou pié*—before it has been harvested. Some peasants, beset by a crisis such as the sickness of a child or the death of a family member, will agree to sell their beans before the harvest. The purchaser will then contract for so many gro-mamit of beans at a stipulated price. The price of beans will depend on the stage of growth at which he finds them. If it is supposed that the immediate postharvest price for beans will be 3 gourdes, the buyer will pay 2 gourdes for the gro-mamit of beans if they are at an advanced stage of growth. If, however, they have been recently planted, then person buying will give the peasant as little as a gourde per gro-mamit. This price differential does not depend on any risk-taking by the purchaser; if he purchases 10 gro-mamit *sou-pié*, the peasant must provide the agreed-upon quantity, even if the crop fails.

In the case of less fragile crops—especially root crops such as shallot and sweet potatoes—the purchaser may actually pre-purchase a portion of that crop "by row" in the peasant's garden. In such a transaction the buyer has examined the garden and buys a specific row, which he himself must harvest when the time comes. But beans are so risky in the plains that purchasers will generally not buy a row of beans in the garden, since the peasant is not responsible for subsequent crop failures, and beans are known for their tendency to succumb to one or another destroyers. The peasant bean planter who besomes *âgajé*—beset by a crisis—before harvest time will have to sell a stipulated number of gro-mamit and come harvest time, deliver that quantity or its current cash equivalent, whether his crop has succeeded or not.

But arrangements such as this are the exception, where the peasant lacks full control over his crop of beans. Ordinarily the peasant has no such commitment and is relatively free to dispose of his

own bean crop in terms of his immediate needs and the current state of the market.

The investigative task, then, is to discover the determinants of the peasant's behavior with respect to his bean harvest. The two major questions to be answered are:

- (1) What determines the percentage of his crop which the peasant will sell, as opposed to that which he will use for family consumption?
- (2) What determines the timing of his sale—i.e. why do some peasants sell immediately, whereas others hold off until market prices have risen?

As to the first question, it is clear from our observations and from informants that in virtually all cases the larger part of a successful bean crop will be sold. If the beans have been destroyed in the garden and the peasant has brought home only a few pounds, these will be eaten by his family. But if he has had a successful crop, the bulk of the harvest is destined for other consumers, not for his own family. At most, a peasant will store 100-150 pounds of beans (depending on the size of his family) and prepare the rest for marketing.

Nonetheless there are differences in these regards within a community; some will save more than others. Paradoxically, it seems, the principle is: the poorer the peasant, the more he will sell. Because beans are relatively expensive in relation to cornmeal and millet, the hard-up peasant prefers to purchase one of the latter with money he gets for his bean crop.

There is another principle which operates to determine whether a given individual will incline to sell or consume. The higher the price on the market, the more likely the person is to sell. This is not as self-evident as it may seem at first. If the market price of beans is high, chances are that the market prices of millet and cornmeal are also high. Thus the peasant who sells his beans for a higher price will also have to pay a higher price for these less expensive staples when he purchases them, instead of consuming the beans he has grown. Informants say that this is a type of "irrationality" on their part, that some peasants have *vādās* (similar to "greed" in English) and will be tricked into selling by high market prices.

In actuality this tendency to prefer cash to home-grown food reflects two features of peasant life in Haiti, at least on the Cul-de-Sac Plain, which must be kept in mind if we are to avoid misinterpreting the situation of the peasant:

(1) The peasant of the Plain is not basically a *subsistence* cultivator in a strict sense of the word. In general he *purchases* what he eats. On the Plain there is a marked preference for selling cash crops grown locally in order to purchase cheaper foodstuffs grown in other regions of the country (principally cornmeal and millet).

(2) We found that the peasants conceptualized "success" in terms of the gradual acquisition of more land. Crops are used to purchase small animals; small animals are raised and sold to purchase large animals, especially cows; and large animals are sold to purchase land when it becomes available. This means that peasant households anticipate, as one of the *essential* payoffs of cropping activities, a cash surplus which will permit the purchase of some livestock whose growth and multiplication may eventually lead to the acquisition of more land. A harvest that provides only domestic food is, in local terms, a failure.

These two features of local life signify that the Haitian peasant is deeply involved in a cash economy, a fact which has great repercussions on Haiti's internal market system. Were the Haitian peasant truly a self-sufficient consumer of what he grows, the market system would reflect that self-sufficiency. Instead, its energy and bustle spring in part from the peasant's deep involvement in a money way of life, with crops to a large degree serving as means of acquiring cash, and hence meant to be marketed.

Thus it is understandable that the peasants tend to make most of their bean crop available to the internal market system and that a peasant debating whether to sell or to consume a given gro-mamit of beans will incline to the former if the market price is high and to the latter if the market price is normal or low. In either case, he will show his responsiveness to the market situation.

The same factors which determine the answer to the first question posed above—how much of his bean crop will the peasant sell?—also operate to determine the second question: when will he sell? Obviously, one hopes to be able to wait for the market price to rise. After the bean harvest, the price is normally low; within two months, however, the price will have risen. The poorer the peasant, the sooner he will sell, for his need for cash will be greater. Those peasants who are better off will store their beans and wait.

There is a certain risk involved in storing, which threatens the quality of the beans; this undoubtedly induces some peasants to unload their bean crops sooner than they would were their eyes fixed solely on the state of the market. Beans keep very poorly;

after a month and a half they may *piké* (be attacked by a tiny insect). The producer, knowing this, recognizes that the risk is high if he leaves beans stored for too long.

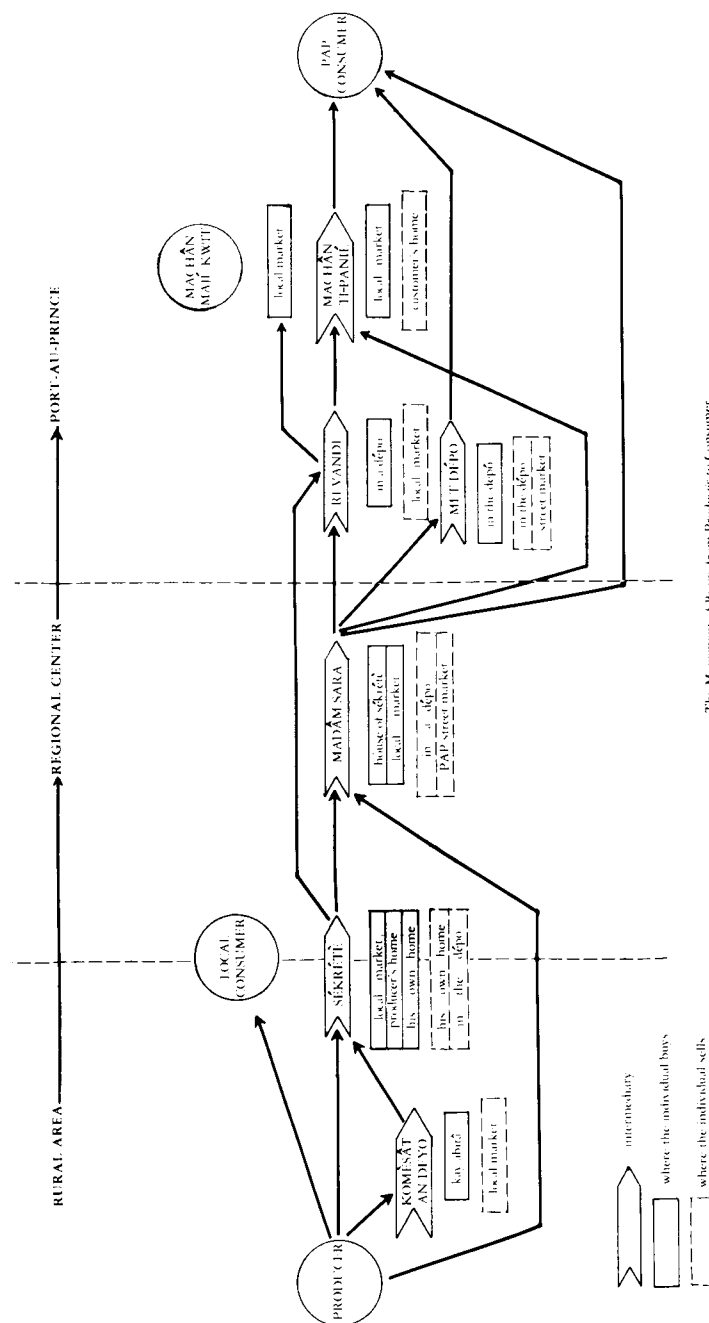
All of these factors combine to induce many (if not most) of the producers to put up their beans for sale shortly after the harvest. Thus the internal bean market shows sharp fluctuations of scarcity and plenty, of high and low prices.

Up till now we have considered the factors inducing a cultivator to plant beans or not, to plant one variety of beans rather than another, to sell one fraction of his crop rather than another, and to sell at one time rather than at another time. We must now consider the peasant's different marketing alternatives and the reasons underlying his choice. These considerations will take us directly into the dynamics of Haiti's internal market system.

The Intermediation Chain: Overall View

Beans are handled almost entirely in terms of the internal market system, that is, the produce is transported from producer to consumer through a chain of relatively small-scale outdoor transactions involving much human labor (mostly female) and relatively little capital per intermediary. The internal market system must not, however, be identified only with those events which occur in public, government-controlled marketplaces. During our research it became quite clear that in the distribution of beans the intermediaries manage to avoid the public marketplaces in many of their transactions. In the case of the traveling intermediary with whose operations we are most familiar, though she does purchase much stock in marketplace transactions, such transactions involve relatively small quantities of produce. Her major purchases are made elsewhere, and the bulk of her stock reaches the depot in Port-au-Prince without ever having entered a public marketplace, even though the produce may have already passed through four pairs of hands, including her own. How this occurs will be described in the following paragraphs.

In the diagram presented here (see "The Movement of Beans from Producer to Consumer") the movement of the beans is schematized according to the various trajectories which we saw or had described for us by our informants. This scheme is not exhaustive, but it appears that most of the beans which reach the Port-au-Prince consumer pass through one of the alternative routes depicted here. The vertical dotted lines separate the three



categories of geographical zones (rural area, regional center, Port-au-Prince) in which the transactions take place. One dotted line passes through the regional local consumer as well as the intermediating *sékrètè* (a regional buyer), since these may make their purchase either in the regional center or in the outlying rural area. The intermediary is located in the region on the chart where she makes her purchase. The key figure in the process, for example, is the *madâm sara* (a traveling intermediary). Though she sells her beans in Port-au-Prince, she has purchased them in the regional center, which is why she is placed there on the diagram.

This scheme captures the process both in terms of specific transactions which we have observed and in terms of the generalizations which informants themselves make about the marketing system. As will be seen, the major figures are the traveling intermediaries (the *madâm sara*). But they travel by truck, and their range of operations terminates with the trucks: in the regional centers. The lack of secondary roads encourages the emergence of smaller-scale local intermediaries who move the beans, usually on horses, mules, or donkeys, from the house of the producer to the regional center where the *madâm sara* buys.

As the diagram shows, the rural producer has four possible classes of buyers. In rare cases, he will sell to local consumers in the rural area. These cases are "rare" because when the beans are "out," that is, in abundance, most of the farmers in the region will have produced them and the local market will be reduced. Thus the producer will probably aim at a more distant market. He then has the choice of calling a buyer to his house or of having his wife take the beans to a regional center (not necessarily a provincial capital; as the term is used here, a regional center is a large market with road connections to other parts of the country). If he calls a buyer to his home, there are two major types with whom he can deal: a local *komèsât* (small-scale intermediary) operating with his own capital, or taking the beans on credit, who bulks a large quantity of beans and transports them by animals to the regional marketplace; or a *sékrètè*, an assistant to a larger intermediary, who has been given money by the intermediary to scour the countryside and *promènè dèyè chay* (search intensively for stock). If instead the peasant's wife has taken the beans to market, she has three potential classes of buyers: a local town-type consumer (buying in the marketplace), a *sékrètè* (mentioned above), or the *madâm sara* herself, who will buy the woman's produce in the marketplace (or, if possible, catch her before she enters, thus saving both buyer and seller from payment of government taxes).

The *madâm sara* travels by truck to Port-au-Prince. There she has four classes of buyers. Very frequently she will sell to the owner of the *dépo* (*mèt dépo*) where she unloads the stock, who will sell it in turn to smaller intermediaries (*révâdèz*) or to shopping consumers. Probably more frequently, she will sell it herself to the retailer. Less frequently she will sell it to a *machân ti-panié* (lit. a "little basket merchant"), an ambulant small trader who makes the rounds of the city neighborhoods, selling her wares at the consumer's front door for a slightly higher price than the consumers would pay were they to do their shopping in the marketplace. Lastly, she may sell small amounts directly to the consumer.

This, in general terms, describes the flow of beans from rural producer to Port-au-Prince consumer. There are many features of the system that are still obscure, due to lack of information. In the regional center there should probably be a local buyer listed, who buys with his own money (unlike the *sékrètè*) and who sells in turn to the *madâm sara*. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the beans which reach the consumer flows through each channel, but we are in no position to make even a rough estimate. We have the impression that the large *madâm sara* gets most of her stock from *sékrètè* to whom she has advanced capital, and that these *sékrètè* in turn get most of their stock in the rural areas in home, rather than in marketplace, transactions. In this fashion a large percentage of the stock circumvents the taxed markets outside Port-au-Prince. Furthermore, within Port-au-Prince the *madâm sara* sells most of her stock to *révâdèz* (retailers), and these in turn probably sell most of their stock to consumers who come (or send domestics) to the marketplace in Port-au-Prince to shop for food. But besides these gross estimates, no reliable statements can be made about the volume flowing through each channel.

It is obvious from the diagram that the *madâm sara* is crucial to the system. The Port-au-Prince *révâdèz* who give money to *sékrètè* to hunt for stock in the regions around Port-au-Prince have a limited range of operations. For transporting stock long-distance, it is the *madâm sara* who is central to the system, as it now operates in Haiti.

Specific Intermediaries

Variations in Weights, Measures, and Profits. A rather neat distinction divides commodities marketed in different channels. Those cash crops which are not distributed principally through the in-

ternal market system but handled by firm-type distributors are measured by weight. The price peasants receive for their sugar cane, coffee, and cotton depends on how much their produce weighs. Yet those foodstuffs which are distributed within the internal market system are measured strictly in terms of volume.⁶ All transactions in beans, rice, millet, cornmeal, shelled corn, and other similar products are carried out in terms of the bulk of the item, not of its weight.

In the case of beans, the standard measure of volume throughout Haiti appears to be the *gro-mamit*, literally "large can." Though its size varies from region to region, in Port-au-Prince the *gro-mamit* is a tin which holds approximately five and a half pounds of beans when it is filled heaping full. Probably all bean transactions at the intermediary stage (including the producer's sale), and many of the transactions at the final retail stage, are done in terms of *gro-mamit* of beans. There is a larger measure of beans commonly used: the *barik*. The *barik* contains 40 *gro-mamit* of beans, about 220 pounds. But the *barik* is a fictive secondary measure. There is no commonly used measuring receptacle with which people measure a *barik* of beans. Though some cloth sacks hold about a *barik* of beans, the person who buys a *barik* of beans has the seller carefully measure out 40 *gro-mamit*. The *gro-mamit* is hence a fairly standard wholesale measure of beans in the Port-au-Prince and Cul-de-Sac areas. Other regions of the country use similar volume wholesale measures, even if the *gro-mamit* of Las Cahobas differs in volume from the *gro-mamit* of L'Estère. Yet the principle is the same: all intermediary transactions are done in terms of relatively small volume measures.

The retail measure used in the Port-au-Prince Cul-de-Sac area is the *ti-mamit*. The *ti-mamit* holds approximately a pound of beans, and it takes five and a half *ti-mamit* to make a heaping full *gro-mamit*. The price of a *ti-mamit* is usually one-fifth of the current price of a *gro-mamit* at a given place on a given market day. But the volume of the *ti-mamit* is less than one-fifth of the volume of the *gro-mamit*, since it takes five and a half units of the latter to fill the former. The retailer generally profits from the slight differential and thus in effect can earn half a *ti-mamit* on each *gro-mamit*. (She has ways of earning more, as will be indicated below.)

The distinction between the *gro-mamit* and the *ti-mamit* is one of the sources of profit in the internal market system. But the difference between these two prices must not be confused with the difference wholesale and retail, if the operation of the system is to

be properly understood. Strictly speaking, a retailer deals in *gro-mamit* with the same frequency with which she deals in *ti-mamit*; it depends upon how much her customers want to buy. But whichever volume she uses, she will be selling at the retail price. If she were to sell all of her stock in terms of *gro-mamit*—that is, if none of her customers bought less than five and a half pounds of beans—she would still be making a profit, since the price at which she retails the *gro-mamit* is not the price at which she bought it. She will have purchased her stock in terms of *gro-mamit* (10 to 20 *kòb* less than the retail price). The consumer can save a little money by buying in quantities of *gro-mamit* rather than *ti-mamit*, but in either case he will be buying at the retail price. Only the intermediaries are generally able to locate beans which are selling at the wholesale price, even within Port-au-Prince, and only the intermediaries are generally willing to go through the hassle of fighting their way through crowds of pushing, shouting traders to get at stock selling for the wholesale price. Many of the mechanisms producing price differentials within the internal market system are still a mystery to us; but the system operates on the basis of these differentials, and the intermediaries are skillful at taking advantage of them.

Thus there two independent differentials operating to produce profit within the bean-marketing system: (1) the difference between retailing in *gro-mamit* and *ti-mamit*, the latter being slightly more profitable; and (2) the difference between the wholesale (*à gro*) price at which the retailer buys and the retail price (*pri détay*) at which she sells. This dual distinction, which is by no means unique to Haiti, underlies the calculations the peasant implicitly makes when he decides how to market his crops.

The peasant has a choice, then, whether to market his beans at home by calling an intermediary or to market his beans in the public marketplace. If he chooses the former, he will get a slightly lower price for his beans (a wholesale price, *pri à gro*) than if he himself (or someone from his family) went to market the beans in the marketplace at the going retail price. But he knows that if he decides to sell in the marketplace, he faces certain expenses: (1) transportation of the beans to the market and (2) payment of government-imposed taxes on all who enter to sell (and in some marketplaces, all who enter to buy).

If his home is not too far from the market, and if he has adult females in his house, he may very well choose to have one of these females sell his beans. But even in this case his choice is not certain. In the marketing of beans there is a great deal of special-

ization and professionalization; the amateur may not be anxious to enter the arena of the marketplace and pit herself against the aggressive madâm sara. Furthermore, if the beans are plentiful the retail turnover may be slow, with the result that: (a) the person may have to wait from three or four days to another week (the next market day) to finish selling the beans and (b) the taxes will have to be paid again. When beans are plentiful, the only sure way of getting quick sales is to sell wholesale and in bulk to intermediaries. Once the decision is made to do this, it is much less troublesome and less expensive to call an intermediary to your home and to sell the beans there than to take them to the marketplace.

It would be interesting to know, for this first stage of the distributive process, what percentage of the farmers sends their beans to the marketplace and what percentage sells it to intermediaries at home. Because the women from the community we studied are professional bean sellers, they handle most of the beans produced there. But this is not typical of all of Haiti, if the information given by informants is correct. In a great many cases—in all likelihood more than half—the producer of beans sells them in bulk at his home.

This fact should perhaps be emphasized, because it implies a somewhat different marketing process in peasant households than the model traditionally attributed to the Haitian peasant. We find in general that the implicit model which the literature tends to provide of the flow of garden produce from rural household to internal market system is somewhat inapplicable, in certain important respects, to the actual series of events which typically occurs in the community in which we lived. Perhaps the most widespread portrait of Haitian peasant cash acquisitions is one in which, in one fashion or another, the woman of the household is depicted as leaving the family *lakou* on market day, carrying on her head a basket of produce harvested from her husband's garden and turned over to her for sale in the local market. The frequency with which one or another variant of this image has made its way into the literature (see Herskovits 1971:67-68; Moral 1961:176; Underwood 1970:5; Simpson 1940:506; Simpson 1942:663; Courlander 1960:113; Comhaire-Sylvain 1961:205) attests, among other things, to the important place this notion of the wife-trader occupies in the conceptualizations used by the peasants themselves when describing the proper functioning of the rural household.

Yet many of the findings of Mintz lead one to suspect that this oft-painted rural vignette may be to some degree an ideal

model rather than an accurate representation of the actual course of economic events.⁷ Certainly in our own research community the marketing of produce was done quite differently. Though we did encounter many people who preferred the traditional model as the proper way for a household to function, the occasions on which garden produce actually entered the market in this fashion from our community were few and far between. Though the bulk of agricultural produce was in fact destined for sale, most produce which entered the internal market system did so during transactions between the producer and itinerant buyers, either in the gardens themselves or at the producer's front door. Though in some instances the woman of the house bargained with the trader, rather than the man, such instances were the exception. The women themselves, in fact, were usually away carrying on their own bean trade in Port-au-Prince.

The accounts of the process of stock acquisition which some of the intermediaries gave us indicate that other regions of Haiti, besides the area of the Plain where most of our research was carried out, also utilize home transactions between itinerant traders and producers as the first step in channeling produce (in this case, beans) into the internal market system. We may be dealing with changes that are being introduced into the system, whereby such large-scale front-door or garden transactions are coming to play a heavier role than in times past. But at any rate the itinerant rural bulker appears to play a much more crucial role in the first stage of produce flow than does the wife-trader with her husband's produce in a basket on her head.

It also appears that in many cases this initial transaction, in which the produce leaves the producer's hands, occurs on the basis of full or partial credit. The itinerant rural trader will in all likelihood be known personally to the peasant. If the intermediary has a good reputation for paying up, the peasant frequently consigns his produce to him on credit and collects the money after the stock has been sold. In such cases it is quite common for the trader subsequently to *plèyè*, to protest that the going price was much lower than had been anticipated when the stock was taken on credit, and to ask the producer to accept somewhat less than was originally agreed upon. So common is this event in our research community that this subsequent cut is probably calculated into the bargaining by both parties when the stock is initially consigned. Such credit transactions appear to be more likely when the intermediary is a small-scale local bulker, rather than a full-fledged traveling intermediary or a *sékretè* operating with the cash of one of these traveling intermediaries.

These two aspects of the channeling of produce into the internal market system—i.e. the pattern of front-door rather than market-place transactions and the use of credit by smaller rural bulkers—appear to be quite prominent features of the system as it actually operates on the movement of beans. The actual percentage of produce that gets moved by these maneuvers rather than by others cannot be specified, but we believe it is high. It is clear that these strategies have become standard practice and that producers as well as sellers make use of them both.

The Madâm Sara. The existing road and transportation facilities in Haiti play a large part in shaping the distributive process and underwriting the emergence and relative predominance of different trader roles. It is clear that most of the transportation mileage between origin of rural produce and Port-au-Prince consumers is covered by vehicle—specifically, by trucks. But the specific configuration of trader roles which has emerged in Haiti is a product of multiple historical forces and not merely of the current state of the roads or number of vehicles. In terms of the dependence of urban sectors on rurally grown produce and the general primacy of vehicle transport (as opposed to animal or human) in supplying food needs of the capital city, Haiti is quite similar to the neighboring Dominican Republic. Yet each of these societies has adopted a fundamentally different solution to the problem of produce ownership during the crucial vehicle link of the intermediation chain. Whereas the truckers themselves are the major purchasers and bulkers of internally consumed agricultural produce in the Dominican Republic (Murray 1974:46-59), in Haiti the truckers limit their internal market activities to that of transporting persons and produce for a price. Though the causes of this divergence have never been made clear, its consequences for the Haitian internal market system are great. Specifically, the system must provide an alternative arrangement for bridging the gap between distant rural area and Port-au-Prince. The Haitian solution involves the activity of a group of relatively heavily capitalized itinerant traders who purchase and amass agricultural produce in the rural areas, pay for space on a truck, personally accompany their produce to Port-au-Prince, and quickly unload it at wholesale prices to urban retailer groups who will in turn pass it on to the consumer.

This traveling intermediary role is not merely one among many trader roles in Haiti. In several senses it is the central role. The

traveling intermediaries bring the produce across larger distances than any other trading intermediaries bring the produce across larger distances than any other trading group. They have on the whole more capital, and acquire more internally grown agricultural produce, than any other trading group. Furthermore, other traders will frequently express a desire to become traveling intermediaries citing lack of capital as the main impediment to this occupational "rise," and providing by their statements clear attitudinal indicants of the primacy of this particular trading role as opposed to the others.

These traveling intermediaries, most of whom are female, are frequently referred to, somewhat jocularly and perhaps fondly, as *madâm sara*. The *madâm sara*, in the original use of the term, is a migratory bird which "flies from place to place and never fails to find the food, wherever it might be."⁸ The *madâm sara* of the internal market system performs the same role. The *madâm sara* were crucial in the marketing of beans and some important features of their operational procedure will be briefly described.

The *madâm sara* have in general successfully solved some of the major problems in acquiring capital. Though it is possible to carry on certain types of intermediary activity with very little capital—or none at all if one's credit is good with the right people—it is not possible to be a *madâm sara* without at least \$60.00. And a *madâm sara* with only \$60.00 would be a small *madâm sara* indeed. The traveling intermediary with whose operations we are most familiar generally has about \$200.00 tied up in stock. But this sum does not include the money she has placed in the hands of her *sêkrètè*, nor the capital which she has invested in livestock back in her home community. Though a successful trader will never reveal the extent of her resources to other intermediaries, one such fellow trader insisted that this particular woman occasionally has as much as \$500.00 in total capital.

Where does such capital come from? It is true that much of the capital of a successful trader has been acquired during the course of business activity. But the problem of initial acquisition remains. In the "ideal family," our informants frequently indicated that a woman's husband is supposed to provide her with the bulk of her annual operating capital. But other statements, and information on specific cases, indicate that such a generalization must be taken with a grain of salt. It is true that some husbands do manage to fulfill the local norm of providing one's wife with money for business and that some young females may get do-

nations of small amounts from their families (cf. Mintz 1964:270). But the overriding impression that emerges in the community where we lived is that incipient traders rely heavily both on borrowed money and on stock given to them on credit and that successful madâm sara are in general almost completely independent of any cash inputs from their spouses.

Though the borrowing of money and the taking of stock on credit are equivalent maneuvers from one point of view, the madâm sara regard them as two fundamentally different types of strategies. To take stock on credit is viewed as dangerous and as a sure symptom that the trader who does so is having economic problems and is on the way downhill. Successful traders appear to be willing to borrow money for certain types of business operations but not to take the stock on credit. The madâm sara whose activities we followed most closely frequently gave produce to smaller traders on credit (a maneuver which will be described below) but emphatically denied accepting stock herself under such arrangements. When she had to resort to borrowing money, she avoided becoming a debtor to any of her business contacts, relying instead on high-interest loans from men whose livelihood came partially from the making of such loans (they were generally store owners or, in one instance, a well-to-do truck owner and ritual healer).

The dynamics of lending appear to depend somewhat on the purpose of the loan. Interest-free loans among kin and neighbors are not uncommon when the borrowing individual (*gê yoû ka*) has some sort of personal or familial emergency, such as sickness or death. But such short-term interest-free loans appear never to be made when the money will be used in business. To borrow capital (*lajâ kap travay pou ou*) the trader must be willing to pay high interest rates. Interest is generally 10 percent per month, the initial capital being referred to as *mamalajâ-a* and the interest as *pîtît-la*—literally "the mother-money" and "the child" (cf. Mintz 1964:240). To borrow in this fashion is terminologically distinguished from interest-free borrowing, frequently called *loué lajâ*, "renting money."

Once a trader has earned profit and is able to undertake larger endeavors, the problem gradually changes from one of acquiring capital to that of protecting and diversifying the employment of the cash that the individual has. Many traders invest part of their money in livestock, especially during those months of the year when there is a lull in the bean trading activity (cf. Mintz 1964:271-74). Occasionally a woman will purchase a plot of land with her *kòb komès*, her business money, but this type of maneuver is

fundamentally different from that of purchasing and having a spouse or kinsman raise a pig or a cow with a view to selling the animal at a later date and reinvesting the money in trade. Though business profits sometimes lead to the purchase of land, land is virtually never sold in order to finance trade. In a sample of 600 land transactions on which data were collected in the research community, fewer than 1 percent were engaged in by the seller with a view to raising capital for trade. Though a majority of adults were found to have been involved in land transactions at one point or another in their lives, the context of such transactions were rituals (notably healing and mortuary rituals) involving rather heavy expenditures, some seven out of every ten land sales being made for such a purpose. The ritual context of land transactions, though it is a pattern whose understanding is crucial to an understanding of rural Haitian economics, is a topic which falls beyond the scope of this paper, except to make the general observation that there is a compartmentalization—and mild incompatibility—between the sphere of land acquisition as a goal and the sphere of trade in the internal market system.

The acquisition of cash is only one side of the coin; the madâm sara utilize a series of equally complex maneuvers with respect to the acquisition of their bean stock. The fragmented structure of the internal system and the general relegation of the madâm sara's activities to the trucking phase of the produce's journey combine to reduce the direct contacts which the madâm sara has with the actual producer of the beans. The highly fragmented nature of the supply source forces any would-be-rural intermediary to spend much more time cultivating contacts and arranging for purchases than the highly mobile madâm sara can afford. For this reason many of the beans she purchases have already passed through the hands of at least one other trader, and her overall business strategy must include tactics for cementing relations with such rural assemblers.

A very important device for achieving these trade relationships is the institution of *pratik* (regular customer) described at length by Mintz (1961 b). Under this arrangement traders establish more or less permanent business ties with other individuals. In the case of the bean-selling madâm sara, these ties are generally with other traders rather than with producers or consumers. Mintz found that such ties were generally established by the making of economic concessions, particularly in terms of price, quantity, and credit (1961b:57). In the case of bean transactions, our informants denied making price or quantity concession during transactions,

and none in fact were observed during the transactions at which we were present. Credit was used (though the madâm sara were generally the donors, not the recipients, as indicated above), and persons involved in such a relationship tended to call each other "pratik." Furthermore, in some cases small gifts of money were made ("so you can drink a little coffee") by urban retailers to madâm sara coming in from the countryside. Thus, though bean traders tended to avoid price or quantity concessions during transactions themselves, there was much prepurchase and postpurchase maneuvering to create and solidify pratik relationships.

But, prevalent though it may be, pratik with other traders does not appear to be the major strategy of the madâm sara with respect to the acquisition of beans. Rather the more successful traders will devise arrangements by which they are in effect able to bypass other intermediaries and public marketplaces in a large number of important transactions. The advantages of such bypassing are obvious. Produce brought into government-controlled marketplaces is taxed; large quantities of produce away from the marketplaces will constitute a substantial savings to the intermediary.⁹ But perhaps more importantly, the marketplaces are, during much of the year, rather poor locations to acquire beans in bulk. If a small-scale rural bulker arrives in a marketplace crowded with madâm sara looking for stock, no amount of pratik with a given madâm sara will ensure that madâm sara that the arriving trader's stock will be sold to her. There will frequently be a noisy altercation over the produce and the seller will be obliged to subdivide her stock, in such a fashion that each madâm sara will end up with only a few gro-mamit of beans. Once a given buyer has been given nine or ten gro-mamit of beans, other women will aggressively push her sack out of the way, claiming that it is now their turn. If a fight breaks out, the authorities will generally intervene on the side of the women who wanted to share the stock, against the woman who was trying to get it all for herself. Thus pratik relationships are a poor guarantee of supply.

The most successful madâm sara in the bean circuits are those who have the capital to utilize another strategy which in effect takes them directly to the garden of the producer. The madâm sara herself does not have the time or contacts to scout out beans in the countryside. What she will do is turn over part of her money to individuals who have contacts with the rural producers, who have demonstrated their skills in purchasing, and who have a reputation for reliability. These individuals will purchase produce directly from the producers at their homes. Under this arrangement the madâm

sara avoids taxes in the public marketplaces, assures herself of a source supply, and saves a great deal of crucial time. When she arrives in her provincial base of operation after selling stock in Port-au-Prince, she will find waiting for her, a great deal of stock which has been assembled by her buyers.

Because of the volume of beans which appears to be channeled into the hands of the madâm sara by this arrangement, we are inclined to rate it as a major feature of the internal market system. When referring to such buyers, the madâm sara will speak of her *sékrètè*, and it is frequently asserted that only those intermediaries who have the capital to employ such *sékrètè* will be able to make a profit consistently through all seasons of the year. Because of their structural importance in the market system, the *sékrètè* will be discussed in more detail below.

The truck drivers and the madâm sara are also very important to each other, and the economic well-being of each of these groups depends on the establishment of ties with the other group. Comments which truck drivers have been heard to make suggest that the carrying of stock provides a larger source of income than the carrying of passengers for some trucks. Though the typical truck has a brightly painted rear section containing benches for passengers, there are some trucks which have simple box backs with no benches for passengers; one truck driver known to us converted his truck into this latter type, having decided to specialize more heavily in transporting stock, as opposed to passengers. Freight is charged by volume, and the largest loads are provided by madâm sara. Though the trucks frequently appear to be overloaded to an outsider, in actuality there is a great deal of unused space on most trips, and truck owners are quite anxious to attract more business. The madâm sara have the stronger bargaining position vis-à-vis truck drivers. Whereas stock provides a substantial part of the truck driver's income, freight charges do not appear to consume much of the income of the larger madâm sara. The loads shipped between Las Cahobas and Port-au-Prince never cost more than 5 percent of the purchase value of the produce for transportation charges. The larger the load, the less burdensome the transportation charges (including the madâm sara's passenger fee); in contrast, intermediaries who could afford only a small amount of stock would find themselves eating up much of their capital in transportation costs, since the charge for themselves as passengers remained constant despite the size of their load. It is for this reason that only highly capitalized traders can assume the role of madâm sara.

Another major differentiating feature between the large traders

and the "small fry" is the possession of a license. Information obtained from informants is contradictory, and some heated discussions were heard between individuals disagreeing as to what the law requires of traders in the way of licensing. Apparently every intermediary is supposed to obtain a government license to trade, but in common practice only the traveling intermediaries are regularly challenged by officials to show one. It is quite clear that the vast majority of women involved in trade do not possess one. A woman who engages in local trade on a small scale will not in general be disturbed by authorities if she pays her market taxes; but a trader who transports produce on trucks without having a license may more easily be challenged. In times past the license, which must be renewed every October, supposedly cost only \$3.00 per year, but in recent years the price has risen substantially. A license to travel between Port-au-Prince and Las Cahobas cost \$8.00 per year at the time research was carried on.

Possession of a license not only frees a woman from being on the constant lookout for the government *kôtrôlè* (tax agent) but confers other subtle advantages. It is commonly asserted that when a trader with a license appears other traders should step aside until she has finished purchasing her stock. This is probably not followed in practice, but the behavior of licensed marketers does seem to be freer, and superficially haughtier, than the behavior of women who must operate on the sly, without the required license. If a woman with a license gets into a squabble and knows that her adversary has no license, she is liable to settle the argument by threatening to report the other woman to a market authority. Furthermore, women with licenses find it easier to borrow money; they are "professionals" and thus perceived as a better risk.

In terms of the general operating style of the madâm sara, we observed a tendency to specialize in two important senses. In the first place she will generally limit herself to one truck route. The successful acquisition of stock entails the establishment of a series of personal relationships which, in turn, presuppose a concentration of her activities along one geographical route.

In addition, she will generally specialize in one major type of produce, carrying other produce only as sidelines, as alternatives in times of scarcity of her principal stock, or as "return trip" merchandise which she will resell in the zone of her principal stock to pay for her return trip. But the bulk of her energies appear to be concentrated on one item, in this case beans. And the return trip is frequently made with no produce to sell in the provincial base. There are no strict rules governing this specialization, and

in times of scarcity of beans the madâm sara will switch to rice. But when business is at its best, the madâm sara is able to concentrate all her energies on one product; if she is seen dealing in many products, she is probably improvising to get herself through a slack business period.

The madâm sara who has built up a respectable capital, who has devised arrangements for the regular acquisition of stock, who has established a working relationship with a truck driver, and who is armed with a government license is in as strong a position as it is possible to be within the internal market system. Yet notwithstanding there is a great deal of risk. Her business activities are almost completely organized into short-term segments, the major unit of which is the *vwayaj*, the "trip." The success of the trip can usually be gauged as soon as the madâm sara arrives in Port-au-Prince, for it is then that she will learn at what price beans are currently selling. This is a crucial moment, for her subsequent behavior will depend on the information she is given upon arrival in the capital. This information is generally supplied by the various retailers with whom the madâm sara usually deals in Port-au-Prince.

The major source of profit for the madâm sara comes from price differentials between her provincial base and Port-au-Prince. There are commonly practiced "tricks" which may succeed in bringing in some extra profit to the madâm sara. The major one appears to be the practice of having two gro-mamit containers, one for purchase and one for sale. The one in which she purchases will be slightly (and secretly) larger than the one in which she sells. The latter may be lessened in volume by lightly pushing in the sides or pushing up the bottom, or she may have a tin made especially for that purpose. Another trick is the use of a *madou*, a piece of cloth or paper secretly placed in the measuring tin after the prospective buyer has examined and ascertained the accuracy of the measuring tin. But these devices are more successful when traders are dealing with unskilled consumer-purchasers. Because the madâm sara generally sells her produce to other traders, who will also have two tins, the amount of profit which accrues to her from these types of tricks is probably small. The profitability of her trip depends in the long run on the rapidly fluctuating differences between the price of beans in different parts of the country, fluctuations over which she has of course no control.

Under favorable price conditions, her beans will generally sell at from two to four cents (10 to 20 *kòb*) below the local retail price. Because the madâm sara is constantly on the move and in a hurry, she has no time to retail her produce but rather unloads

it fast at wholesale prices in order to be able to return for more stock as quickly as possible.

As was seen in the diagram, her principal outlets are *dépo* owners and retailers. Some traveling intermediaries have established *pratik* relations with *dépo* owners who are in commerce and who will immediately buy up their stock, give them the use of the *dépo* as sleeping space, and provide free storage space for the stock that they begin accumulating for the return trip. Other *madâm sara* sell their stock to small retailers, generally getting slightly higher prices but having to pay for storage space. We are here at another critical node in the internal market system. If we had more exact information on the percentage of stock funneled through the *dépo* owners, and on that which moves through smaller-scale intermediaries, and if we knew the determinants of the choice of the traveling intermediary, we would have some valuable insights into the workings of the market system. As it is, we only know that these two alternatives exist, without knowing the determinants of choice or the relative importance of the alternatives.

The traveling intermediary who reaches Port-au-Prince to find beans selling below the price at which she had hoped to sell can either turn to street retailing herself, thereby getting a higher price than if she had sold at wholesale, or, probably more common, give her beans out on credit at the price at which she had hoped to sell. This surprising maneuver is made possible by the existence of many poor intermediaries with no capital at all. By selling this stock quickly, even though for less than will be owed the *madâm sara*, these poor intermediaries gain use of the capital thus acquired to buy more stock in the period before her return. Gradually the lucky ones build up enough to pay the *madâm sara* and still have some profit left over for themselves. In this way the *madâm sara* has avoided a loss—in effect, by lending her stock at a few pennies per tin.

Having described the principal activities of the central figure in the chain of intermediaries, we will now analyze one actual business trip made by a traveling intermediary. On this trip between Las Cahobas and Port-au-Prince, the traveling intermediary made a net profit of about 10 percent on her investment and the internal market system added 25 percent to the original price paid to the producer in transporting the beans to the final Port-au-Prince consumer. The *madâm sara* purchased approximately five *barik* (200 *gro-mamit*) of beans. Calculating the weight of this *barik*, two points must be kept in mind:

(1) A Las Cahobas *gro-mamit* is larger than a Port-au-Prince *gro-mamit*.

(2) In either case the *barik* contains forty local *gro-mamit* of beans. This means, of course, that the Las Cahobas *barik* weighs more than the Port-au-Prince *barik*.

The Las Cahobas *gro-mamit* is made by pouring seven *pôt-sèt* (a smaller Las Cahobas volume measure) into the container. Although the *pôt-sèt* is not generally used in Port-au-Prince, it takes exactly 6 *pôt-sèt* to fill the Port-au-Prince *gro-mamit*. Thus, since the Port-au-Prince *barik* has about 220 pounds of beans, we may assume that the Las Cahobas *barik* has about 256 pounds of beans.

The *madâm sara* paid an average of 188 gourdes per Las Cahobas *barik*, i.e. 14.7 U.S. cents per pound, and sold in Port-au-Prince at 4.60 gourdes the *gro-mamit* (Port-au-Prince), which is 16.7 U.S. cents the pound. Thus her gross profit was approximately 13 percent on her 940 gourdes of purchasing capital before the deduction of transportation and storage expenses, amounting to 26 gourdes. Or adding stock purchase and expenses for a total investment of 966 gourdes (\$193.20), her sales of 1,071.80 gourdes (\$214.36) resulted in a net profit of \$21.16, or slightly less than a 11 percent profit on her total investment.

This was an exceptionally good trip. The same *madâm sara*, on a later trip, came in from Las Cahobas with approximately the same amount of beans but netted only a 7 percent profit. We can perhaps take 10 percent as a fairly decent and "normal" figure.

But what about the entire intermediation chain? Our data are less exact on this. Given that the traveling intermediary bought most of her stock from the *sékrètè* in Las Cahobas, who had in turn purchased it directly from the producers at their front doors, we can assume that the producer was paid at 13.0 U.S. cents per pound of beans. The highest price which the final Port-au-Prince consumer paid was 18.0 U.S. cents per pound (at the time the observations were made). That is, the entire intermediation process added only about 25 percent to the cost of the produce in its trip from producer to final consumer. Inasmuch as these are outside figures, the actual market margin is probably even less.

It remains to be seen whether the same profit margins hold for other foodstuffs as well. But if other products handled in the internal market system behave in the same fashion as beans, we have little reason to criticize the system as "inefficient" from the point of view of any actor in the chain, including producer and final consumer. We suspect that the internal market system cost of 25 percent is less than the cost of distributive systems in more

advanced economies. Furthermore, this 25 percent fee is spread out over many actors, providing some income for an impressively large number of individuals living in a society where more lucrative avenues of economic activity are not available.¹⁰

The Sékrètè and the Koutché. Among secondary figures in the internal market system, the *sékrètè* seems to have a very important role. Basically an undercapitalized businessman who trades on his knowledge of the local scene and his reputation for trustworthiness, the *sékrètè*, as the name is applied in Haiti, may be any of a broad range of actors but is always an adjunct to a person who has money. The idea of the *sékrètè* as scribe has given way in Haiti to another: he is essentially a person who handles the money and helps to direct the affairs of another person.

In the bean marketing system there are three types of *sékrètè* which may be described as regional, familial, or traveling *sékrètè*. The regional *sékrètè*, the most common, is a person who is given money by an intermediary to buy stock. The familial *sékrètè* is a member of one's family who remains in the rural area to buy stock for the female intermediary. In some cases we observed, the peasant-husband served as the familial *sékrète* for his wife, buying stock for her while she was away doing business in Port-au-Prince. The third type, the traveling *sékrètè*, is merely entrusted with money by an intermediary and makes a tour of depots and nearby markets to buy stock. Unlike the regional *sékrètè* he may have no special knowledge of the peasants of a region and will probably not operate primarily on the basis of *pratik* relationships. The principal difference between a *sékrètè* and an intermediary is that the latter generally operates with her own capital, whereas the *sékrètè*—by definition—operates with other people's capital. The role of *sékrètè* is a broad one, and the criteria for membership are somewhat loose. Many people easily slip in and out of the role. Nonetheless it is a firmly instituted status in the Haitian internal market system. The *sékrètè* is so important to the intermediary that, especially in times of scarcity, it is said no traveling intermediary can continue to function unless she has left several *sékrètè* with money back in her provincial sphere of operation to hunt out stock for her at peasant houses. The modest volume of desired stock which passes through the public market is too small by itself to sustain the expensive journeys of the traveling intermediaries.

The bean-purchasing *sékrètè* may have money from more than one intermediary. The trader entrusts money to him, and if the

sékrètè does not find stock he merely returns the money. The *sékrètè*, in their normal operations, have two possible sources of profit:

- (1) They are paid 1.5 gourdes (U.S. \$0.30) by the traveling intermediary for each *barik* of beans they locate for her.
- (2) They profit from the *djê*, the difference between the agreed and actual prices. Before entrusting money to them, the intermediary tells them to buy beans from the peasants at a given price. The *sékrètè* may be able to buy them for an even lower price from the peasants at their homes. This is called "swooping down on the peasants" (*volé sou abityá*). If the *sékrètè* manages to get the beans at a lower price than that stipulated by the intermediary, that is no concern of hers. In this fashion the *sékrètè* often makes a larger profit in the intermediation chain than the intermediary herself.

For some reason, the *sékrètè* are mostly males. In a cross-cultural perspective the Haitian internal market system presents the most interesting spectacle of rich and active wide-ranging females controlling activities of indigent males. Because the *sékrètè* work for several people and are indispensable in times of scarcity, the intermediaries will try to woo them with gifts and attention, to insure that they will seek out stock for them instead of returning their money.

The role of *sékrètè* tends to merge with the less dignified role of *koutché*. The *koutché*, in his most frequent mode of operation, is a type of intelligence gatherer, who will tell the intermediary where *chay* (stock) can be found. Having come across beans, the *koutché* gets the owner of the beans to save them for the *koutché's* customer—and is paid something by both the owner and the customer for arranging the transaction.

The principal difference between a *sékrètè* and a *koutché* is that the latter is generally not given money to make the purchases, being considered too unreliable to entrust with money (though some informants have called the *sékrètè* "koutché"). The *koutché* role is actually a very generalized one that may include finding a house for rent or selling an animal for a peasant. One very interesting use of the *koutché* comes during peak seasons when stock is plentiful and the large traveling intermediaries, arriving at a *dépo* "too tired" to measure out their own stock, hire a *koutché* to do the measuring for buyers. Because he can measure so fast, the *koutché* is in a position to cheat an unaware buyer. If he makes two *gro-mamits* on a *barik*, one of the cans goes to him and the

other goes to the owner of the stock. On other occasions it is the owner of the stock whom he will cheat, making an eye signal to the buyer to indicate that he will put extra stock into her sack. He will subsequently go to the place where she sells and collect his half of the extra stock.

The Mèt Dépo. Because most of the trade in the internal market system is in the hands of small intermediaries, the traditional Western "store" plays a very minor role. Sellers of goods do not for the most part operate in locales owned by themselves but rather pay intermittently for their selling and storage space. To capture the action of the internal market system outside of Port-au-Prince, the regional public markets would be the most likely place to station oneself (though much of the bean traffic bypasses these markets, as has been pointed out). In Port-au-Prince, however, there is little question but that most of the highly significant initial intermediary action takes place in numerous locales lumped under the common term of *dépo*, and knowledge of the Port-au-Prince market system entails knowledge, first and foremost, of the comings and goings in these locales.

As with so many other words in local usage, *dépo* is a blanket term for a number of different entities of widely varying characteristics. There are two major types, each characterized by the activity of the owner. The most common is what one informant has called *dépo piblik*, whose owner merely rents space to traders who store their produce there for a given fee, usually at night. The owner of the *dépo* is responsible for stock stored there and any theft must be reimbursed by him. Furthermore, the people who store produce in the *dépo* also have a right to sell there—and even to sleep there. The owner himself is not in commerce, except perhaps to set up a small *boutik* selling minor foodstuffs and refreshments to the people who use his *dépo*.

The second type of *dépo* is what the informant has labeled *dépo pèsonèl*, whose owner, unlike owners of the first type, is heavily engaged in commerce. His first and foremost interest is the purchase, for resale, of the stock of the people who use his *dépo*.

Trucks bringing intermediaries and their stock to Port-au-Prince head immediately for their particular *dépo*. Each *dépo* seems to cater to the intermediaries and produce coming from one region. In principle, the *dépo* do not specialize in produce; any produce may be stored at any *dépo*. But because different regions tend to specialize seasonally in different produce, the *dépo* are frequently identified with a given crop.

It is in the *dépo*, rather than the Port-au-Prince marketplaces that most of the beans first change hands. The Port-au-Prince markets are for the most part the scenes of the final retail transactions; but there is a great deal of bulkbreaking to be done between the time the produce reaches Port-au-Prince and the time that it is finally sold to the consumer. The scene of this bulkbreaking is the Port-au-Prince *dépo*.

An adequate enumeration and categorization of the Port-au-Prince *dépo* is only now beginning to be made. Some are the scene of intensive exchange; others appear to be used almost solely for storage space. What determines whether the *mèt dépo* will go into business or merely rent his space for storage? Present information indicates that the commercial activities of the *dépo* owners are dependent on the state of the market. Profits are highest and turnover is quickest when there is a scarcity of produce; it is in these periods that the *dépo* owners (or their wives) will go into trade, even becoming aggressive in their attempts to buy from the traveling intermediaries instead of merely storing their stock. At these times the owners of the *dépo* are in direct competition with the smaller retailers who normally purchase from the traveling intermediaries arriving on the trucks. The *dépo* owners are not in general interested in retailing but merely wish to take advantage of the situation of scarcity and interpose themselves in the intermediation chain. Since the owners of the *dépo* in no way appear to coordinate their behavior as a group, individual *dépo* owners can take these steps only in situations of true scarcity.

The *dépo* could store and handle much more produce than they do now; thus the owners of *dépo* are constantly attempting to attract more intermediaries to make use of their *dépo*. The rules of the game are fairly standard across *dépo*, and the storage prices are standard as well. A large sack of produce the equivalent of a *barik* will cost 50 *kòb* to store; a smaller sack, 25. Though the government selling tax varies by produce (beans costing more than rice, for example), the storage rates in *dépo* are uniform across all produce, the only consideration being the volume of the item stored. The intermediary who wishes to store produce enters the *dépo* and has the owner write down her name, and the date, and label her sack for her. The sack may stay in the *dépo* for days or even weeks, and the trader will still only pay 50 *kòb*. But each time she removes the sack to sell—normally every day—and returns it to the *dépo*, she has to pay anew. The *mèt dépo* rightly suspect that otherwise the traders would fill the sacks with new stock and claim that it was their old unsold stock. Because the *mèt dépo* are generally eager to

attract and keep customers, storage fees are allowed to accumulate and, in the case of larger traders, the indebtedness may get as high as eight or ten dollar.

Our initial categorization of the dépo into those whose owners do business and those whose owners do not might be replaced by an equally valid breakdown of the dépo into those in which the principal trading activity is wholesale and those in which it is retail for there are some dépo along the principal street that permit retailing to consumers by small intermediaries who store their stock there. But two dépo known to us fit neither categorization and merely illustrate the inadequacy of our information with respect to these locales, so central to the Port-au-Prince pole of the internal market system.

The first is a dépo in which storage prices are double those of the normal dépo but which has to turn away customers because of an arrangement the owner has managed to make with the authorities: no produce sold in this dépo will be taxed. Since selling privileges are extended to all who store in the dépo, and since the extra storage charges will be more than compensated for by the freedom from daily taxes, the dépo attracts more customers than it can handle.

The second anomalous dépo is a cluster of selling locales called by informants Dépo Jérémie. This dépo is unusual in three fashions:

- (1) Its produce arrives principally by sea from towns on the south coast.
- (2) The produce is not generally accompanied by its owner, which is most unusual in the Haitian market system. The owners on the south coast ship it to agents waiting on the wharfs in Port-au-Prince. These in turn sell it on a consignment basis.
- (3) This dépo functions by giving a great deal of credit, it appears. Not only do the local agents receive the stock on credit from producers in the south but they also in turn give it to small retailers on credit.

The Révâdèz. The final important link in the chain of intermediation between producer and consumer of beans is the small retailer. These traders are characterized generally by a capital of less than \$50.00. Their characteristic trading cycle is to purchase beans in one of the dépo and resell them in small quantities in a street market section of the city near Croix Bossale.

As in the case of madâm sara, the retailing of beans is a specialized activity. Though recent market shortages of beans have induced many of the women to move temporarily into rice (and to a lesser

degree cornmeal), the women of our community have generally specialized in the small-scale retail trade of beans in Port-au-Prince. Though the term *révâdèz* (literally, "reseller") technically refers to any intermediary, our informants tended to apply this term only to small-scale traders who *chita mèziré* (sit and measure out produce in small quantities), as opposed to the activities of the higher status madâm sara.

Unlike the madâm sara, these small intermediaries are not able to employ *sékrètè* to hunt for stock for them, depending instead on their own knowledge of truck schedules for different regions. They rarely purchase more than a barik of beans for resale at one time, and their margin of profit is rarely more than about 2 or 3 cents (10 or 15 *kòb*) per gro-mamit of beans. They are fairly stable in trade. Though their level of activity will vary according to the availability of produce, they do not customarily withdraw from trade in slack seasons. Unlike the madâm sara, these traders are willing to take beans on credit for resale, and do so.

Summary and Conclusion

General Patterns. The general question which guided our research was: how do beans travel from producer to the ultimate consumer in Haiti? Throughout this presentation we have been interested in process and system and have presented a preliminary descriptive model of the alternative trajectories used to bring beans from the Las Cahobas and Les Bayahondes producer to the Port-au-Prince consumer. The processes we have described in these pages fit into the patterns described principally by Mintz in his writing on the Haitian internal market system. To mention a few of the bean-related phenomena:

- (1) Many small transactions;
- (2) Intermediaries who frequently weigh out more than the sum total of the stock which they handle;
- (3) High investment of labor to save on scarce capital;
- (4) The use of *pratik*, personalized regular trading relations, at all stages, between producer and rural bulker, *sékrètè* and regional merchant, *sékrètè* and madâm sara, madâm sara and truck driver, madâm sara and Port-au-Prince dépo owner.

Delving into the marketing of beans more specifically, we have found many unexpected processes, and certain actors who play unexpectedly important roles. To mention a few of these:

- (1) The use of *sékretè* by traveling intermediaries to scout out beans for them in the rural areas.
- (2) The tendency of buyers and sellers to make a substantial portion of bulk transactions outside the marketplaces.
- (3) Intense specialization and professionalization as to particular produce. Thus the large-scale traveling intermediaries specializing in beans carry other produce only as a sideline, reducing the scope of their trading activities during periods of bean scarcity rather than dedicating themselves fully to the sale of another product.
- (4) Several ingenious credit maneuvers, the principal one being the custom of hurried *madâm sara* to unload all or part of their stock on credit at higher prices than the purchasing retailers would pay if they had cash.
- (5) The clearly defined role of the *madâm sara* as a traveling middle link in a three-stage bean-transport process, the first and third stages being operated by smaller-scale traders (frequently males at the first stage) with less capital than the *madâm sara*.
- (6) The crucial role of the Port-au-Prince *dépo* as the principal node through which beans are funneled into the Port-au-Prince market channels, and as the principal setting for the major bulk breaking transactions. With respect to the *dépo* handling beans, we have found the following significant features:
 - (a) A tendency for intermediaries to identify the bean *dépo* by place names (e.g. *Dépo Mirebalais*, *Dépo Jacmel*) because of the apparent tendency of the *dépo* to specialize by region rather than by produce.
 - (b) A concomitant *de facto* seasonal specialization of the *dépo* in the one or two major products currently being harvested in the particular supply region whose intermediaries use the *dépo*. This apparent product specialization is an accidental side effect of seasonal crop specialization by supply region rather than an intentional product specialization by the owner of the *dépo*.
 - (c) The existence of several types of *dépo*, which we have suggested might be profitably categorized and studied in terms of the following dimensions: type of client activity (i.e. mere storage vs. selling); type of owner activity (i.e. space rental vs. actual business operations in the produce); and scale of typical transaction (i.e. wholesale vs. retail).
 - (d) The surprising importance of the *mèt dépo* as a key figure in the bean intermediation chain, manifested principally in his tendency to become an intermediary himself under certain market conditions, and to enter into direct competition for incoming produce with smaller retailers, who will subsequently be obliged to buy from him instead of directly from the traveling intermediary.

In short, the process of bean distribution in Port-au-Prince cannot be discussed without reference to the central role of the *dépo* and of their owners. We suspect that the same importance we found bean *dépo* to have in the marketing of beans would probably be found to hold for the *dépo* through which other foodstuffs pass as well.

Some Effects of the Internal Market System on Rural Domestic Groups. One objective of examining the internal market system was to understand better certain domestic patterns observable in the village. To conclude this presentation, we will list briefly several strategic points of interaction where the demands of the internal market system seem to impinge upon social and domestic life in the home community of the intermediaries.

(1) The internal market system, with its series of differentiated roles, constitutes in effect a separate status system within which a woman can plan to "move up in the world" somewhat independently of the particular economic position of her husband in their home community.

(2) The internal market system affects the norms governing sex role in such a fashion that successful entrepreneurial behavior becomes expected of the female as a normal component of her general role as wife and mother. A woman is judged socially (and hence comes to judge herself) by the criterion of success in trade. Thus in effect the rural Haitian definition of "femininity" includes as a central component a notion of economic skill and productivity.

(3) The existence of the internal market system as an outlet of gainful activity, principally for females, tends to draw women even further away from agricultural activities. Whereas in times past certain agricultural tasks were seen to be in the woman's domain, nowadays the women in the community we know best seldom go to the fields; they are usually away, engaged in commerce. Thus, increasing opportunities in the internal market system tend to accentuate the dualism which already exists between the home-based world of men and the market-based world of women.¹¹

(4) One aspect of the absenteeism of female traders is that the men and children in the community eagerly await the weekly shipments of food from Port-au-Prince, sent home by trading wives and mothers. It is becoming increasingly common for households in the community to depend entirely on these food shipments during certain times of the year. To an increasing degree, many peasants-producers will provide fewer and fewer foodstuffs directly to their families and more and more become underwriters of the

entrepreneurial activities of their wives. Thus the gardens are increasingly becoming less a source of food and more a source of trading capital.

(5) The fact that, to an increasing degree, females are able to obtain credit and thus to set up or to augment their trade independent of financial support from their spouses has shifted the "balance of power" in many households, where the woman has become the principal cash provider, especially during nonharvest months. In the words of male informants: "Nowadays we don't dare raise our voices to the women."

(6) The internal market system operates in such a fashion that some of the successful traders have built up businesses where they steadily earn more money than their husbands. In such cases it has become accepted procedure for the husband to give up his direct involvement with agriculture, turn his fields over to others on a sharecropping basis, and move to the city and become an assistant to his entrepreneur wife, perhaps functioning as her *sékrète*.

(7) In the same vein the internal market system creates a situation where many "success stories" of domestic groups rising in the world occur by virtue of the woman's success in trade, rather than the man's success in acquiring more land. Thus the social position of a domestic group is not inextricably bound to the social position of the husband-father.

(8) The phenomenon of quite remarkable female absenteeism from the community creates a general domestic situation whereby males are frequently obliged to cook, carry water, care for children, and perform other tasks formerly (and even today normatively) performed only by women. The prevalence of this condition has made it somewhat normal for males to perform tasks which would be highly embarrassing, for example, to male cultivators in the neighboring Dominican Republic.¹² This shift in domestic roles is directly linked to female participation in the internal market system.

(9) The economic opportunities for females in the internal market system create a situation whereby there is a formidable opportunity cost involved in childbearing. Under current late-weaning practices a woman's economic activities are brought to a halt for more than a year and a half when she bears a child. Thus the internal market system may further depress fertility by making neonates a definite economic liability. This would not be so obviously the case if the women had no opportunities for gainful employment.

(10) Extended female absenteeism means that children under the age of fourteen or fifteen are frequently separated from their mothers, as they are too young to accompany her on business trips. The internal market system thus creates in effect a quite different mother-child bond from that typical of settings where children are constantly with their mother. In the conversations and games of village children there was frequent expression of the theme of the absent mother, whose principal demonstration of love was the sending of food once a week by truck.

(11) The extended presence of marketing females in Port-au-Prince, and their frequent interaction with urban consumers and their children, has clearly created higher aspirations with respect to their own children in some cases. Success in trading is almost immediately converted into better (generally urban-style) clothing for the woman's children, and may also result in the child's being sent to school or to sewing classes if the child is an older female (Legerman 1961:386).

(12) The activities of young females in the internal market system increase their geographical range of "availability" in terms of potential mates. With increasing frequency (though still rarely enough to constitute exceptions), village girls are establishing conjugal unions with males from other parts of Haiti who were also residing in Port-au-Prince.

(13) In terms of the life-cycle of the domestic group, the existence of the above mentioned patterns (item 12) as well as the general presence of village females in Port-au-Prince induces an impressive number of older women who are gradually withdrawing from commerce to live in Port-au-Prince with their daughters, taking care of whatever grandchildren they may have there, leaving their own husbands in relative isolation back in the home community.¹³ Thus the internal market system may be helping to create a situation whereby an impressively large number of couples see less of each other in their declining years than at any other time in their conjugal careers.

Notes

- 1 A strong statement concerning the isolation of the Haitian peasant can be found in Herskovits 1971:2. See also Leyburn 1966:266-67; and Bastien 1951:13.
- 2 The following articles of Mintz were consulted: 1957, 1959, 1960a, 1960b, 1961a, 1961b, 1964. We also consulted Mintz and Hall 1960; Wood 1963: ch. 7; Underwood 1970; Legerman 1961; Bastien 1951: ch. 6; Moral 1961:237-51; and Herskovits 1971:81-84.

- 3 The *carreau* is the most common land measure used in Haiti and is equivalent to 1.29 hectares or 3.33 U.S. acres. Though we have given the French spelling of *carreau*, in this paper we will ordinarily give a Creole rendition of non-English words, using a modified version of the Laubach orthography, indicating nasalization by a circumflex over the vowel, but retaining the letters *ou* to represent the *oo* sound in the English word *boot*.
- 4 These species were not botanically identified by the authors. The binomials provided were those found listed as the scientific names of the various popularly named beans in the following three publications: H.D. Barker and William Dardeau 1930; H. Barker, William Dardeau, et. al. 1930; Ignatius Urban 1920.
- 5 The *lakou* is a residential cluster of houses, perhaps best rendered by the English word *compound*.
- 6 For a detailed discussion of weights and measures used in a Haitian market, see Mintz 1961a.
- 7 See for example his discussion of the general separation between the activities of the Haitian market woman and those of her producer-husband (1959:23). He also suggests that the major contribution, if any, which males make to their wives' trading activities takes the form of an initial cash subsidy rather than garden produce (1959:23; 1964:283). Though in one passage he states that the peasant's wife in general does the selling of the household's garden produce, his findings in general lead to the suspicion that the women who crowd the market-places and roads on market days are carrying produce which they have purchased rather than received from their husbands.
- 8 Mintz's informants gave him a slightly different explanation of the term *madâm sara* (1961a; footnotes).
- 9 In late 1974, after the termination of this fieldwork, market taxes were officially abolished by governmental decree. We expect that this new circumstance will greatly modify some of the ongoing strategies of the intermediaries, many of which were directed toward coping with or circumventing these taxes.
- 10 This argument was also used by Mintz (1960:24-26) and is a line of thought standing in rather sharp contrast, for example, to the negative assessment Geertz makes of the market system (*pasar*) in Java (1963:30-47).
- 11 For a discussion of contrasts between the productive and distributive sectors of the Haitian economy, see Mintz 1959:23.
- 12 One of the authors is a native of the Dominican Republic and the other has done fieldwork in rural areas of that country.
- 13 Because of the prevailing uxori-local residence rules in the Plain, the sons of a couple tend to move away from their family of orientation on establishing a conjugal union. If a couple's daughters are all in Port-au-Prince doing commerce with their mother most of the year, the husband-father in then quite literally left alone.

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