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The survival strategies of Haitian immigrant women

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

THE SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF
HAITIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
MASTERS OF ARTS
IN
COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY

by

Sue Chaffee

1994

To: Dr. Arthur W. Herriott, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Florida International University

This thesis, written by Sue Chaffee, and entitled Survival Strategies of Haitian Immigrant Women, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgement.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Alex Stepick

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Kevin Yelvington

Date of Defense: 16 November 1993

This thesis of Sue Chaffee is approved.

Dean Arthur W. Herriott
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Florida International University, 1994

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PREFACE

Perhaps one approach to researching a subject previously unknown would be to start with books - - then, armed with educated guesses and preconceived notions, to enter the field. Each new experience would justify, compound, confuse, or confirm research previously done. Then one might hope to learn, to theorize, and to venture into new territory.¹

Does this method, full of standards of measurements and frames of reference, leave room for awe and wonder? Does it acknowledge prurient interest and a tendency toward voyeurism? These questions suggest another approach to finding out something previously unknown.

I did not pick the study of Haitian immigrant families struggling to survive the "American Dream." It picked me. I could not help but embrace one particular Haitian woman, Lucie, from the moment our lives crossed. Through her a

¹ Like most people, I also had implicit theories regarding the topics that peaked my interest. I was interested in Haitians and their culture and had wanted to photograph their surroundings when moving to Miami. Previous to migrating to south Florida, my moral sense of justice was outraged by the treatment of Haitian refugees in this country. In addition, I was confused how the majority of society could so openly devalue this group of immigrants.

wonderful cross-cultural romance began to take shape as a real anthropological study.

Lucie relocated her household to Miami in 1976 to join her husband who had migrated three years earlier. I moved to Miami in 1990 to continue studying photography and embark on studying anthropology. Two weeks after I arrived in Miami, I met Lucie in a seafood restaurant where she was preparing salads and I was to be a waitress for the next three and a half years. The first evening I saw Lucie, she had her back to me and she was singing in a high, quiet voice in Creole.

Our friendship at the restaurant ultimately spilled over into our private lives and Lucie invited me to attend her Haitian Baptist Church. Weekly visits to her church transformed into daily visits to her home as our friendship evolved and our lives began to become entwined (see page 30). I was fascinated with this Haitian woman and her culture, and simultaneously she was thanking God for bringing me into her life.

As a result of this friendship, I found myself driving daily into a neighborhood of immigrants - both documented and undocumented. I began to be introduced to Lucie's friends, relatives, and neighbors and began to notice how most of them, including Lucie, lived in multi-family dwellings. I soon became aware how the majority of them had dependent and extremely needy families back in Haiti who were relying on

their financial success in the United States.

While I photographed Lucie and her surroundings, I listened to conversations in which these refugees lamented over the lack of work in Miami and about the prejudice and discrimination they were experiencing from Miami's Anglo and Cuban communities. I observed the loaning of money, the sharing of food, the tending to sick neighbors, and over all a sense of unending generosity that resonated from these people and helped them live an admirable and even enviable life. Most important, it became apparent how religion was a foundation that not only dictated a moral code to abide by but also provided these immigrants with a spiritual, practical, and social haven.

It was not until I started studying anthropology that events I had been documenting with my camera began to take on a new dimension. The word "friendship" soon had a different, weightier meaning when I realized it could also define the social networks established between friends that were used as a mechanism for emotional and economic survival in a new country. "Sharing" and "generosity" soon became translated into a phenomenon called reciprocity and were also associated with survival strategies in literature from the social sciences. Research I eventually did on Miami's informal sector helped me understand cottage industries I had photographed in many Haitian homes. It also explained the

unrelenting presence of Haitian women selling their goods and wares on side streets in Little Haiti, daily or weekly in rented stalls at local flea markets, from door-to-door and sometimes out of back doors in their overcrowded neighborhoods.

As I continued to photograph the art with which Lucie lives her life I was able to learn how an immigrant population which seems to have everything against it lives in our society. I also gained insight into the ceremonial aspect of Haitians' lives and how these lives seem to be encompassed by deaths, births, the latest tragedy at sea, baptisms, marriages, and funerals. There seems to be an endless procession of celebration or mourning to mark the latest drama that has unfolded in their lives. On the same day that I attended a funeral with Lucie for one of her best friends (who was brutally murdered by her husband), I drove her to the dry cleaners to pick up a dress she was to wear later to a wedding that very same night.

Since humanity can be expressed by both verbal and visual approaches, I am including photographs in this thesis. The photographs were for the most part made in Lucie's home where she was residing with her husband, three sons, and two daughters when I first met her. In the short span of time that I have known her, Lucie's household composition has changed. She and her husband now live with one son and two

daughters in addition to four tenants in this multi-family dwelling. For the most part, I am presenting the written portion of this thesis in a narrative-style to allow Lucie's voice and speech patterns to emerge rather than as an ethnography that is solely my voice.²

I would like to thank Lucie for allowing the visual and verbal material that follows to unfold in real life instead of as an agenda for a research project. I would also like to thank her for waking me up early in the morning January 1, 1993 in the Bahamas and putting her head next to mine on my pillow and softly whispering, " bon ane [Happy New Year]. I prayed to God for you this morning. I prayed for your life, for your happiness, for you to do good in school, for many things. I thanked him because you are in my life and I gave thanks for all the things you do for me."

² Many of the quotes included are from telephone conversations I had with Lucie. In addition, I would often keep notes as we were talking in person.

CHAPTER 1

Recent studies of how immigrants adapt to host societies have focused on the different ways immigrants adjust to and influence local labor markets and economies.¹ However, these studies of immigration adaptation usually address the impersonal, structural variables concerning how immigrants adapt and how they assimilate or integrate into the host society.² Although these studies have greatly increased our understanding regarding immigrant adaptation, a more explicitly anthropological approach in understanding how immigrants survive is lacking.³ In particular research concerning those immigrant groups, such as Haitians women, who appear to be unemployed, unwanted, and beyond the reach of the state and private charities is needed.⁴ As a graduate student

¹ See Bonacich (1973), Portes and Borocz (1989), Piore (1979), Portes, Castells, and Benton (1989), Portes and Stepick (1985), Massey, et al. (1986) for various discussions on how different immigrant groups may penetrate local markets either as middlemen minorities, through the informal sector, create economic enclaves, etc.

² See Eisenstadt (1966), Garcia (1986), Taft (1966) and Milton (1965) for discussions on immigrant absorption, adaptation, and assimilation.

³ Perhaps with exceptions to recent works by Rouse (1986), Stepick (1992), Gonzalez (1981), Grasmuck and Pessar (1991), and Dinerman (1978)

⁴ This is a common experience of immigrant groups coming to the United States (i.e. Guatemalans and Vietnamese).

doing research on Lucie, a Haitian woman who has relocated her household to the United States, I have been able to document the survival strategies she utilizes to ensure her family's survival on a daily basis.⁵

Using ethnographic methods, I have investigated these strategies. They include Lucie's economic behaviors such as her activities in Miami's informal and formal sectors. I have seen how these behaviors are maintained or revised by cultural factors such as religious practices and family life. I have also documented how Lucie actively employed resistance in order to combat the disrespect, discrimination and oppression she was faced with on a daily basis in the workplace. Other strategies I have examined include the formation and termination of her formal, informal, and social networks. I have studied Lucie's various networks and propose to analyze how she employs them to contribute to her household's adaptation and survival.

Lucie who was born in 1935, migrated from Cap Haitian, Haiti, in 1976 (see page 8). She is the mother of five children and has been living in the United States for 17 years. In this thesis, my intention is to describe and

⁵ There are two connotations of the term adapting (or adaptation) which are misleading. The first one implies, in a theoretical sense, functional "fitting." The second one implies an ideological position of "melting pot." Adapting, or adaptation in this thesis will not be used in such a way that there will be such an ideal outcome. Rather, these terms will connote "survival," or "survival strategies."

-Lucie and her son prior to
migrating-

Haiti, 1976

analyze how Lucie's individual experiences are embedded within a social, cultural, economic, political, and gendered framework that is strongly dominated by prejudice and discrimination against her and other Haitian women in south Florida. I have documented how being a member of her church helps Lucie, and how she and other Haitian women resist and contest these trying conditions. It is my contention that the church ultimately became a significant source of respect for Lucie. Her relenting faith in God gave her the ability to contend with the truly despairing problems of a female Haitian immigrant's adaptation in Miami.

In addition to the church, I suggest Lucie's family and household networks and the cultural notion of reciprocity are also central in helping her combat these despairing conditions and are crucial to her economic and social well-being. This thesis posits two areas that are critical for socioeconomic survival, especially for refugees that no one wants. They are 1) family/household networks embedded in acts of reciprocity, and engagement in Miami's informal sector, and 2) respect, religion, and resistance. The first provides a base for obtaining and ensuring economic and social survival and the second allows for a way to combat the disrespect, prejudice and discrimination, and oppression surrounding these immigrants and provides a sense of dignity and a source for pride. My concern is not to demonstrate how the importance of

survival strategies are to one individual, but to provide complementary data and a framework for understanding immigrant and household adaptation that extends beyond the typical structural variables.

Past Migration Studies

Studies of migration have generally focused on one of two issues: macro-level trends in the political economies of labor-exporting and labor-importing societies that stimulate migration or micro-level processes influencing individuals' decisions to relocate (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). Research concerning migration between the Caribbean region and the United States has generally focused on both the structural relations between these two areas and their impact on individuals, for example, the lack of an economic opportunity structure, population pressures, and the like in the homeland (Chaney, 1979; Wood 1981; and Richardson 1983). In addition, male migration out of the Caribbean historically has been the focus of discussion and women have been included only in terms of those left behind. As a result, too few studies discuss the movement of women (Brydon, 1989).

Another dimension of migration studies focuses on immigration adaptation and how immigrants both assimilate and integrate once they have reached their host country. These studies often focus on the ways immigrants adjust to and

influence local labor markets and economies (Griffith, 1992). They also tend to include research concerning patterns of cyclical migration and immigrant settlement, and their consequences for labor market behaviors and the structure of the labor market itself (Portes & Bach, 1985; Massey, et al. 1986). These migration studies are not only produced by sociologists and anthropologists, but also by political scientists and economists. Political scientists have generally focused on the interaction of policy and immigration, while economists have focused on the way immigrants affect the wages and working conditions of native workers (Griffith, 1992).

Accounts of population movements have included the historical-structuralist perspective. This perspective has stressed the significance of a large pool of marginalized workers in developing societies as a prerequisite to large-scale migration from Third World countries (Portes & Bach, 1985). Other migration studies include the traditional equilibrium theory or push-pull model that depict migrants as responding primarily to wage differentials between sending regions and receiving regions (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). These theories have been used to look at individuals' decisions to migrate due to conditions at the point of origin and at the destination (Garcia, 1986). According to these perspectives, large population movements occur because large

members of individuals make similar calculations regarding the advantages of migrating (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). Recent writings on migration (Rouse, 1986; Fernàndez-Kelly and Garcia 1989; Gonzalez 1981; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991) have stressed both structural causes of migration and adaptive strategies of households with households viewed as a mediating unit between forces, both macro-and micro-level, and individual behaviors.

Household Adaptation Studies

Central to a variety of perspectives on households is the notion that the household contains a "moral economy" where economic resources are pooled (Becker, 1981). According to Wood (1981) the household is defined as a group that ensures its maintenance and reproduction by generating and disposing a collective income fund. Similar to this, other social scientists commonly depict the household as a collective, income-generating unit whose members struggle together to stretch and supplement inadequate wages (Dinerman, 1978). Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) critique those who regard the household with a moral-economy perspective saying this view portrays households as essentially passive and as social units whose members are collectively victimized by the market economy. Instead, they argue that not all households are made up of people with the same agendas. Therefore, it is important to study the hierarchies of power within households

as well as ideologies of kinship and gender. In addition, it is important to consider the production and consumption patterns of the entire household to better understand the strategies its members will enlist to survive.

Similar to Grasmuck and Pessar's argument, Rouse (1986) also critiques the literature on households that treat these units as clearly bounded and readily identifiable entities. In his research on households in a Mexican transnational migrant community, Rouse did not find consistently bounded entities. Rather he observed households that consisted of members who had remarkable solidarity one moment and the next would be weak and fragmented. He critiques the adaptationists who fail to recognize the conflicts and disputes that happen in these so-called homogeneous units.

Another dimension to household studies is added by researchers who contend that households are integral to recent immigrants' adaptation to host countries. According to Fjellman and Gladwin (1985) Haitian households found in the United States are constantly changing and need to be extremely flexible. They describe the Haitian household as migrating in nodes, chains, or fragments and contend it is in these households where individual decisions are made based in the context of family-based strategies for survival and continuance. Similar to this, Laguerre (1984) contends that the household is extremely crucial for Haitians migrating to

the United States is since it is a unit for social reproduction. He therefore deems it necessary to study how households function in order to give proper insight into the adaptation process of Haitian immigrants. According to Laguerre, the household provides a niche in which traditional values are challenged, behavioral conflicts are intensified, and survival strategies are developed.

Network Studies

Another body of literature focuses on social, informal, and formal networks when discussing family survival strategies in migration. In this literature S.F. Harbison (1981) refers to households as being domestic units that become socializing agents as they lay the foundation for family and household based networks. Studies on networks similar to Harbison's study have given insight into international flows and settlement (Boyd, 1989). Boyd notes how social networks are central components in migration systems analysis. Other researchers feel network-building contributes to binational families (Chavez, 1988), transnationalism (Glick-Schiller and Fouron, 1990), and institutionalized linkages between sending and receiving communities (Massey, et al. 1986; Portes and Stepick, 1985).

Another dimension of network studies has been explored by researchers examining the survival strategies of women in the

Caribbean. Information has emerged from this work showing how communal and fraternal relations are key elements in enabling poor people to survive. According to Senior (1991) women are especially dependent on the creation of network alliances which permit reciprocal arrangements with other females for child care and household duties, food or cash in emergencies or general emotional support. Caribbean women also employ a strategy that involves "knowing people" (Senior, 1991). Family, and to a lesser extent friends and neighbors, play a major role in survival for these women and might be an answer to what outsiders discern as "no visible means of support." The interaction with kin or friends might not involve a cash exchange but the exchange of services as well as goods and emotional and other forms of support. "Hand wash hand" is how the reciprocal nature of such exchanges is commonly described. It is by networking that poor people - women especially - assist each other in coping with their multiple roles and in supplementing inadequate incomes (Senior, 1991, p. 140).

Yelvington (1991) also did research concerning Caribbean women and their utilization of networks as a survival strategy. In his research in a Trinidadian factory, Yelvington examined how the women workers felt in order for them to succeed, it was necessary to have connec (connections whereas the individual has a relationship with a person who has access to power). In addition, to having the connections,

the women contended they also had to be able to use them. He found reciprocal practices amongst the workers were based on different positions and their associated constraints in the social structure. In addition, support network activities are argued by Yelvington to be a sort of bridge between what has been traditionally defined as formal, informal, and household labor. He therefore labels these support network activities a "fourth shift" for women workers and deems it to be taken into consideration when theorizing about women's labor in the Third World (1991).⁶

Other research concerning networks as being utilized as a survival strategy has also been suggested by anthropologists Carol Stack (1974) and Larissa Lomnitz (1977). They focussed their studies on the significance of networks to groups of people that are generally devalued, unemployed, and unwanted. Stack noted that prior to her research, few studies of the black family living in the United States had ever high-lighted the adaptive strategies, resourcefulness, and resilience of urban families under conditions of perpetual poverty or the stability of their kin networks (1974). Stack therefore performed an extensive anthropological study on black urban women and found extensive networks of kin and friends

⁶ Ward (1990) notes that researchers have for a long time referred to women's "double shifts" as workers and housewives and suggest that we now look at their "third shift" in informal sector activities (Yelvington, 1991).

supporting and reinforcing each other along with devising schemes for self-help and strategies for survival (1974). Stack also observed reciprocal obligations that linked participants to each other.

Following Stack's significant research on women's survival networks, Lomnitz also noted the importance of networks to groups of people that have access only to jobs that are temporary, intermittent, menial, devalued, and generally unprotected (1977). She saw members in this marginal class as having to build their own economic system which depended heavily on reciprocal exchanges between neighbors (1977). Lomnitz did her research in a Mexican shantytown and concluded that a reciprocal exchange of goods and services was found to be the core of the residents' economic existence. She also stressed these networks result in integration, mutual assistance, and cooperation that result in a complex economic system utilized by members based on family units (or households) and not individuals.

Stack was referring to Black Americans women, and Lomnitz was referring to Mexicans when describing the groups they were studying as being resourceful and resilient, while they worked at jobs that were temporary, intermittent, menial, and devalued. However, they could very well have been describing Haitians living in the United States. According to Stepick and Portes (1985), Haitians have been described as being among

the most persecuted and suffering of any contemporary immigrants in the United States.

As well as utilizing complex family and household networks, I contend Lucie, her family, friend's, and other Haitians living in south Florida rely on the church along with the cultural notion of respect as a survival strategy.

Respect, Religion, and Resistance

In 1985 nearly seventy-five percent of Haitian immigrants reported they attended church at least weekly (Stepick, 1992). In addition the religious community has become the primary means through which Haitians have become linked to American institutions (Woldemikael, 1989). I have done an extensive literature research on Haitians and their religions, but the literature I found solely addressed vodou (voodoo).⁷ While vodou is extremely important to many Haitians and is significant as part of their religion, this is not true for all Haitians.⁸ Like many other Haitians both in Haiti and in

⁷ See McCarthy Brown (1991); Courlander (1960); Leyburn (1966); Herskovitz (1971); Larose (1977); Wilentz (1989); Banks (1985).

⁸ Many Haitians I have interviewed as a research assistant for the "Immigrant Adjustment and Inter-Ethnic Relations in South Florida" - a National Science Grant directed under David Griffith said they have converted their religions from Catholicism to Protestantism. Most of these people are in Lucie's networks. In many conversations with Lucie and those folks in her networks, I have concluded that those that have converted shun vodou totally and feel it is disrespectful to assume all Haitians participate in vodou.

the United States, Lucie has converted her religion from Catholicism to Protestantism. For the most part, therefore, those who have converted have vowed to disassociate themselves from any form of vodou.

As previously stated, I was unable to find any literature to support my argument that religion is a fundamental way for unwanted immigrants to buffer themselves from the consequences of prejudice and discrimination. However, there is literature that supports my hypothesis that the church is a vehicle for obtaining respect along with dignity and a sense of pride for people from the Caribbean. The notion of respect as being an important cultural value has been vastly addressed in literature on the Caribbean. It has been cited as being a fundamental moral concept, central to one's existence as a human being (Wilson, 1973).⁹

In Caribbean regions, respect is associated with women who are members of the church, theoretically because the church is part of the legal society. Since women can participate officially in the church, they are therefore regarded as..."carriers of respectability" (Wilson, 1969). Not only is the church the ultimate authority for the

Lucie recently quarreled with a long-time friend of hers because the woman was rumored to be allowing a group of Haitians to practice vodou in her living-room.

⁹ This body of literature has also been critiqued in Sutton (1974) and Besson (1993).

definition of respectability, it is, outside the home, the principal public domain of sociability for women, who more or less control the activities of the church even though such key positions as pastor and deacon are held by men (Wilson, 1973).¹⁰

According to Wilson (1973) the actual function of the church is bringing into sharp focus the degrees of respectability. Simply to go to church is a mark of being respectable; but is important that those who claim greatest respectability attend church as a family or household. High class people ideally attend church as a family, and the children go to Bible school as well. This assumes that the parents have been married in church, and church marriage is itself a major index of respectability in most Caribbean societies (page 100).

Another dimension in the studies regarding maintaining respect through church membership was explored by sociologist James Blackwell (1975). He contends social status and respect within the Black community can be gained by variables such as family background and church membership. Blackwell referred to these two variables as secondary variables - as opposed to

¹⁰ Not all key positions are held by men, however. Lucie serves as "deaconess" in her church, as do other women. This may partly be due to a high percentage of the congregation of Lucie's church are women. According to Lucie's son, who is the church secretary, this is because in Miami many of the Haitian men are working in restaurants and hotels and are required to work on Sundays.

the universal primary variables used when determining socioeconomic status - occupation, education, and income. Similarly, in her studies on domestic workers, Thornton Dill (1988) found that black women who participated in various social groupings, particularly in the church, and who had reputations as being decent, law-abiding, hard-working citizens were able to offset the low status of their jobs and maintain dignity and respect. However, Thornton Dill argued that the effort to maintain dignity in a low-status occupation was an on-going process along with a form of resistance. This included household workers utilizing a variety of resources in the process. Part of this process included asserting their remarkable sense of self-worth that was derived from their [the workers'] intimate knowledge of the realities of employers' lives, their understanding of class and race in this country, and their value system, which measures an individual's worth less by material success than by one's character, by the quality of one's interpersonal relationships and by one's standing in the community (Thornton Dill, 1988).

Ward (1987) also addresses these very issues. In her autobiography, Wandering Girl, Ward tells how, as a young girl, she was informed by her employer that she was considered the woman's "dark servant" (p. 120). Ward was made to feel like she was ignorant and had to endure demeaning tasks such as washing the car seat after riding in her employer's car, to

remove any traces of her scent. Ward relates events in which white society was continually draining this Aborigine's sense of self-respect. In one such incident, Ward recalls entering a party at her place of employment where, "as soon as I opened the door all the chatter and laughter stopped. You could hear a pin drop as all eyes were on me. 'Tracey dear, is this your little dark servant?' I just stood there smiling. I thought it was wonderful that at last people were taking notice of me...I turned to the lady who did all the talking and said, 'My name is Glenyse.' She was quite startled; she said, 'Oh dear, I didn't think you had a name,' (p. 24)."

As her life as a domestic worker unfolds, Ward eventually discovers subtle ways to become empowered in her situation, thereby re-establishing her dignity and respect. According to Ward, "if she scolded me or talked to me in a way where I felt like I was dirt, I sort of found courage to answer back in a way that would make her feel stupid, (p. 92)". Ward would also take advantage of her employer's absence by eating forbidden meat instead of her daily cold cereal, and drinking from the fine china instead of her dented tin cup. By treating herself to these small forbidden pleasures, Ward was able to resist the demeaning position her employer forced her into and maintain her sense of dignity and respect.

Goals and Objectives

In the following chapters, I intend to give insight into how immigrant women survive in the United States, especially those who appear to be unemployed, unwanted, and beyond the reach of state and private charities. The goal of my research is to increase the understanding of the different survival strategies employed by immigrant women who are devalued in this country and show how their adaptive strategies, resourcefulness, and resilience allows them to survive.

This research is significant because Haitians, and particularly Haitian women living in Miami are relatively newcomers and therefore unstudied. In addition, the problems surrounding their adaptation are vast. By focusing on Haitian women's survival strategies, I hope to increase the understanding of 1) their economic behaviors which ultimately are connected to other social and cultural realms; and 2) the importance of religion and respect in helping these immigrant women buffer themselves against the consequences of disrespect, prejudice, and discrimination.

Methodology

In order to study Haitian women's survival strategies, I employed tools of participant-observation in the tradition of feminist anthropology. In this feminist tradition, I was able to focus on women's activities that are

often ignored by traditional ethnographers. In addition to writing an ethnography as a feminist, I included photography as well. While photography has been used to explore society since the medium's invention, it has only been since the 1960's that interest in visual sociology/anthropology has really taken off.

According to Agee (1946), a photographer's task is not to alter the world as the eye sees it into a world of aesthetic reality, but to perceive the aesthetic reality within the actual world, and to make an undisturbed faithful record of it. Prior to the camera's invention, it has been suggested that memory (as opposed to engravings, drawings, or paintings) served as a substitute for the photograph. Yet, unlike memory, photographs do not in themselves preserve meaning. Meaning, rather, is the result of understanding what is going on. This knowledge takes place in time, and must be explained in time. Only that which narrates can make us understand and photographs in themselves do not narrate. For the most part, using photography in the social sciences is beneficial for indeed, it does help to stimulate the researcher's memory. Unfortunately, utilizing photography may also pose problems for the researcher as well. Because of their lack of ability to narrate, the photograph can be torn from its context and therefore lends itself to any arbitrary use.

Therefore, if photography is to be useful in social

science research then an alternative use of photography needs to develop. The task of an alternative photography is to incorporate photography into social and political memory instead of using it as a substitute which encourages the atrophy of any such memory.¹¹

Another dimension surrounding the various uses of photography is that of sensitivity. According to Becker [(1974) as in Gold (1989)], a measure visual sociologists employ to protect subjects can be called "sensitivity." Sensitivity requires the researcher to develop an in-depth understanding of subjects so that he or she may determine which individuals and activities may be photographed. As such, sensitivity is rooted in the reciprocal character of sociological research. In addition, a researcher cannot engage in the reciprocal relationship required by the covenant without making efforts to understand his or her hosts' beliefs, values, and views of the world (Gold, 1989).

It was with a similar "sensitivity" that I began to frame Lucie's story in my camera's lens. Eventually it was with a combination of photography and intellect that I began to comprehend what this Haitian woman did on a daily basis in order to survive and gained insight into the intersection

¹¹ When I first began to photograph Lucie, I methodically narrated events, (and in reality, memories) that were encompassing the photographs into a daily written journal.

between her public and private domains.

As my graduate studies progressed, I began meticulously to log fieldnotes into a computer after I spent the day with Lucie. In order to provide the reader with a scope of the activities I did with Lucie I am including a panoramic view of some of these events from the past three and one half years. This array of activities includes: attending church with her on a weekly basis; traveling with her to the Bahamas for 21 days; escorting Lucie and her husband to visit his worker's compensation lawyer, doctor, and physical therapist; attending school with her to learn English as a Second Language (see page 28); helping her run errands, including trips to the dry-cleaners, bank, post office, electric company, water company, and Southern Bell; attending funerals with her; taking her to the Miami docks to ship remittances to Haiti; driving her to visit relatives in Pompano, and Ft. Lauderdale; taking her to the flea market in Ft. Lauderdale on a weekly basis; helping her shop and transport groceries back to her home; acting as a translator between her and her accountant, her lawyer, her doctor, "HRS" (Human Resource Services), and the Unemployment Office; filling out numerous applications for food stamps, Medicaid, and unemployment; and acting as a note-taker and tutor so she could obtain a certificate in daycare by attending classes that were taught in English through HRS.

In addition to observing Lucie's activities spontaneously, I tried to understand more about the members of her network in the second year of my graduate studies. At this time I was hired as a research assistant (under Dr. Alex Stepick's - of Florida International University - direction) on a National Science Foundation grant (for David Griffith - of East Carolina University) examining "Immigrant Adjustment and Inter-ethnic Relations in South Florida." Dr. Stepick's and my component of this research grant was to interview thirty Haitian households in the greater Miami area. Aiming to produce a snowball sample, I elicited Lucie's help in finding me people to interview. Dr. Stepick then had her hired onto the grant to help with Creole to English translation as many of the respondents we spoke with did not speak any English.

Since Lucie was being paid to help me with the interviews, she was aggressive in finding people for me to talk to. Many days we would sit in her home and she would make a verbal list of friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and relatives we could go "visit" and who might then consent to an interview. This process allowed me to gain further insight into Lucie's network and provided an opportunity to examine which individuals she seemed to feel a closer alliance to. I also learned which relationships seemed to have a precarious balance of trust and mistrust. I was also able to make my

-Lucie attending class to learn English as a second language-
Little Haiti, 1992

own mental list of members that I had previously documented as being a part of her network, but found she was reluctant to pursue for an interview. Often I would suggest an individual and she would seem uncomfortable, and then refuse, saying she did not think that person would consent. Often she would say that person was "funny" (meaning scared to reveal private information) or "he/she don't like white people."

In my unfolding relationship with Lucie, I continually sought ways to interpret her actions. I looked for models of how to relate Lucie's survival strategies and found anthropological and feminist agendas that provided me with ideas about how to proceed.¹² The ethnography that follows is not only the result of a deep commitment to Lucie, prudent listening, and an enormous amount of photographing, but in addition to academic training, countless conversations with professors and classmates seeking insight and clarity, and most of all, a reciprocal relationship with this Haitian woman whose small section of life I attempt to tell.

¹² These agendas included Karen McCarthy Brown's Mama Lola (1991), Carol Stack's All Our Kin (1974), and Ruth Behar's Translated Woman (1993), and through the teaching and guidance of Alex Stepick.

-Lucie serves me tea before we attend church-

Little Haiti, 1991

CHAPTER TWO

Haitian Immigrants in the United States

Geographic, historic, social, and political factors have combined to make the economic system of Haiti one of the most impoverished countries in the world. The lack of economic development comes from several factors including inadequate natural resources, the limited amount of arable land, the overpopulation of the country, the historic neglect of the rural areas, and a lack of interest by a government that is more concerned with retaining power than promoting economic development (Miller, 1984). Due to political and economic reasons, many Haitians, both have left their homeland and have moved in large numbers to the United States.

Some 600,000 Haitians fled what they perceived as an oppressive home country government between 1950 and 1979, with 400,000 of those currently residing in the United States (DeSantis and Halberstein, 1992). The greatest outmigration from Haiti began in the late 1950s when Francois Duvalier assumed power and instituted a reign of terror which stripped citizens of their rights and forced political opponents, intellectuals, and professionals to seek a safe haven abroad. The first wave of political refugees emigrated to Francophone

Africa, Canada, France, Latin America, and to nearby Caribbean countries as well as the United States. During the 1960s, as many of these countries closed their doors, the United States became the major haven for expatriates, mainly from the Haitian middle class (Buchanan- Stafford, 1986). These early "airplane migrants" from Haiti's middle class and above settled mainly in New York and were largely welcomed in their new homeland (Stepick, 1992). During the 1970s another wave of Haitians, from all strata of Haitian society, migrated, mainly toward south Florida's shores. These new immigrants included the "boat people" most of whom settled in Dade County, Florida. In contrast to those who migrated to the United States earlier and by airplane, this new wave, for the most part, crammed themselves twenty or thirty at a time into small barely seaworthy vessels for the perilous 720-mile trip to southern Florida (Stepick, 1992). The people in this group were composed largely of Haitian peasants and unskilled urban workers with little or no education (Giles, 1990). Many of them, however, did not survive the trip, due to drowning at sea in overturned boats.

In 1980 when the Haitian-American population of Dade County numbered some 50,000, another 25,000 to 36,000 were allowed entrance to the United States. Most remained in Dade county and settled in the Edison-Little River area now referred to as "Little Haiti." Little Haiti represents the

largest single urban concentration of Haitians within the confines of any city in the United States (DeSantis and Halberstein, 1992).

The 1990s brought another influx of Haitian immigrants to U.S. shores when a coup d'état took place in Haiti in October, 1991 and the Haitian military ousted newly elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide (Rohter, 1991). Since that time, Haiti once again became encompassed in political turmoil and many Haitians have attempted to flee terror in their homeland. Many of the Haitians in this latest wave had difficulties with immigration policies that described them as primarily economic, not political, refugees. As a result, the U.S. Coast Guard was ordered to intercept boats of Haitian refugees and take them to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (Devroy, 1992). This interdiction policy prompted one Miami mayor (Xavier Suarez) to hand out bumper stickers that read "Interdict Drugs, Not Haitians" (Rohter, 1992).

Haitians in Miami

An estimated 100,000 Haitians currently reside in the Miami area and another 100,000 are divided among south Florida's Broward and Palm Beach counties. Exact numbers are hard to come by since many Haitians are illegal immigrants and, are subject to deportation, tend to avoid officialdom (Mohl, 1991). According to Stepick (1992) negative

stereotypes and fears of Haitians have become firmly embedded in the general south Florida area. Haitians have not only been perceived to be disease-ridden, but also as uneducated, unskilled peasants who can only be a burden to this south Florida community (pg.58).

Since the context of Haitians' reception in the United States has not been positive, their integration into American life has not been positive. Because of their race and ethnicity, Haitians have not only experienced discrimination in the United States but have also been relegated to a low status (Buchanan-Stafford, 1986). Compounding these problems are the federal policies that exist which have helped produce extreme conditions by subjecting Haitians in Florida to a relentless campaign of harassment designed to discourage Haitians coming to the United States and to impel those who are here to return (Stepick, 1992). The policy of persecution, legal confusion, and social isolation contributed to Haitians' dismal socioeconomic conditions in the United States. Therefore, their employment situation compares unfavorably to any other immigrant population in the country (Stepick, 1992).

According to Stepick, recent Haitian immigrants in Miami are undoubtedly number one among America's most suffering contemporary immigrant communities. Economically they lag behind every other major group in the region and behind their

own compatriots who arrived in the United States earlier (1992, p. 78). Few immigrant groups in recent history have suffered unemployment, downward occupation mobility, and poverty to the extent that the Haitians have (Stepick, 1992).

In addition, statistical analysis has indicated that increased education or skills does little to improve their chances of either getting a job or earning more money. The only thing that seemed to make a difference is gender - females have it much worse than males. More than 80% of Haitian females are jobless, in contrast to 35.7% of the males. Also, Haitian women have been unemployed nearly two-thirds of the time since their arrival in Miami, while men have been unemployed less than one-third. Seventy percent of Haitian female refugees had incomes below the 1983 individual poverty level (Stepick and Portes, 1986).

In the wake of arrivals of Haitian boat people in the late 1970's, numerous organizations arose to provide services to the new immigrants. Those that have the most evident presence in Little Haiti include the Haitian Refugee Center (HRC), the Haitian American Community Agency of Dade (HACAD), the Haitian-American Chamber of Commerce (HACC), the Haitian Task Force (HTF), and the Haitian-American Democratic Club (HADC). In addition to these well-known Haitian organizations, many religious organizations also provide

services to Miami's Haitian community. These include the Haitian Catholic Center as well as the numerous store-front Protestant churches found in Little Haiti (Stepick, 1992).

Together with the above-mentioned Haitian organizations and religious organizations helping these immigrants adapt to life in their new home country, Haitians have also utilized their family and kinship ties to assist each other in a variety of ways in order to survive. This ranges from giving support in times of crisis to providing each other with loans of money (Buchanan- Stafford, 1983). The household has ultimately become the location where many of these survival strategies come into fruition.

Haitian Household Studies

Laguerre (1984) contends that it is in the household where Haitians establish networks of relationships with relatives and friends. It is also the site where members of the Haitian extended family can serve as a base for support for family members who are migrating from Haiti. Fjellman and Gladwin (1985) stress that planning strategies among Haitian families are integral for the family's survival. They also contend that Haitians, like most migrants driven by disaster, have few institutions outside the family to give meaning to their actions and viability to their strategies. They conclude that the family, by default, becomes the provider of

both.

Fjellman and Gladwin also state that the Haitian family - which can include a range of kinship and fictive kinship ties that can be called upon for reciprocal support - can function as an extended network. This extended network provides the setting in which Haitian family beliefs about reciprocity and hard work for the survival and betterment of oneself and one's family are transplanted into the daily life routines of survival in a new land (Fjellman and Gladwin, 1985). For the most part, studies on Haitians in the United States place little or no emphasis gender differences.

Haitians in Miami's Formal and Informal Sectors

Attempting to integrate into a country where racist attitudes prevail of society has created severe difficulties for Haitian immigrants trying to find a stable means of employment. According to Boswell (1991) most Haitians are underemployed since coming to the U.S., and in south Florida blacks have always been concentrated in unskilled agricultural, heavy labor, or domestic jobs. Stepick and Portes (1986) found that most Haitians who were working in south Florida were employed in apparel and furniture factories, restaurants, and hotels, where they were hired to do the most menial tasks.

In response to American's society's rejection of their

presence, Haitians have created their own informal sector in order to survive in south Florida. This informal sector resembles the original descriptions of this phenomenon in Third World cities; casual self-employment isolated from the broader market and the use of informal enterprise primarily as a survival mechanism (Stepick, 1989). According to Castells and Portes (1989) the informal economy is not an individual condition but a process of income-generating characterized by one central feature. It is unregulated by the institutions of society in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated.

The Haitian community in south Florida, similar to other immigrant communities in the U.S., has provided much of the requisite labor for informal activities and even the entrepreneurial drive to initiate them. The rise of the informal sector is not the result of any structural requirement of the U.S. economy, but merely the outcome of the survival strategies of immigrants attempting to make it in America (Castells and Portes, 1989). For many Haitians attempting to "make it" in Miami, informal enterprise provides a supplement to, not a substitute for, wage labor. Generally they do not leave wage labor voluntarily in favor of their own business but rather become full-time informal entrepreneurs when they have no choice, as when they lose or cannot obtain regular employment.

In their quest for survival, Haitian immigrants have utilized a flexible, ad hoc form of economic activity as they attempt to generate income. The small-scale and face-to-face features of these activities make living through a crisis a more manageable experience than waiting in line for relief from impersonal bureaucracies (Castell and Portes, 1989). Also, many of the Haitian unemployed seldom even have access to the welfare system and hence must find some kind of renumerated work, generally in casual self-employment (Stepick, 1989).

The view that informalization is a marginal phenomenon caused by the survival needs of the poor is being replaced by a complex understanding of the informal sector as an integral part of advanced capitalistic economies. Gonzales (1992) considers workers in the informal sector to be the invisible proletariat because for the most part their work goes unreported in government tabulations of income and labor force participation. The estimated size of the invisible proletariat is 50 million workers, of whom 24% are people of color and 49% are female. According to Fernàndez-Kelly and Garcia, poverty-stricken populations are likely to engage in imaginative strategies for maintaining levels of subsistence (1989). Commonly found in south Florida's Haitian communities, these imaginative strategies result in petty businesses with numerous Haitians engaged in informal

activities. The most common of these petty businesses are dressmaking and tailoring, petty commerce, food preparation, childcare, and transportation (Stepick, 1989).

In the following chapter, I will provide ethnographic data to show how Lucie attaches herself to Miami's formal sector as well as engages in Miami's informal sector in order to make a living. As a close friend of Lucie's I was able to document her participation in the informal economy and the seemingly inherent skills and strategies she employed on a daily basis in order to ensure her family's economic survival.

CHAPTER 3

This is not my year. Nope, this is not my year. 1992 is very bad for me. My husband isn't working and my children need many things. But I'm not going to kill myself. I have God in my life. Now I'll try to make lots of money selling things, buying little things...

Lucie, a 54 year old
Haitian immigrant woman

Early one morning Lucie called me on the telephone and in an urgent voice said, "Sue, vini, [come] I need your help. I want you to take me to Sosyal [the unemployment Office] to see if I can find some money." The seafood restaurant where Lucie had been employed as a pantry worker since 1988 and I as a waitress since 1990 had closed due to Hurricane Andrew in August, 1992. Some of our Haitian co-workers told Lucie she should go downtown and file for unemployment benefits. The Crabhouse restaurant, which eventually stayed closed for renovations for seven months, was Lucie's only attachment to the formal labor market. With its closing, Lucie's activities in the informal labor market increased substantially as she tried to accumulate and manipulate capital in order for her household to survive.

I drove to Lucie's house in Little Haiti where she was at that time living with her husband and three of her five children. Without knocking I entered her house through the

front door and could smell the Haitian food she was preparing in her kitchen. As I sought her out, I passed through the dining room where three small children huddled together on two chairs watching cartoons on a television that occupied most of the small dining room table. As I entered the kitchen, Lucie looked up from the stove where she had several things cooking and smiled saying, "Bonjou madmwzaèl, sa'k pase ["good morning miss, what's happening"?]? How you feeling today?" I asked her who the children were and she laughed and said, "oh you see them? I'm watching them for my neighbor Woda. She go to Fort Lauderdale today to make work in shampoo factory. She had to take bus at 5:00 this morning so she bring them here real early." As she divided scrambled eggs onto three small plates, I asked her if Woda was paying her. She nodded, and in a lowered voice explained, "She give me \$4.00 for 'each child for the day (see page 44). That makes me pay for \$12.00. It's not much but I need the money." She placed the eggs in front of the children and warned them, "'i cho [it's hot]." She then returned to the stove and removed the lid covering a large pot full of some type of thick bubbling liquid and asked, "you know what this is? I make big pot of Kremas to sell¹. When I make this I find many people who want to buy. Luna wants to buy some, Jackson wants to buy

¹ Kremas is a hot, thick, Haitian drink that resembles egg nog.

some, I'm sending some to Pompano. People pay me \$8.00 for one jar when I make this for them."

Replacing the lid and turning the burner off she said Charlie (her husband) and Sisi (her daughter) were going to watch the children while we went out to, "look for some money" (see page 45). She ran to her bedroom to finish dressing and called to me, "Sue, chita m'ap vini [Sue, sit down, I'm coming back"]."

The closing of the restaurant was only one thing in a series of events that would contribute to the worsening of Lucie's economic survival in 1992. Prior to that, her husband (also employed at the seafood restaurant) fell down on a concrete floor while working creating permanent damage to his back and leaving him with receiving decreased bi-weekly insurance payments from Worker's Compensation. Also that year, the embargo placed on Haiti resulting from the military coup d'etat of Haiti's elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide would leave Lucie's brother - who resides in northern Haiti and was the recently widowed father of seven children - extremely dependent on Lucie's remittances of food, clothing and money for his family's survival². Similarly, Lucie's mother, who also resides in northern Haiti, would need Lucie's remittances of money and food as her health began to fail her

² Lucie also sends \$45.00 a year for each of her brother's six children living in Haiti to pay for their school tuition.

-Lucie babysits in her home for low rates of profit-
Little Haiti, 1992

-Lucie's daughter helps her babysit-

Little Haiti, 1992

due to her growing older. Later that year, Lucie's brother-in-law, who also lived in Haiti with his wife and five children, would die at the age of 45 leaving Lucie's husband (who was the eldest brother) in charge of the funeral expenses. Following the Hurricane Andrew, Lucie applied for government assistance for food stamps and unemployment insurance. She eventually received \$110.00 weekly from unemployment and \$300.00 a month in food stamps. This, along with her husband's bi-weekly \$370.00 worker's compensation totalled to \$1500.00 a month. Lucie's household expenses included a monthly mortgage payment of \$770.00, a monthly water and gas bill approximately totalling \$110.00, a monthly phone bill averaging \$100.00, a monthly electric bill averaging \$85.00, and various bills including doctor bills she paid in increments, furniture payments, debts she was repaying to people in her network she had previously borrowed money from, and college expenses for one of her sons. In addition, to everyday expenses including bus fares and food, along with money spent on remittances sent to Haiti, Lucie's monthly budget was approximately \$1900.00 a month (assuming there were no unexpected problems or disasters) for her family of seven. Therefore, the income coming into her household, was less than her expenses making every month a financial struggle. However, Lucie's participation in the informal sector, like many other Haitian women, allowed her to survive

1992, a year she would refer to as one of the worst years of her life.

As a close friend of Lucie and her family, I was able to document her participation in the informal economy and the seemingly inherent skills and strategies she employed on a 63daily basis to ensure her household's survival. These strategies included engaging in petty commerce, sewing clothes for low rates of profit and babysitting for neighborhood children whose mothers probably did not earn more than the minimum wage. Lucie also worked part-time in a mini-market owned by the godfather of her youngest child, collected rent from different tenants who rented small sections of her home, and cooked or prepared food in large quantities in her home to sell to relatives or friends. I also took a trip to the Bahamas with Lucie where she utilized cross-cultural economic networks to sell the goods and wares she had accumulated for three months in hopes of making a profit.

In addition to her formal, and informal activites Lucie also continued to perform duties in her household, including socializing and raising her children, washing clothes, ironing, cooking, and cleaning (see page 48). For a long time, feminist researchers have written about women's double shifts (or double burden) as housewives and formal laborers. More recently, researchers have documented how more

-Lucie's household chores include
doing her family's laundry-
Little Haiti, 1992

and more women are engaged in some combination of housework and formal and informal labor. The third shift (or triple burden) has been added because of economic necessity and for survival (Ward, 1990). In addition, informal-sector work should be distinguished from formal labor, particularly in analyses of women's work. As performed by women, informal work, like housework (which is also unpaid and not covered by Social Security), contributes to the reproduction and survival of the household (Ward, 1990). In order to ensure her family's survival, Lucie not only worked a triple burden, but also utilized great resourcefulness and inventiveness along with employing trading skills she learned early in life from observing her grandmother in Haiti. Her profit margin was certainly not high but she managed to achieve some type of financial advancement.

Lucie migrated to the United States in 1976. Like other Haitians seeking political asylum, economic opportunity or as in Lucie's case, "afraid of the Tonton Makout [Haiti's feared secret police]," she joined her husband, who had migrated three years earlier, in hopes of finding a better life. According to Lucie, she "wait long time for Charlie to send money. Everyday I wait to hear because I never know exactly what day I would have to leave my children" (see page 50). Finally, her husband wired her money to migrate to the United States. At that time Lucie said she, "cried all night because

-Lucie left her sons in her mother's
care when she migrated to the U.S.-
Haiti, 1976

I knew I would be leaving my sons the next morning. The next day I take big tourist boat to Bahamas, I wait few days, then I take one more big boat here. I don't take little boat like Haitians do now, I come on big boat."

Lucie, who was entering the country legally, obtained a green card and this legal documentation, when combined with her Alien card, allowed her to look for work in the formal sector in Miami. However, as documented in chapter 2, few immigrant groups in recent history have suffered unemployment, downward occupation mobility, and poverty to the extent that the Haitians have. Lucie eventually found employment in Miami's service sector as a maid, but she has always found "other little ways to find money." Many Haitians, including Lucie, have created their own informal sector in order to survive in south Florida. This may be because Haitian immigrants employed similar strategies in their home country prior to moving to the United States.

They, along with people all over the world have used different income-getting activities in order to earn a living. Petty commerce is a prevalent activity and has long been recognized by researchers of women's participation in Haiti's market system. The talent and originality of these women traders resembles the talent and originality of Haitian immigrant women engaged in informal activities in the United States (see page 52).

-many Haitian immigrant women engage in informal
sector activities in the United States-

Ft. Lauderdale, 1992

Little Haiti, 1991

Market Women in the Caribbean

Haitian market women have been often recognized for their ability and know-how in substituting their seemingly endless labor for limited amounts of capital in pursuing economic survival. It is also recognized that the activities of these female traders can contribute both directly and indirectly to the economic effectiveness of so-called underdeveloped societies (Mintz, 1971). These Haitian market women can vary from the peasant wife who sells a handful of produce at irregular intervals in the market place to obtain cash for needed commodities, to the large-scale, full-time urban and rural wholesalers, retailers, and stallholders who handle large amounts of trading capital. Marketing in Haiti is often considered women's work and there is hardly a Haitian rural woman who has never engaged in petty trade (Mintz, 1961).

It is generally acknowledged that the informal sector in which Caribbean women predominate forms the backbone of their local economy (Isaac, 1986). This is partly due to women having been a vital source of cheap unskilled/semi-skilled labor during slavery as field and house slaves, as laborers on the plantation and estates after emancipation, and in the post-independence period as workers in the new industries and factories. Towards the end of the period of slavery, when slaves were given a small piece of land to plant their own provisions, women began to sell their surplus produce on

Saturdays to earn money independently. This was the beginning of the higgler/hawker/huckster/ trade in internal markets and is still an important economic activity for many women in the lower echelons of Caribbean society (Ellis, 1986). In Haiti, small-scale, independent informal sector traders who travel outside of their home country in search of merchandise to resell in the capital and provincial towns are known as Madam Sara. The formal economy is beyond their reach due to costly fees and bureaucratic procedures required to officially establish themselves in trade (Plotkin, 1989).

In addition to these marketing activities, women engage in a wide variety of informal activities in Haiti and other parts of the Caribbean including basket-making and weaving, dress-making, furniture production, pottery, wine-making, food preparation and preservation, shopkeeping, running snackettes and small bars, livestock and vegetable production, hairdressing and huckstering/trafficking, among others (Isaac, 1986).

Some informal sector activities such as marketing practices in Haiti are not qualitatively different from such practices in more developed societies. However, there are differences in the ways marketing in Haiti goes on. For example, the absence of standard measure in the instance of substances which could be readily measured by volume, requires both vendor and buyer to be on their guard and display

considerable knowledge in the items they are either buying or selling (Mintz, 1971). These women also need to utilize a substantial amount of energy, wit, and resourcefulness and learn how not to be vulnerable as they need to guard themselves against thieves and also those they trust to give credit (Mintz, 1964).

In spite of their lack of formal education, Haitian market women and Madam Sara display a firm grasp of economic principles having to do with capital as opposed to money. These marketeers show a firm grasp of certain economic principles as they apply to the Haitian economy. It has been estimated that these market women seek a profit of twenty percent of their gross investment, but are satisfied with ten percent (Mintz, 1971). These market women, many who have mastered the business skills required to be skillful traders often learn how to trade at a very young age. Similar to these women, Lucie also learned her marketing skills by simply observing her grandmother as a child in Haiti. Later on in life she utilized these skills as she both participated in Haitian markets as a young women, and later in life as a Haitian immigrant actively participating in Miami's informal sector. When I asked Lucie how she first learned how to buy and sell she explained, "my Grandma, my Mom's Mom, she have big business, big store. She sell lot of things like oil, rice, soap, lot of things. I see that when I was younger and

I like it. She had big house and made it into big store. At that time my Grandma live on a farm but I live downtown. But sometimes I go to the market with her to but some things."

According to Mintz (1964), girl children living in Haiti learn how to trade from their mothers, aunts, older sisters, and other female relatives and ritual kinfolk. They customarily accompany some older woman to local, regional, or town market places. They are taught to buy and sell, to calculate value and to recognize currency, to measure and to judge quantity and quality, and to assess various products.

Engaging in Miami's Informal Sector

In 1973 Lucie's husband migrated to the United States. Lucie remained in Haiti until he had sufficient funds to relocate her and their three sons. During the three years they would be separated, Lucie gave up her occupation of sewing to actively pursue buying and selling. She recalls,

when I first marry Charlie I used to sew. I would sew and I would teach a lot of people to sew. Then when Charlie move to Miami, I buy some things and go to sell. My Grandma would watch my children and I would go on a big bus to buy a lot of things. I saw my Grandma doing that when I was younger so I try to make business after he leave.

Seventeen years later, she would once again employ these same marketing skills as she increased her activities in Miami's informal sector. One morning I called Lucie and asked her what she was doing that day. She explained,

you remember my friend Cecile? She come to pick me up this morning to go buy perfume. She know one place downtown where they have special price for perfume so she is going to take me there to buy some. Why don't you come with us? Come to my home before Cecile come that way you can go with us and see where we go and then next time I want to visit I don't need to go with her. Vini, fe vit ["come, fast"].

Cecile arrived shortly after I did at Lucie's house. She agreed to let me come along, and she maneuvered her station wagon in and out of the congested stop and go morning traffic heading south on Miami Avenue towards Miami's downtown. We eventually ended up on in a parking lot facing a warehouse that had a small neon sign advertising French perfumes. Later that day Lucie told me, "I know Cecile long time. She travels a lot, goes to Haiti, New York, Fort Lauderdale, lots of places and buys perfume, clothes, things like that to sell at her little store in #1 Flea Market."

When we walked into the warehouse, there was a small room with shelves of perfumes, shoes, hair accessories, shampoos, and various dusting powders and mens colognes. Cecile pointed out the items she usually bought to Lucie. A Haitian woman later tallied up Cecile and Lucie's purchases which totalled \$212.00. In a lowered voice the clerk whispered to Cecile and Lucie, "ki moun sa-a ["who is that"? - referring to me]." She was told I was a good friend and the woman (who had decided not to charge them tax) said she could not afford to get into any trouble with her boss. We then left the

warehouse with a trunk full of perfumes, lotions, and deodorant sprays.

A couple of weeks later I stopped by to visit Lucie and found her sitting in her front room surrounded by fifteen king-sized comforters in new plastic wrap and a cardboard box filled with king-sized sheets and bathroom rug sets. Lucie moved some of the comforters off of a chair so I could sit down and explained, "this morning Cecile call me and ask me if I want to go with her to buy some things. We went far away, real far, way down southwest-something. Even past Homestead, I think." I asked her how much the comforters cost and how she paid for them and she said, "I pay \$20.00 each for the kouvrele [comforters] and I think I can re-sell them for \$30.00, maybe \$40.00. I spent maybe \$350.00. Cecile make that on her charge card for me. When I sell them, I'll pay her back."

Lucie would continue visiting wholesalers and downtown warehouses with Cecile for the next two months. On several of these trips she borrowed Cecile's credit card to make her purchases. Lucie's small living room gradually resembled a storage room as she accumulated boxes of tablecloths, factory warehouse dresses, towels, sheets, and linens along with the comforters and perfume. Lucie also began accumulating items she would buy at a large flea market in Fort Lauderdale she and I visited regularly on a weekly basis.

At the flea market Lucie would look for used clothes to send to her relatives in Haiti, and for new clothes that she could resell for a profit. Many of the women she did business with were also Haitian and Lucie would always try to bargain for a lower price. As we shopped around the flea market she would often discuss the problems her family was experiencing in Haiti and how helpless this made her feel. One morning as we walked around Lucie lamented,

I need to send things to Haiti but I don't have much money for that right now. I want to buy my Mom one slip, one dress, something nice for her to wear in December. I want to make [buy] those things for her, maybe all white, and send her a new hat (see page 181). When I was in Haiti I feel bad because my Mom doesn't have good hat for her church. Last night my brother Ramon call from Haiti. He said they need food. I can't buy too many things, maybe some spaghetti, some oil, a can of tomatoe, some little things like that. His family needs those things real bad but I don't have too much money to buy food for them. Oh my. I don't know what I'm to do. Only God knows what I'm to do. I'll get them what little bit I can with my food stamps.

As we continued to walk around the flea market she spotted a booth where a man was selling material for both 50 cents a yard and one dollar a yard. Lucie purchased a few yards for two dollars saying that was the end of her money. As we started to leave she noticed a large pile of scrap material on the ground and was told by the vendor she could have it all for \$5.00. She looked to me as we silently communicated that she could borrow some money so she asked the

vendor to put it all in a bag for her. As we were again leaving the vendor called to her that she could have all the material he had for sale on his table for another \$5.00 saying that he wanted to go home. Lucie quickly agreed to this. As we walked away hauling large plastic bags full of bolts of material she had purchased for \$12.00, Lucie said,

ooooh God is taking care of me today. God knew I needed something to help me make money so he told that man 'sell Lucie this material for little money so she can sew many clothes.' Thanks God I met that man. Now I can sew all little clothes and big clothes. Oh I thank my God.

Lucie's fervor over the bargain material could not be contained as we drove back to Miami and she planned what she would sew and who she would sell it to. As we reached her house she resolved,

every day I'll do this. Get up in the morning and cut material. When I have a big pile I'll sew them. Sew them, put elastic on the waist, little snaps cause I don't have money for buttons so I'll make little snaps. God sent me there today. He show me the way and now I have to do my part. That's how God works. Oh, I have so many things to be thankful for because of God.

As we continued going to the flea market on a weekly basis Lucie would often reinvest the small amounts of profit she made from selling items she had either sewed or bought wholesale. Sometimes when we passed a vendor whom she previously made purchases from Lucie would whisper, "remember those t-shirts I bought from him for \$1.00? I sold three of them yesterday for \$5.00 each to my neighbor Verlain. Oh

thanks God I sold something. I showed them to her and she give me \$5.00 for each t-shirt." Other times we would walk up and down the long rows looking for bargains. Whenever she saw one she would grab my arm and pull me towards them saying, "I pay 50 cents for that now and I know I could sell it for \$1.50, maybe \$2.00" then she would proceed to rummage through piles of clothes.

After we visited the flea market, I would often return to Little Haiti with Lucie and help her run her errands. One afternoon she asked me to stop by "HRS" (Human Resource Services) so she could drop off her application for more food stamps. On the way up in the elevator Lucie recalled in an indignant voice,

the last time I was here, one Cubano, she says to me 'you're not in the computer, you have no appointment.' Yeps, she said it just like that. I wait and I wait and they tell me I'm not in the computer. I have appointment for 10:00. 11:00 pass, 11:30 pass, they don't call my name. I ask them 'why you not call my name?' They tell me to sit down. 12:00 pass, 12:30 they say they lose my paper, they tell me make appointment for another day. I work for many years in this country. My husband work. Now my husband is sick, my work is closed and I need help from the government. They're not supposed to give me these problems.

When we arrived upstairs, she was rudely told by a receptionist that they were not giving anymore appointments to review applications even though it was only 12:30 and they were open until 4:00. This upset Lucie extremely and as we returned to the ground floor on the elevator, she sighed

heavily and said, "I need to find me two jobs. Not only one but two. When you have two jobs you don't have to take nothing free from the government. I don't like getting food stamps. When you get free things from the government people thinks they can treat you bad. I don't want their help. I need to find two jobs."

At this point Lucie became quiet and when I looked at her I saw she was praying. She continued to be quiet as we drove in the car and prayed with her hand covering her eyes and her head leaning back on the car's headrest. As we arrived in front of her house she opened her eyes real wide while rubbing them with her hand and simply stated, "I don't know what I'm supposed to do."

Lucie eventually got the food stamps and after she received them she purchased food for her home and also some food to ship to Haiti as she had planned. As she packed the box she planned on sending on a boat to Cap Haitian she recalled how,

sometimes I send things to my Mom to sell. Maybe I send material to make clothes, big sack of beans, a case of oil, things like that. My Mom then takes it to the market to sell. Sometimes she sells to one person who buys all big things then sell little, little, little things at one time. One woman makes business by buying big sack of beans from my Mom. They sell one cup of beans, something like that. They sell little, little to may people. Other times my Mom takes what I send her to the market. This is big market with lots of people. Maybe she stays there all day and sells little amounts until all her things are gone. She does it both ways.

When she finished packing the box she went into the kitchen and filled a plastic contained with food she had cooking in a big pot on the stove. As she did this she said, "Toni (her daughter's godfather) call me and said no one visit him all day and he have nothing to eat. I need to go to him cause I don't want him to feel hungry."

Toni owns a small mini-market on the northwest boundary of Little Haiti. Lucie had recently started working part-time there one or two days a week. She had initially worked there as a favor when Toni had to fly to Haiti for seven days and he needed someone to help watch his business. When he returned back to Miami Lucie told me, "Toni pay me \$150.00 for working five days in the store so I finish making my house payment with that." Lucie continued to work in the store two days a week saying she needed to stay there as long as the restaurant remained closed. When she is working she sits behind the cash register and mainly sells beer, sodas, candy, and cigarettes. The cash register does not total the price of the purchases so she is responsible for calculating amounts in her head. Toni pays her \$30.00 cash for a full day of work which Lucie acknowledged, "I know that's not much but it's enough to buy my children food."

Selling in the Bahamas

Along with babysitting, sewing, selling clothes to her

neighbors, and working at the mini-market, Lucie started discussing taking a trip to the Bahamas where she intended on selling her wholesale-bought items. She informed me,

I think I'll go to the Bahamas for seven, maybe eight days then come home. People there buy good things for a lot of money. I don't think I'm supposed to look for other job now. I think I'll wait for the Crabhouse to open. When I go to the Bahamas I'll take only good things. I know I can make good money there.

Although Lucie started talking about the Bahamas in early November, it would not be until late December that she would actually go. Her trip got delaying when she received news from her husband's relatives in Haiti. She called me early one morning before I left to pick her up for the flea market and in a distraught voice said,

Charlie has some bad news. They call from Haiti in the night. I didn't call you then because it was too late. Charlie's brother die yesterday. Oh my God. He was a young man, maybe 45 years old and they called and said he died. Charlie so sad now. He cry all night long. I don't think I'm supposed to go to the flea market today because I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do. We need to make them money because his brother have five children but we don't have money. My payment for the house is due now and Charlie's check don't come this week from insurance company. I'll never forget 1992. My brother children need my help, now we have Charlie's brother's family to take care of. The funeral cost maybe \$2,000.00, we're supposed to send \$500.00, maybe \$1,000.00. I don't know what I'm to do.

After we hung up the phone I drove to Lucie's where I saw her sitting at the table propping her head up with her hands.

We discussed the death and she shook her head and quietly said,

this is not my year. Nope, this is not my year. 1992 is very bad for me. My husband isn't working and my children need many things. But I'm not going to kill myself. I have God in my life. Now I'll need to make lots of money selling things, buying little things.

Lucie was in close contact with several family members the days that followed. Feeling frustrated from the trying events that seemed to encompass her life she would lament,

oh, everyday the phone rings and someone from Haiti is saying 'I need this or I need that. Auntie bring me some shoes, I need shoes, bring me this, bring me that.' Oh they calling me all the time. They things I'm going to come with many things but I can't do that for them. I have the big box to send to my brother's family and my Mom but I don't have money for many other things. They need me to come though. I don't know what I'm supposed to do. If Charlie say go, I need to go. If he don't, then I'm supposed to wait until December 12 and go to the Bahamas.

We decided to go to the flea market that morning afterall as we had previously planned. Lucie wanted to look for sweatsuits saying they would be easy to sell in the Bahamas because pretty soon the weather would turn cold. While we were there we ran into a Haitian woman that Lucie knew from Miami and sat and talked with her as she ate her lunch. After she left I asked Lucie how she knew her and she explained, "I see her many times at the food stamp place. She's a good person. The other day she gave me \$20.00 of food stamps

because she know they give me many problems and I had to wait for ten days for my food stamps. So she gave me \$20.00 of food stamps.

I asked her if the woman worked and she replied, "oh no. her husband die and left her with three little children. She doesn't have no job but she buys some little things and sells them. She come here, [referring to the flea market] buys some things, then goes to Miami and sells them out of her van."

Later when we arrived at her home, Lucie invited me inside saying,

I need you to help me get my social security card fixed. Remember I told you they were making problems for me with that? They want papers for income tax for all the places I work before. I don't remember all those places. I work one place in Miami Beach and it close. I work another place on Miami Beach as a maid, but they close too. I work there two years, maybe three. Oh, I work many places. How is one person supposed to remember where they work for sixteen years? That's how long I work in this country. They don't know what a problem they make for me making me try to remember all those places.

Lucie's job history in the formal labor sector has encompassed a variety of low-paying and menial jobs. These jobs include short-termed factory work, cleaning and housekeeping jobs in various hotels in Miami Beach, washing, drying, and folding clothes in a Haitian-owned laundromat, and the work she was at that time doing in the seafood restaurant.

Lucie said her husband decided against sending her to Haiti because she had recently encountered some type of

problem with her passport. However, they managed to borrow enough money for their part of the funeral expenses from friends and family members and sent a money order via a fund-transferring agency to Haiti. Later that week when Lucie received a check from the restaurant for over \$300.00 (similar to checks given to all former employees who signed agreements to return to work at the restaurant when it re-opened for business) she kissed it then held it high in the air saying, "thank you for my little bit of money. Now I'll take this check and buy some dresses, buy ticket for Bahamas, sell all things when I get there, come back and make my house payment."

I told Lucie I wanted to go with her to the Bahamas and asked her if she thought she would have a problem finding someplace to stay if I was with her. She thought about it for a moment then said, "I don't know. We'll find someplace to stay. I have a couple of friends there, some family, we'll have no problem. I can always find someone."

Approximately two weeks later, Lucie called me say her cousin Emelia was in town visiting from the Bahamas and had agreed to let us stay in her house when we visited there. She explained how Emelia was also the grandmother of Yvrose's children (her neighbor) and how she was raising Yverose's three year old daughter, Karla, in the Bahamas. Emelia planned to return to the Bahamas later that week and we decided to take the same boat and accompany her.

Lucie bought more items for wholesale prices that week including four large sacks of pinto beans, two sacks of white rice, and \$150.00 worth of candy. With each purchase she made she gathered sales receipts to present when we passed through Bahamian customs. As I watched her living room fill with all of these accumulated items I would continually question her about buying and selling - partly because I was curious but mainly because I was in awe. She explained our itinerary over and over because she knew I was concerned about the large amount of money she had invested and wanted to relieve my anxiety. She explained how first we would,

find a big taxi when we get there to take our things to Emelia's house. Then I will sell my things to some people. Some people I find to buy more than one thing. Maybe they buy all perfume, and then they sell it. Same with the kouvrelle (comforters). Maybe one person buy six, something like that then sell it again. In Bahamas some people thief your money. They take your things, say they'll come back another day with the money and you never see them again. But I won't give anybody credit. No I'm not going to do that. I'll try to sell the things for nine days. Something like that. If I don't find people to buy, I'll pack my things up and bring them back to Miami.

After a considerable amount of planning, buying and packing of items the morning arrived for us to leave for the Bahamas. I reached Lucie's home at 5:15 a.m. as did two Haitian men in the large van Lucie had hired to transport us

to the Port Everglade docks³ (see page 70). Lucie, Emelia, and I were to share the cost of the van with Marijoe, another Haitian woman who resided in the Bahamas and resided in the same town as Emelia. Marijoe and Emelia both ran small businesses out of their homes and both were returning home with items they had purchased to re-sell.

The five of us rode in the back of the van until we left Marijoe at the Sea Escape dock. We had tickets for another cruise line, the Tropic Star, so we were to separate from Marijoe at that point. As she exited the van she told us she would see us in the Bahamas and then told the driver what items to unload. Pointing at various suitcases, sacks of rice and beans, and heavily packed cardboard boxes, Marijoe boarded the boat while her belongings got transferred to a place designated for the ship's cargo. It would not be until we were similarly unloading at the Tropic Star dock that Lucie would discover how Marijoe had taken Lucie's beans instead of her own. She was furious about this saying how her beans were not only more expensive but could also be sold for more money when we reached the Bahamas. Furthermore, although Marijoe was allowed to travel with the sacks of rice and beans as her

³ These Haitian men were also part of Miami's informal sector. Lucie told some of her neighbors she was "cheche transpo" (looking for transportation) and they got her in touch with them. In a conversation with the Haitian men, they both told me they had regular 8:00-5:00 jobs in Miami, but that since the pay was so low, they supplemented their income with their van service.

-Lucie and her cousin Emelia hired a Jitney to transport
them to Port Everglades-

Little Haiti, 1992

cargo on the Sea Escape cruise, the dock workers at Tropic Star refused Lucie's saying they weighed too much and therefore were not allowed. This upset Lucie even further for now she would not be able to swap the beans to retrieve her own and would have to send them back to Miami. The mix-up of the beans troubled her greatly and she worried about this for the entire cruise.

When we reached Grand Bahamas, we hired two cabs to transport our things and drove thirty minutes west to a small town named Seagrape. Claiming she had no money, Emelia had Lucie pay all the expenses that occurred during the trip (excluding the cost of her ticket) and told her she would pay her back later. Seagrape, the town where Emelia had migrated to from Haiti in 1980, is an ethnically mixed community with mainly Haitians, Jamaicans, and Bahamians. As we drove through it I saw one Winn Dixie grocery store, an occasional hardware store, gas stations and laundromats, and some small game and video stores.

Emelia's home was located on the west side of town, an area similar to most of the town, where few residents have indoor plumbing and most of the houses are connected by dirt paths. When we entered her front door, I saw she had two large tables where she had previously placed items she was trying to sell and a large refrigerator that stored mainly beers and sodas. One table was covered with dozens of large

jars that were to be filled with assorted candy she had bought in bulk in Miami. The other table held a variety of items including potatoes, yams, sprigs of dried herbs, a stack of cans of Carnation milk, an opened box of Pampers and small boxes of spaghetti. A large window was propped open allowing natural light inside and was also an opening where customers could call out what they needed to buy from Emelia (see page 76). I later learned this window was opened at 7:00 a.m. and remained that way until Emelia retired to bed, usually around 11:00 p.m. Emelia showed Lucie a small area where she could unpack her things and display what she had for sale. This area included a small double bed and hooks on the wall behind it where Lucie promptly hung the factory bought dresses and long sleeved sweatsuits she had purchased at the flea market.

The first night we were there, Emelia had many visitors and Lucie promptly began to sell her things. Emelia had been visiting the States for 22 days and many people came to both welcome her home and see what new items she bought from Miami to sell. As I became more familiar with Seagrape, I realized it was an area that had inadequate provisions for its residents along with excessively high prices. Therefore this town was an area where many households similar to Emelia's engaged in informal economic activities due to the lack of goods and services that are usually provided by the formal

sector. Throughout the evening casual visits transformed into economic opportunities for both Emelia and Lucie. Lucie sold linens, a few boxes of candy, clothes and cigars the first evening of our arrival. Marijoe, the woman we had travelled with to Sea Escape, was also one of the visitors that evening. She and Lucie greeted each other initially, then instantly got into a loud discussion about the mixed-up beans. Lucie said later,

she's a thief. She tried to tell me she don't know the different but I know she see she had my beans when they unloaded her things at the dock. Her beans were in a white sack, mine were in a red sack. She say 'red, white, it's the same.' I told her they weren't the same. One is red, one is white. One is better beans and cost more money. Oh she know exactly what she did.

Later that evening we nicknamed Marijoe "volè pwa" (bean thief).

That night Lucie went through all her things, item by item and figured out how much she would charge to make a fair profit. She would hold up a box of cookies saying, "I pay \$3.55 for these at Wholesale Depot. I think \$7.00 is good price." While she did this she said, "Sue, make one list for me. Write down first 'two borrowed candy.' Emelia borrow that and I need to make sure I don't forget. Now write down 'one bag roach powder.' Charles [Emelia's husband] bought that but he don't pay yet. Also Volè Pwa [Marijoe] left with \$65.00 of my things. She don't give me money yet but Emelia

say to give her credit."

Giving credit in the Bahamas was a process Lucie had hoped to avoid. She knew the potential risk that would come to her investment if she gave credit to those who promised to pay and then did not. However, when women would approach her for an item and ask to take it home and return later in the week with the money, Lucie would rely on Emelia's judgement as to whom she would say "yes" and whom she would say "no". Emelia would give Lucie a nod or some similar gesture if she felt the buyer was trustworthy or downcast her eyes if the woman should be refused.

When it was close to 11:00 p.m., Emelia locked her front door and closed up her window, signalling to visitors and customers that she was closed for the night. Lucie and I proceeded to get ready for bed and Lucie took a deep breath, exhaled slowly and shook her bed. Still upset about not being able to ship the rice and beans, she said,

that make me big problem. That could have made me good money in Bahamas cause I know I have no problem selling that. I pay \$33.00 something and Emelia say I can sell them for \$60.00. Now I have problem. I'll try to sell all things but I don't know if I can. I need to try though. I need to make my payment for my house.

With this weighing heavily on her mind, Lucie got on her knees and began to pray, enclosing her head in her arms at the end of the bed. When she was through she continued to worry about the possibility of not selling all of her things.

Before she slept she quietly said,

I already know I lost my money on this trip. Today I pay \$45.00 for the van, \$28.00 at Customs, \$6.00 for tip, \$25.00 for taxi. How much is that? \$104.00? I pay \$140.00 to make my ticket for boat. That's almost \$250.00. Yeah, I think I lost my money. But next time I know what to sell. Beans, oil, candy - these are things I know I can make money on. Maybe if I sell all of my things then I make money. But I'm not taking anything back to Miami with me. No, my God don't do that to me. If I can't sell, I bring price real low because I'm not taking these things back to Miami.

Lucie and I spent Christmas in the Bahamas along with the first two weeks of January, 1993. Lucie did not sell her things in the nine days as anticipated; rather we would stay there for twenty one days. Quite often women would stop by to visit Emelia and leave with some of Lucie's merchandise. However, to her dismay, many continued to leave owing her money after she decided to give them credit.

The longer we stayed, the more familiar and acquainted I became with Seagrape and the people that inhabited it. Many of the people were unemployed and those who worked usually travelled on a Jitney to Freeport and worked in low-paying service sector jobs. The surrounding area and the people that lived in Seagrape (including Emelia and her husband) seemed impoverished. Lucie and I would often sit together in the evenings and discuss how the people there did not seem to have any opportunity to make money. One evening, Lucie would recall,

-customer waiting to make purchase from Emelia-
Bahamas, 1993

~~-Emelia feels depressed when business is slow-~~
Bahamas, 1993

Emelia used to make good business here. When I came here before people were always coming up to the window saying 'I need spaghetti, give me two soda, you have salt? I need Tide.' Emelia was always busy. Sometime she put a cot right by the window so she could get a little sleep. that's because there was a lot of cocaine - same like Miami. It's not like that now. They had so much money from selling cocaine they would buy things they don't need. Yeah, they might buy two sodas but only drink one. They would throw money away. But now, FBI make them all in jail and there's no money. Maybe she makes \$100.00 a week but she has to stay home seven days a week and always has to be by her window (see page 76).

I asked Lucie if she still thought she could sell her things considering how it was such a poor area along with money being more scarce because Christmas had recently passed. She thought about this then replied, "they say the people get paid tomorrow. Because Friday is January 1st, they get their paychecks early. Maybe when they have paycheck they come to buy things. I don't know if I sell my things, only God knows."

Everyday Lucie would make a verbal list of how much she had sold, often enlisting me to either count the money she had hidden away in a double-knotted handkerchief or to help her keep track of the credit that was owed her. One morning as she was ironing clothes she thought out loud,

I don't think I have any money on the outside now. Oh yes I do. Tall Haitian man owes me \$8.00 for one towel. And American woman still owes me \$14.00. She gave me \$20.00 for one kouvrele but she still owes me \$50.00. How much is that? \$72.00? The woman that thieved my beans still owes me \$65.00. I'll never get my money from her because she's a thief. Can you write these things down for me? Put on the list \$2.50 too. One short woman came today with \$10.00 but still owes me

\$2.50. I think that's all the money I have on the outside (see page 79).

Lucie called home to her husband later that day and told him she was having some problems selling. When she hung up she said, "Charlie told me, 'if you don't sell, leave it.' He tell me if I don't sell my things to leave them all with one person and come home."⁴

After two weeks passed by, Emelia and Lucie sat together and discussed how Lucie could sell her things in the remaining days of her trip. On one of these days she discussed with me how, "Emelia said she is asking the esu, assosie, for money. She said if they give her money she'll buy all my things from me." She then asked me, "you know esu, assosie? Like they have in the Crabhouse (the restaurant where her and I were employed)?"

I realized she was talking about a rotating credit system called sangue, min, assosie, or esu and are a way of Haitians to save money. These associations are where a lump sum fund composed of fixed contributions from each member of the association is distributed, at fixed intervals and as a whole, to each member of the association in turn (Laguerre, 1984). This was the first time I ever heard the Haitian

⁴ Lucie called home approximately every three days to discuss things with her husband. These were collect calls and many times she would talk with him for ten to fifteen minutes. After she hung up the phone she would comment on knowing the high cost of the phone call, but would say she "needed to talk to Charlie about some things."

-Lucie irons her clothes as she makes a verbal list
of what credit is owed to her-

Bahamas, 1993

workers in the Crabhouse had formed one so I asked her to explain. She said

you give money and one time this person gets all money. Next time another person gets all money. That way if you need big money to make something, you have it. The men in the Crabhouse do that - Babier, Bolivar, Edmond, Canes, Lindor, Saint Alice, Fertilus, lot of men. They pay \$100.00 maybe every check. Every people have a number. If you're number 4, you supposed to wait for 3 people to go ahead of you. They make president and he make a list of all the names. If your number is 5, you wait, wait, wait, 1,2,3,4 then you get the money. Emelia say if I wait until Wednesday, she'll have the \$258.00 she borrow from here and in Miami and she will give me \$350.00 for the rest of my things. I don't know what to do though. I want to go home but I need the money. She said she can get money from Esu but not until Wednesday. Today they go around to all people to collect money. Then she said she can pay me. Then we leave. I'm afraid to listen to her though. She tells me many things and many of them aren't true.

This would be the first of many conversations where Lucie revealed to me her lack of trust in her cousin Emelia. I realized that on one level she was expected to trust her because it would be a symbol of reciprocity for letting the two of us stay in her home and also simply because she was family. Lucie also had to be concerned with the necessity of being successful with her financial dealings since her family both in Miami and Haiti relied heavily on her.

Wanting to call her husband again for advice and conversation, Lucie and I walked again to the center of town where a phone booth was located to call him. On the way there we passed a small bar that one of Emelia's friends owns

and manages. Looking towards the bar, Lucie said, "oh, I just remember that woman owes me \$40.00 for one dress. I almost forgot all about that. That big Bahamian woman. When we get home can you write that down for me on one piece of paper? If we don't walk by here, I would forget my \$40.00." We then walked to visit a woman named Marie who Lucie knew in Haiti. When we were walking home Lucie said,

Marie told me there's no money in the Bahamas anymore. She used to buy and sell things too but said she doesn't do that anymore because she said she can't find many people to buy. Oh Emelia told me 'come to Bahamas, buy this, buy that, you'll make good money cause people are always looking to buy candy, cigars, blankets, perfume, clothes, everything.' I don't know why she tell me that. If I had talked to Marie, I would never have come.

When we arrived back at Emelia's, Wilna, a Haitian woman in her mid-thirties, was waiting for Lucie's return. Wilna was Lucie's best customer, buying from her often, usually paying her in cash, and the two times she used credit, she returned with the money when promised. Wilna had returned that evening and told Lucie she wanted to buy some sheets and towels to send to her sister in Miami, who was about to be married. Earlier that day Lucie had told me,

you know Wilna, tall Haitian woman? She's my best customer. Before we leave I want to see her and make special deal for her. I want to bring my price real low and maybe she take many things from my hand. I already make good profit from her on many things. Yeps, I think I want to do that for her.

Before Wilna left that evening, Lucie took her aside and spoke with her briefly. After Wilna departed, Lucie explained, "she's going to look for more money. I give her good price so she said she's coming back later to buy more of my things."

The next morning Lucie and I took a walk with Timaya, one of Emelia's friends, so Lucie could collect some of her money. Timaya guided us through several winding dirt paths that were linked to narrow dirt roads as we finally approached a house where a woman gave Lucie the \$40.00 that was owed her in Bahamian money. Then we walked to the bar where Emelia's Bahamian friends owns to collect another \$40.00 that was owed to Lucie. As we entered the bar, the Bahamian woman greeted us and invited us to sit with her as she visited with a friend. The barroom walls had an assortment of framed pictures including Eddie Murphy and one of Tina Turner, together with posters of nude women. I knew Lucie disapproved of the place and felt uncomfortable sitting in a bar but she was still very friendly. The owner heavily sighed and said, "there's no business, no business." Lucie also sighed agreeing, "oh, I know that, no business." Everyone was quiet for a moment then the owner broke the silence saying, "no business now but maybe in February, only God knows." Lucie slapped her palm on the table and once again agreed saying "that's it, only God knows." We left without the money, but

the owner said she would send someone over later with the money (and she did).

When we left the bar Lucie told Timaya and me she wanted to look for Sergo, a distant cousin to both Emelia and her. Every day Lucie would separate the American money from the Bahamian money she had taken in then give the latter to Sergo to be exchanged. After we visited Sergo we went outside where it was almost dark, and as Lucie took my arm she quickened her step and in a determined voice said, "come on Sue. I want to go visit Volè Pwa [Marijoe]. She's not supposed to thief my money. I think I need to visit her and tell her this." Marijoe runs a little business out of her home similar to Emelia's but also sells a lot of beer and alcohol late into the night to men who gather outside her home to play dominoes and cards. Earlier that week, Lucie had attempted to retrieve her money from Marijoe - first by sending one of Emelia's male neighbors to ask for it and later by Emelia's husband - but both attempts were unsuccessful. As we approached her house, I could hear loud laughter and the sound of Haitian music accompanied by the sound of dominoes being slammed on a wooden table. Marijoe was standing outside talking to a man and when she saw us she excused herself and apprehensively greeted us. Her and Lucie immediately got into a quiet argument and later as we walked home Lucie said in a disgusted voice,

she say she is sick. She say she is sick because I make her nervous. Bothering her everyday, sending

people to her house to ask for my money. I told her I was leaving tomorrow, so she said she'd send my money over later. She don't give me my money now cause she's a thief.

Later that evening Marijoe's son called through Emelia's open window telling her he had brought money from his mother. he was a young teenager and was accompanied by an older man. When Lucie came out of the bedroom, he tried to hand her the \$40.00 his mother sent him to deliver. Once again Lucie was furious because she was supposed to get \$65.00. She refused the \$40.00 and told the older man if she was going to be thieved from, then let them take all of her money. The older man asked the boy, "ou konprann? Di mama-ou sa-a ["you understand? Tell your mother that"]." When Lucie returned to the bedroom she shrugged her shoulders and said, "she thieved my beans. I don't know why Emelia said to give her credit."

We then went to bed and ten minutes later there was a loud knock at the door. Lucie and I looked at each other knowing it was Marijoe. When they saw each other they argued fast and loud and the only words I could clearly distinguish were "mezanmie, m'bliye, m'bliye, mezanmie ["oh my goodness, I forgot, I forgot, oh my goodness"]." After she left Lucie once again returned to the bedroom sarcastically imitating Marijoe saying, "m'bliye, m'bliye." She handed me some money while continuing, "she tried to tell me she forgot one box of cigars she bought from me. She don't forget nothing. Count that money. She still keep \$11.00 of my money. She had the

money in her hand and asked 'when you coming back to the Bahamas - I'll pay you than.' I told her 'I'm never coming back here!!'

Earlier that evening Lucie told me, "Charles [Emelia's husband] has gone outside now to look for money." Charles was supposed to get money from Esue, the rotating credit association. After he returned Lucie whispered to me, "Charles went to look for the money, but he don't find it yet. The president told him he was still collecting it from people and Charles would get it by Sunday. I can't stay though, my husband said to come home. I need to go home."

Emelia and Lucie started to go through the items Lucie had not sold and after an hour Lucie said, "Sue, can you make me one list?" Lucie and Emelia agreed on a price of \$350.00 for all the items excluding the perfume and Charlie said he would bring the money to Miami. Lucie explained,

Charlie told me he come to Miami next Saturday or Sunday. They buy all my things but my perfume. I'll take that to Miami with me. Oh thanks God I don't have to carry all these things home. Altogether Charles is bringing me \$600.00 [referring to the \$258.00 Emelia previously owed Lucie and \$350.00 for the leftover items]. I need you to write down on that list \$350.00 and \$258.00.

The next day Lucie and I travelled on the Tropic Star cruise ship returning to Port Everglades. We hired a van to drive us to Miami and reached her home at 4:00 a.m. Her husband, who had been expecting us all night, opened the door and immediately started asking questions about our trip. We

sat up while the darkness receded and the morning light filled the room as Lucie provided him with details. He then filled Lucie in about things that had happened since she was gone and at one point they lowered their voices and I could tell by the expression on Lucie's face that she did not like what she was hearing. She turned to me and in an equally quiet voice whispered, "the man I rent my little apartment to - he never give Charlie \$200.00 for rent. He supposed to pay that last month too but Charlie say he never give him any money like he said he would." No longer whispering Lucie raised her voice and continued,

I go to the Bahamas to make money to pay my house. If I don't pay that the government take my house away. He's supposed to pay part of that payment. Jesula (her other tenant) gave me money for her rent before I left but that man thinks month after month he don't have to pay nothing. Now I need to wait for Charles. I don't know how I pay for my house if he don't come with my money.

Since Lucie and her husband are homeowners, they have remodeled their single family home so that it accommodates two small apartments. The rent she collects from her tenants is another income-getting activity to help her meet her financial responsibilities. As indicated in the above description, this strategy has its problems because according to Lucie she "pa genyen chans avek moun-sa-yo (doesn't have luck with those people - referring to her tenants)."

Lucie waited the next 10 days for Emelia's husband to

arrive from the Bahamas with her \$600.00 as promised. Simultaneously, her family members in Haiti continued to strongly rely on her for her financial help. Lucie confided,

I heard from my Mom the other day. She needs operation on her eye. I need to send her money but I don't have it yet. After I get money from Bahamas I need to send her \$100.00. I feel bad she has to wait but I don't know what else to do. I left Bahamas without my money. Now my Mom has to wait to go to the hospital.

Emelia's husband finally arrived in Miami but only brought Lucie \$200.00 - not the \$600.00 she anticipated. He promised Lucie he would return with the remainder but to Lucie's dismay, he never returned. Although she barely broke even on her selling trip to the Bahamas, she managed to pay her bills and is currently planning another trip there. She told me she plans, "to sell twenty dresses for little girls that [she] paid little money for to one Haitian woman." She also plans on returning with candy and cigars - two items she could make a quick profit on and did not require much capital to invest. Since the restaurant also re-opened where Lucie and I were employed, she said, "I can only spend four days in Bahamas cause I need to keep my job at the Crabhouse. This time I don't stay long."

Nineteen ninety-two was certainly a difficult year for Lucie as she struggled to generate income to insure her family's survival in uncertain economic times. However, through her tenacity, inventiveness, unrelenting faith in God,

and her participation in the informal economy, she and her family members were able to economically survive.

Discussions and Conclusions:

In Haiti, the market women are called Madam Sara, after the raucous and busy little black finches found throughout the country. The machann (market woman) is said to be named after the madamsara bird because the female of the species will work herself to exhaustion hunting for food for her young (McCarthy Brown, 1991). Possessing work ethic characteristics similar to the Madam Sara or the machann in Haiti, Lucie depends on constant work, imagination, and inherent economic skills to successfully exploit various sources of income.

Lucie was once again attached to the formal labor market in Miami preparing salads and desserts in the Crabhouse restaurant's pantry, however, in the fall of 1993, they laid her off. Since she continues to be laden with heavy financial responsibilities, but is unable to attach herself with some stability to the formal sector, it is necessary for her to engage in several small and often erratic sources of income simultaneously and constantly to scheme for new ways to generate income.

According to Fernàndez-Kelly and Garcia (1989) the examination of household structures to which informal workers belong leads to a better understanding of informal activities.

Households in this context are depicted as a collective, income-generating unit whose members struggle together to stretch and supplement inadequate wages (Dinerman, 1986). In Lucie's household, she is presently the only member who can actively ensure its maintenance by generating an income fund. At the time of this writing two of her sons are pursuing a college education, while a third one is in the Navy. The family members who reside in her home are two teenage daughters, ages 13 and 15, one of the sons, age 21, in college, and her husband who is unable to work as previously stated due to a work-related back injury. This leaves Lucie as the sole family member to be deployed to actively earn her family's income.

Sidney Mintz (1971, 1981) argues Haitian women engage in petty commerce as market women with independence and authority. In fact, much of Mintz's writings focuses on this independence of marketing women from their spouses and families. Given the ethnographic data on Lucie, I would disagree with this contention. Lucie has a certain amount of autonomy in her business dealings, but I argue it is not independent of her husband. As detailed in the ethnography, Lucie often called home from the Bahamas seeking his advice or simply to talk to when she was worried about not selling her things. In addition, it was his decision not to send her to his brother's funeral in Haiti. Although she was the one who

was physically doing the buying and selling of items she would market, it was always with her husband's consent, advice, cooperation, or approval. Hence, I am suggesting Lucie, similar to other Haitian women engaged in informal activities such as marketing and petty commerce, would not endanger the social status of her husband by excluding him from her marketing activities and by acting completely independently.

Having little or no formal business training and virtually no access to credit from formal lending institutions or banks, Lucie has to rely either on a credit card borrowed from her friend Cecile or money borrowed from individuals in her networks which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. In addition, she often reinvests the small savings she manages to accumulate in more items that she can resell. So far her investments of time, capital and energy have paid off due to the fact that her household has managed to survive along with she is able to regularly send remittances to Haiti. Chant (1989) considers the resilience and imagination used by women engaging in informal employment is a way of coping with urban poverty. They often utilize their valuable time and labor to the full to earn what is usually only a meager income, but one which helps to maintain their families at or just above subsistence level. Despite its low status in the wider society, Lucie's entrepreneurial activities in the informal sector provide needed goods and

services and brings some status to her as well as her family members.

Studies on women of the Caribbean who engage in informal sector activities reveals that many of them are functionally illiterate because of a lack of education (Isaac, 1986). Lucie completed three years of grade school as a child in Haiti, and since migrating to the U.S. she has, from time to time, attended classes for English for speakers of other languages. However, Haitian women similar to Lucie tend to be concentrated in informal sector activities because of the lack of career options and choices both in Haiti and in the United States. In addition, women's multiple roles prevent these women from having either the energy or the time to devote to prolonged periods of training or to skill improvement programs (Isaac, 1986). However, in order to be successful in her economic endeavors, Lucie calculates figures in her head and relies on her memory to keep track of how much is taken in or how much is owed in credit. This is a skill Lucie learned early on in life. In the Bahamas she often asked me to 'make her one list' but these lists were rarely if ever referred to.

Examining the informal activities Lucie engaged in - babysitting, cooking or preparing large amounts of food, working part-time in a mini-market, and turning her home into a multi-family dwelling - along with marketing and petty commerce, provides some insight into the networks Lucie

maintains and utilizes to meet her financial demands. Preferring to sell her flea-market bought items and articles she had sewn door-to-door allows her to utilize the people who make up her informal and social networks to try to make a small amount of capital. Similarly, the Kremas she cooks in large quantities in her home and resells for \$8.00 a jar or so are usually sold to the people from the same networks. Selling her goods in the Bahamas allowed Lucie to utilize cross-cultural networks as well as expanding her already established network as she tapped into customers that were friends, family, or neighbors of her cousin Emelia. Working in her daughter's godfather's store was also a result of using a network. This was an exchange embedded in reciprocity and obligation since Lucie initially worked there as a favor, but was allowed to continue when her economic condition worsened. Babysitting in her home was another income getting strategy where Lucie depended on those in her networks to bring children to her home. This activity was also a reciprocal exchange since Lucie's daycare fees were well below the market rate and Haitian women could therefore attach themselves to the formal market. Their earnings were certainly low (Lucie's neighbor Woda brings home \$22.00 for 9 hours of work in a shampoo factory after paying transportation costs), but at least Lucie and the mother were allowed some economic advancement.

Another income strategy used by Lucie, along with many other Haitians in south Florida who are homeowners, is turning her household into a multi-family dwelling where the rent is collected as agreed upon by her and her tenant. She often utilizes individuals in her network to find people looking for a room or apartment to rent, and in return she manages to generate \$500.00 per month towards her own living expenses. Many of Lucie's tenants are adults, either living alone or with a roommate, and are sending most of their income as remittances back to Haiti. When Lucie's oldest son left her household to attend college in another city, she and her husband had his bedroom remodeled into a one room apartment with a small bathroom. Since her son had shared this room with his two younger brother's, they proceeded to sleep on the floor in the front part of her house. Currently Lucie also is allowing a single man to stay in her household since her two dwellings are rented and he cannot find another place to rent. To accommodate him, she has turned her dining room area into his bedroom (by removing her dining room table and replacing it with a single bed). In return, the tenant pays her \$200.00 a month for room and board. The combination of rents from these three tenants is by far her largest devise to generate income.

In order to survive in south Florida, many Haitian women are participating in Miami's informal sector. By providing

detailed descriptions of one Haitian woman's informal activities and the entrepreneurial drive she uses to initiate them, I hope to have given insight and access into the strategies of immigrant women who actively use the informal sector as a mechanism for survival. I contend these informal activities, when combined with the utilization of the networks as described in the following chapter allow Lucie and her family to survive economically and socially in south Florida.

-Lucie is exhausted from working a "fourth shift"-

Little Haiti, 1992

CHAPTER 4

Sè Ben brought me many things yesterday. She bring me turkey, milk, tomatoe paste, eggs, bread, many things. The day before yesterday she passed by my house and when she was there she see I don't have nothing in my refrigerator. She knows that if I have the money, I buy things for my family to eat and the refrigerator shows this. But she says she look in there and thought to herself, 'she need my help' so she buy me many things.

-Lucie referring to a member of her reciprocity network

While conducting research on Lucie's daily activities, I had the opportunity to observe extensive, reciprocal exchanges in which her family, neighbors, and friends were supporting each other as they participated in a complex social-cultural network. For the most part, Lucie's social and economic life was permeated with acts of reciprocity and mutual exchanges. Activities such as the loaning and borrowing of money, exchanging of information (see page 98), baby-sitting of children, sharing of food, transportation of those without licenses or vehicles, and offering space in a home for those who needed somewhere to stay happened on a daily basis between Lucie and the members of her household and

her extensive network.

As part of her everyday life I had the opportunity to document the flexibility of this network as relationships were either created, maintained, or dissolved to ensure Lucie's family's survival. This chapter will focus on ten individuals (myself included) who are or were members of Lucie's extensive network.

In the following vignettes, I will provide examples of the different acts of reciprocity I have observed Lucie engaging in in order to provide insight into these exchanges. Since Lucie has different relationships with the various individuals, the expectations and exchanges between these individuals and Lucie will be considerably different. Some of those included in her network are family members, either through kinship ties or fictive kinship ties, while other relationships had their roots firmly established through church membership (see page 101). Some are included in Lucie's network because their households have a close physical proximity to her household. Other ties are kept intact because of friendship and other ties are reinforced through ritual ties. The various types of kinship ties therefore becomes important when analyzing networks. Different members of Lucie's network are not only tied through consanguineous, legal, and customary affinal ties, but also, ritual ties (e.g. godparenthood, and members of the Baptist church). In

addition, there are an abundance of fictive kinship bonds (e.g. friends who more than adequately share the exchange of goods and services, and therefore are called kinsmen).

According to Stack (1974), fictive kin relations are integral to individuals who depend on their networks for survival. Fictive kin relations are maintained by consensus between individuals, and in some contexts can last a lifetime. However, losing a fictive relative does not dramatically affect the shape of personal networks as does the dropping of a close kinship link. Friends are classified as kinsmen when they assume recognized responsibilities of kinsmen. Haitians, in particular, often have relations who are considered fictive kin. In the following ethnography, one of the vignettes mentions Lucie and her cousin Marijak. These two individuals are actually cousins because of consanguineous ties. However, it is commonplace for Haitians to refer to non-kin as "kousen" or "kousin" (male cousin or female cousin) because social relations have been conducted within the idiom of kinship. Lucie refers to many people as her kousen or kousin and when questioned if they are actually related, she will reveal they are not and often times does not even remember exactly how the tie began.

Another dimension of Lucie's network includes friends or relatives of hers who have lived in her home. Lucie had expanded her household at various points of time from 1976 to

-Lucie exchanges information with a member of her network-
Little Haiti, 1992

Little Haiti, 1992

as recently as November 1992 to include new arrivals from Haiti who needed a place to stay. All of these individuals (nine that she can recall) still are included in her network and according to her many of them call her "Mommie" and she refers to them as "my son" or "my daughter." As previously stated, Haitians often have a range of fictive kinship ties which can be called upon for reciprocal support and functions as an extended network. This is due to the fact that they have few institutions outside the family to give meaning to their actions and viability to their strategies (Fjellman and Gladwin, 1985).

The purpose of this chapter will be to offer insight into the nuances, density, and complexity of the relationships contained within her network and how they are or were maintained through a sense of reciprocity and obligation.¹ It will also offer insight into the paradoxes and conflicts inherent in the relationships between Caribbean men and women. Literature on the Caribbean reveals men often play a limited role in family life because they are often absent from the household and are not economically strong (Shorey-Bryan, 1986). This leaves them feeling marginal in their relationships with their spouses or partners. As a result,

¹ In his analysis of social networks Mitchell (1969), uses the term density to refer to the measurement of interlinkage between the persons to whom Ego is directly tied. Although I am also analyzing networks, I use the word density to simply convey the meaning of being firm and massive.

this ambivalence which men often face affects their self-image and often the only way to bolster their ego is by asserting their dominance over women and constraining their freedom. In the vignettes regarding Luna and Marijak, there are subtle references to this dominance and constraint.

Taking into account the complexity of the different relationships surrounding its members, I contend this kinship, household, and social network is used by Lucie as a survival strategy. It is a device that ultimately provides a base for obtaining and ensuring her family's economic and social survival.

****LUNA****

In 1986, Luna migrated to the United States from Cap Haitian, Haiti. She initially lived in Lucie's home when she arrived in Miami, similar to many of the Haitians in Lucie's network. According to Lucie, "Luna's mother and father send her to me because they stay in Haiti. She's like my daughter. She stayed in my home until she got married." Luna would eventually stay there two and one half years until she married in 1988.

Luna, who is Lucie's husband's brother's daughter is currently working as a licensed practical nurse and resides in Lucie's neighborhood with her husband. Lucie and I often visit her home and on such occasions Luna always sends a

-Lucie shops at a flea market with a family member who is part of her network-

Ft. Lauderdale, 1993

-the exchanges between Lucie and members of her network vary-

Little Haiti, 1992

container of Haitian food for Lucie to take home to her family. I have also seen Luna giving Lucie various amounts of cash to buy groceries as with bringing food purchased from a Haitian restaurant to Lucie and her family when she visits her home. I have watched her write letters in French for Luci to send to relatives in Haiti.

One day Lucie and I were discussing Luna, and I was asking why Luna never had any children. To this Lucie replied, "she's supposed to have children. She's supposed to do that for me and my husband." This answer made little sense to me, so when I questioned her further, Lucie explained,

when Luna marry, Charlie and I spend lots of money for that. Not all, but lots. Supposed one of my daughter's tell me she is ready to marry. Because she is our daughter we are supposed to fix her so everything is nice for the wedding. It costs lots of money. Well because Luna is Charlie's niece, we do that for her. Now she is supposed to make us smile and have a baby. Oh yes. that's the best way to pay someone back when you help someone get married is give them lots of babies to make them smile.

Another afternoon I went to pick up Lucie to go do some interviews for the Griffith research grant. When I entered her home, I found Luna was there visiting. I followed Lucie into the kitchen so I could privately ask her about interviewing Luna and she quickly replied, "oh yes. Let's go have her make that with us now." Since part of the interview involves networks, one section of it asks the respondent to name a person they visit with on a regular basis and then to

describe in detail the exchanges that go on between their two households. Luna named Lucie as the person she visits and when asked what she does for Lucie, she answered, "I give them lots of food, I watch their children, and I cook for them when they are sick." When I asked Luna what Lucie or members of her household does in exchange, Luna answered, "they help me with everything, everything." When I asked her to be more specific, she raised her hands in the air and said, "Sue, I mean everything."

At the time I conducted the interview, Luna's husband was visiting Haiti. Later Lucie revealed,

if Luna's husband was home, he would tell her she couldn't answer your questions. He'd tell her 'no, your business is your own.' He's like that. That's why I told you to make the questions now and ask them at my home because I knew he would tell her no.

****MARIJAK****

The first time I met Marijak was when I drove Lucie to the Miami River to ship a package of food to her Mother in Haiti. When we arrived at the docks, there were a lot of Haitian men walking around and only a few women. About seven people were gathered around a big tape player listening to Haitian music and others were loading boats with goods to be transported to Haiti.

As we walked through the parking lot, three women were leaning against a truck and talking to a man who was busy unloading sacks of rice. One woman looked up and while waving and smiling called out to Lucie, "zanmi-m. Ki sa w'ap fe la? ["my friend. What are you doing there?"]?" After taking the woman's hands and kissing her on the cheek Lucie introduced her as Marijak and added, "we grew up together in Haiti."

Later that day Lucie explained to me how close she and Marijak were as children. She recalled,

when we were little girls we lived together in Haiti. We didn't live in the same house because I have a family and she have a family. But we were cousins and sometimes when my Mom would leave to go to the Bahamas to sell some things, I lived with her and my Auntie so Marijak and I were always together.

When I asked Lucie how much they had charged her at the boat docks to send her package to Haiti, she answered,

you remember that man Marijak was talking to? That was her husband. He lives in Haiti with her four children. He works on one boat and sees Marijak when it comes to Miami. You don't see him writing on my Mom's package? He put his number on it and because he works on the boat, he don't have to pay nothing. He do that for me cause he know Marijak and I are like sisters.

Several months later Lucie and I sat in Marijak's living room who had consented to an interview after visiting with her for awhile. It was at this time I found out she had also stayed in Lucie's house upon migrating to Miami and not only had four children in Haiti but also five in the United States.

As we proceeded to go through the interview I became confused when Marijak told me her husband worked in a factory in Miami (and not on a Haitian boat as I had previously documented). Realizing she must refer to two men as her "husbands," I attempted to get more information from her that would clarify her marital situation. As we were doing this, her "Miami husband" unexpectedly came home early from work and demanded to know what we were doing there when he saw me with the interview paper. Marijak began to explain but he interrupted her and angrily said to me, "we have been in Miami for twelve years and have never had any problems so you don't need to be talking to Marijak." Lucie also attempted to explain but when I realized he was not about to calm down, I suggested we leave. In the car Lucie fumed,

I never thought he would act like that. That makes me very angry. When he and Marijak first come from Haiti, I let them stay in my home for two years. Two years I made him food, gave him a place to sleep, helped him anyway I could. He said 'people come with those kind of questions and say they want to help Haitians but they really working for the government.' I told him 'if she's no good I never bring her to your house.' Yeah, I told him that.

She stopped talking momentarily and angrily looked out the window and with her voice rising, continued, "he knows me better than that. He thinks I would bring some bad person to his house after all the things I did for him before. He's a stupid man."

****Sè BEN (Sister Ben)****

Many times Lucie has told me she considers Sè Ben to be one of her closest friends. When Lucie talks about Sè Ben it becomes apparent the close alliance these two women have and the abundance of emotional aid and small services they provide for each other (see page 109).

I first met Sè Ben when she had come to Lucie's house with several members of her church to pray for Charlie (Lucie's husband) who was sick in bed. Charlie had fallen down in the restaurant where he worked and was in physical pain with a back injury. Lucie was extremely distraught over his situation but when Sè Ben arrived with her friends to pray, I could sense some of Lucie's tension temporarily cease (see page 108).

Lucie's husband continued to be bedridden for several months, and eventually their financial situation worsened. It was during this time that I documented many of the individuals in Lucie's network offering support in various ways. Not only did Sè Ben gather with her church members in Lucie's living room to offer spiritual support, but a few weeks later Lucie told me,

Sè Ben brought me many things yesterday. She bring me turkey, milk, tomato paste, eggs, bread, many things. The day before yesterday she passed by my house and when she was there she see I don't have nothing in my refrigerator. She knows that if I have the money, I buy things for my family to eat

and the refrigerator shows this. But she says she look in there and thought to herself, 'she need my help' so she buy me many things. Thank God for Sè Ben, she's such a good friend of mine.

That same year, Charlie's youngest brother died in Haiti. Charlie was the oldest son in his family and therefore was responsible for providing most of the money for the funeral expenses. Lucie lamented over this as she said,

we're supposed to send \$1,000.00 to Haiti. I don't know what I'm going to do." Later that week I asked her if they managed to send the money and she nodded her head saying, "thanks God, yes. I borrow \$500.00 from Toni and you remember my friend Sè Ben? Her sister just move here from New York. She made me loan for \$500.00. You know what I'm saying? I don't take it from her, I borrowed it from her.

One day when I stopped at Lucie's, I found her and Sè Ben sitting in the front part of Luci's house that she calls her salon. Sè Ben was eating a large portion of fish and rice while Lucie sat next to her singing a song from her Creole hymn book. Later that evening Lucie told me Sè Ben had brought the fish for her so Lucie made her dinner. She also told me Sè Ben was going to be on the radio later that evening since Sè Ben and her husband had,

a nice radio program. You never hear them? I never told you that before? They talk about God. They talk about religion. Sè Ben has such a nice voice. They go to the radio station long time now. They talk at 3:00 in the morning. That's a good time. Three in the morning is good. Sometimes you can't sleep because of your problems and you need help. It's good to turn on the radio and have someone like Sè Ben talking to you.

-members of Sé Ben's church offer spiritual support for
Lucie's husband-

Little Haiti, 1992

-Lucie sings from her Creole bible while her friend
Sè Ben eats rice and fish-

Little Haiti, 1992

****TONI****

One morning Lucie called me and said, "Sue, I need you to take me somewhere today. You remember we went to visit one old man a long time ago? He was a little man and had a little wife? I need to go give him some money." I remembered she had borrowed money from him over a year ago but I knew because of her continual financial problems she was in no position to repay him. When I asked her about this she explained,

I borrowed money from him long, long time ago and I think I need to pay him now, so Toni give me the money. I made a loan from Toni to pay that man back because it's been too long since I ask him for that.

Toni is a Haitian man in his early forties who used to work as a cook with Lucie and Charlie in the seafood restaurant where Charlie was injured and Lucie was currently layed off. When Lucie's youngest child was born, Toni was named the child's godfather, creating a strong ritual tie to Lucie's family.

Toni also owns a small Haitian mini-market where Lucie works part-time as a clerk. Lucie's attachment to Miami's formal market has been unstable as documented in chapter three so Toni has hired her in his mini-market three days a week. Toni frequently travels to Haiti and instead of closing his business, he often has Lucie and Charlie mind his store until he returns to Miami. This is an arrangement that has reciprocal effects as Toni leaves his store with someone he

trusts, and Lucie is able to make additional income. The first time I documented this happening, Lucie said, "Toni's gone to Haiti so I make a little part-time job in his store until he comes back." Later that week she said, "Toni made me pay (paid her) for working five days in the store so I finish making my house payment."

Since Lucie has been working in Toni's mini-market, I have observed many exchanges between the two of them. Toni often calls Lucie at her home and tells her he is at the store and has not eaten all day. When this happens, she always responds by taking him a container of hot food either made by her (see page 112) or purchased from a nearby Haitian restaurant. This exchange is also often reciprocal as Lucie once revealed to me: "Yesterday I had no food for my family and the day before was the same thing. So Toni came and fed my children. He brought them fried chicken, something like that." In another conversation Lucie told me how her phone had been disconnected for three days because her payment for the bill was overdue. After it was reconnected she called and said,

when Toni hear they cut my phone he laugh and say 'don't let them cut your phone. How can I call you and tell you I'm hungry if you don't have a phone?' He then gave me money to turn it back on. He told me if my bill is ever late again to let him know and he will loan me the money.

-Lucie often prepares food for members of her network-
Little Haiti, 1990

As previously mentioned, Lucie's husband has been out of work due to a work related accident. Unable to work and receiving little or often no worker's compensation pay has left Luci and Charlie in an extremely vulnerable financial situation. Toni has responded to this situation by making them loans of \$500.00 when necessary (e.g. to help pay for the funeral expenses of Charlie's brother in Haiti), and in addition he gives small amounts of money to Charlie when he is not even asked. According to Lucie,

when Charlie was sick in bed Toni gave him \$50.00 every week so he has money for his pocket. That way he has money to give to my children to use for school and things like that. When Charlie's not working because he feel sick, he feels bad inside because he can't make no money. Charlie like to work. He has always worked hard to help his family. Toni sees this so he gives Charlie money for his pocket cause he want Charlie to feel good inside.

****NINI****

Nini moved into Lucie's neighborhood in the mid-1980's. In that time she and Lucie not only became acquaintances but also friends. Nini, who is divorced and 57 years old, lives alone and has no family members in Miami. She consented to be interviewed for the Griffith project but it was difficult to set up an actual appointment. I would often find Nini standing at Lucie's door engaged in a conversation with Lucie when I visited their neighborhood. When I would ask her about

the interview she would consent saying in Creole that we would have to talk another day because she was on her way to look for a job. Nini had recently been laid off from her job in a clothing factory and was experiencing difficulty find new work.

When we finally got together for the interview, Nini invited us into her living room; a room full of various religious decorations, plastic covered furniture, and framed portraits of her children. It was in this lowly lit room that I conducted an extremely troubling interview.

Although Nini could speak a little bit of English, she asked me if she could answer my questions in Creole. Agreeing to this I proceeded to ask her about her networks and family ties. It was in this part of the interview that I found out Nini, unlike most Haitians I talked to, was virtually alone in Miami and had very few friends, relatives, or co-workers to help her survive. She did mention Lucie and two friends from her church she considered friends but said for the most part she only either visited with them or saw them in church. In addition, being divorced, and having left her grown children in Haiti, she had no familial ties in Miami.

When I began to question Nini about the reasons she felt she could not find any work, she answered, "m'pa gen transpo ["I don't have transportation"], m'pa genyen parenn ["I don't have any connections"]," then she began to cry and added,

"prejiji ["prejudice"]." She then turned to Lucie and spoke in a low voice so that I could not hear her. Lucie listened carefully to her and said,

Tinini upset. She says she's sorry because she feels she needs to cry. She says her heart feels broken cause she can't find a job and doesn't know what to do.

We were silent for a moment, then Nini once again spoke. As she spoke, Lucie continued translating,

everyday she take the bus to factory and places like that, she sits in office, she ask for application to make interview. But they say they don't have nothing for her. She can tell by the way they look they don't want to talk to her because she's black. She say sometimes she sit in room with another person. Sometimes Cuban, American, something like that. If there are two people, one white, and Tinini, they don't talk to her because she's black. When they come out they give white person the application then they look at her and say they have no job.

At this Tinini, who was still crying, said, "I don't know why I'm black." Lucie also began to cry quietly agreed, "I don't know why I'm black either." In Creole Lucie continued, saying God had made them black and they could not question it. Tinini told us about her worries of being evicted and how she had no savings. She then told us how she asked for an emergency appointment to receive food stamps but how HRS had scheduled her appointment for six weeks later.

After we finished the interview, we were walking across the street to return to Lucie's house when Lucie asked me, "you have \$10.00, something like that we could give to Tinini

for food?" I did and went to get money from my purse. I continued to walk to Lucie's while she ran back to offer Nini the money. When she returned we discussed how upsetting the interview was and she said,

I cry today because Tinini already talk to me about her problems. When I see her cry, I start to cry. I know how she feel. Before I used to feel real bad because I'm black. Oh, it make me feel very bad. Somedays I don't know what to do. But I don't do that anymore. I just tell myself that God had his reasons for making some people black and I try to accept that. When we talking with Tinini today she say she so tired, she so tired. That make me cry. You hear what else she say? She said if she could find one boat back to Haiti she would put her things on it and go.

****YVROSE****

In 1990 Yvrose came to the United States on her Bahamian passport and eventually gave birth to her fifth child in Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital. He was the third child Yvrose gave birth to that was a distant relative of Lucie's, further bonding their family tie.² After Hurricane Andrew in the late summer of 1992, Yvrose would relocate herself and her two American born sons across the street from Lucie's household. This would further strengthen this tie and with actively put her directly into Lucie's social network.

² The father of the child is Lucie's cousin Emelia's son. This is the third child he has fathered for Yvrose.

Yvrose, who had never married and lived alone with her children, immediately began to rely upon Lucie as a friend and a relative. Lucie would often tell me how she was visiting Yvrose's house so she could help her with her sons Herve (age 6) and Sergo (age 1). On one such occasion, Lucie returned home and with a heavy sigh said,

Yvrose call me. She have problem with Herve. This morning he get up, he watch TV, watch TV, when it time to make him ready for school, he won't go. He want to watch TV. She had problem with that so she call me to help her. Yvrose say she told him she would beat him but he still won't go. I went there and made him go. I told Yvrose, 'when you have problem like that you supposed to talk to him real serious.' That way he know you don't make joke, he knows you mean what you saying, yes, I told her to talk serious with him. After we do that, he go to school.

A few days later Lucie accompanied Yvrose to the health clinic because Herve was sick. According to Lucie,

Sunday, I look at Herve and I see he look sick. I told Yvrose 'don't send Herve to school Monday, we need to take him to Family Center instead.' I was supposed to call one woman to go clean her house but I couldn't because Yvrose need my help. She need that. We took bus to Family Center and when we got there the nurse look at Herve and said to take him to Jackson Hospital because he was very sick. Yvrose and I took bus to Jackson and we were there all day. When we reach there, they give Herve oxygen. They said he have asthma. They take him inside for a long time. That's when the doctor see him.

Yvrose also relies on Lucie for food to supplement the food stamps she receives for her two children. She cannot obtain legal documentation and therefore is unable to find

work. In a phone conversation, Lucie confided,

you remember when Yvrose came here last ni ght? She call me in a little voice and say 'm'grangou ['I'm hungry'].' She told me she couldn't sleep because she was so hungry and asked if I had a little food for her. That's why she come that late. She said she was so hungry she couldn't sleep because it was making her have bad dreams.

Lucie continually helped Yvrose and her children on a daily basis. In return I would often see Yvrose helping Lucie cutting vegetables, cleaning fish, preparing rice and beans in addition to providing Lucie with companionship. She would accompany Lucie to pay bills, go to "HRS" (Human Resource Center where Lucie and Yvrose both receive food stamps) and visit with her when she was home from work.

I also became friends with Yvrose and would often visit her household. One day when I knocked on her door, I found approximately twenty people gathered in her living room who were involved in some type of prayer service. After entering, I found Yvrose in her bedroom with her children and had her ask the people if I could make some photographs as they prayed (see pages 120 and 121). Later I found out Yvrose regularly allowed these people into her home to pray on Fridays. When I asked Lucie why they were there she explained,

when I talked to Yvrose she say she rent her living room to some people so they can make big prayer. I hear it on the radio the other day. They make anons [announcement] saying 'if you have big problem, if you need help, come here, we pray for you,' something like that. Then they say address for kay-Yvrose [Yvrose's house]. Yvrose say they

don't give her too much money but she needs it even if it is a little bit.

After Lucie explained why the prayer services were being held at Yvrose's house, I questioned her whether there was some type of vodou involved. I described what I had photographed and had never seen this type of ceremony before. Lucie dropped her voice to a whisper and said, "I don't know nothing about that. I work on Fridays at Toni's market so I never see how they pray at her house. But one neighbor told me she thinks they make vodou ceremony in Yvrose's house." She then shrugged her shoulders in disgust and continued, "God don't like that. Only crazy people do that. She's not supposed to have vodou at her house."

During this same time, Yvrose had received an eviction notice from her landlord because her rent was thirty days overdue. Lucie, sounding annoyed, told me,

yesterday Yvrose make big argument with me. She tell me 'you have money, you are my family. You supposed to make my rent for me so they don't put me out.' She knows my husband not working. But when people know you have job in restaurant they think you make big, big money. Maybe six hundred dollars a week. Yeah, many Haitians hear you have restaurant job and they think that. She tell me 'you don't care if they put me and my children out on the street.' I try to tell her 'Yvrose, my husband don't work. We don't have money to pay our own house.' But she don't listen. She has no respect. She make big argument and walk out of my house.

-prayer service held at Yvrose's house-

Little Haiti, 1993

Little Haiti, 1993

Little Haiti, 1993

Their problems would escalate when Yvrose would once again start an argument with Lucie, this time accusing her of spreading rumors that she was allowing vodou to take place in her house. Following this second argument Lucie vowed to have nothing more to do with Yvrose. She fumed,

I tell you that girl has no respect. She say 'you tell some people I let them make vodou in my home. You trying to get me killed.' When I tell her I never say nothing like that she call me a liar. Oh, I'll never have nothing to do with her again. She talk to me with disrespect before but I say to myself 'God make Yvrose the way she is so I can't stay mad with her because she don't know better.' But no more. Yvrose is a stupid girl. She has no respect for people so I'm not supposed to be her friend.

Yvrose was eventually evicted and moved out of Lucie's immediate neighborhood. She and Lucie had no contact for eight months until one day when Yvrose called Luci and was crying. Following their conversation Lucie confided,

last night Yvrose make me cry. She called and said 'Auntie, I have big problems. The woman I stay with beat me with a shoe and made big fight.' She don't fight back because if the woman call the police, Yvrose have big problem with immigration. Oh I cry when I hear her talk like that. I talk to Charlie but he say that girl has no respect so we can't let her stay here. Charlie say the only thing we can do is feed her, give her little money if we have it, and talk to her. When you are my friend, I do everything for you but she don't know how to respect people so I can't let her live in my home.

****Sè VIJINI (Sister Vijini)****

While Lucie and I were running her errands in Little Haiti she said, "Sue, I want to find Sè Vijini. Let's drive to her old apartment and see if we find one vwazin [neighbor] who know where she lives." When we reached Vijini's previous neighborhood, Lucie told me to stop the car saying, "this looks like the house." We went to the door and Lucie knocked awhile calling out "hello, hello." We went to the apartment next door where we could hear a radio playing Haitian music and Lucie continued to call out. Finally a Haitian women greeted us with "bonjou, ki jan ou ye ["hello, how are you?"]? Lucie explained she was looking for Vijini and lost contact with her since she had given birth to her new baby and moved to a new neighborhood. The woman then explained to us how she had cared for Vijini's eldest son while she was sick in the hospital for two months due to her pregnancy but Vijini never contacted her after she moved. Lucie explained how a similar incident happened to her and how at the same time she had cared for Shelda (Vijini's daughter) for over a month and Vijini took her and Lucie had also never heard from her. They then agreed on how disrespectful that was, and we left.

Lucie initially met Vijini, her husband, and four children when they became members of the same Haitian Baptist church. A year later, the family would separate when Vijini tired of her husband's extra-marital affairs and moved with

three of her children into Lucie's house. She remained there approximately nine months until she managed to rent a three room apartment nearby. Lucie often talked to Vijini about returning to her husband.

I tell Vijini, 'when you have children you supposed to think of them first and stay with your husband. When you are with him, your children have a father, they have a mother. He wants you back so you don't need to live outside anymore.' But she don't listen. She's mad with him so she thinks only for herself.

Following her divorce, Vijini became pregnant with her fifth child, and she had to spend four months in the hospital due to a difficult pregnancy. It was at that time Lucie took Vijini's only daughter into her home. During this time Lucie took care of Shelda, a three year old, as if she were her own (see page 125). One morning when I arrived at her house, I found Lucie ironing a dress for Shelda to wear to daycare. After she finished dressing Shelda, Lucie took some hot soup she had cooling in the freezer and told Shelda, "vin isit, vini Shelda, manje ["come here, come Shelda, eat!"]!" Shelda stood with her mouth open waiting for the first spoonful and Lucie demanded to her, "close your eyes. Thank God. Close your eyes. Say 'thank-you God' for your food. Thank you much." When Shelda did as directed, Lucie proceeded to feed her.

As previously noted, Vijini left the hospital with her newborn, gathered the rest of her children and relocated her

-Lucie foster-parents for children whose parents are members
of her reciprocity network-

Little Haiti, 1991

Bahamas, 1993

family to a different neighborhood. It would be three months for her to contact Lucie and when she did we went to visit her. Following the visit Lucie said in a troubled voice,

I'm so worried about Sè Vijini. Oh I have talked to her so many times but she don't know how to listen. I keep telling her she needs to take care of her children before anything else but she looks so sick. I told her to visit the doctor and that the government will keep giving her food stamps. I gave her \$10.00. I know that's not much, but it's all I can help her right now.

It would be a few months later when Lucie would ask me,

you remember Watson [Vijini's second oldest son]? I bring him to my home to live for awhile so I can feed him. When I see Watson the other day I see he's skinny, skinny, skinny. He's so skinny he looks like all bones. And he's so dark. It break my heart when I see him dark like that and skinny. So I tell him, 'Watson, I want to bring you to my home.' He say 'okay Mommie, let's go.' Now I feed him, feed him. I pray for him to get fat. If Sè Vijini didn't leave her husband before, Watson don't get skinny like that.

****CECILE****

Sunday evening, June 13, 1993, I was reading the Miami Herald and saw a headline stating "Man Kills Wife With Ax, Then Hangs Himself." The opening paragraph started, "Cecile and Celius Marcelin were high school sweethearts in Haiti" and ended with, "on Saturday morning, their troubles exploded in a quiet Miami suburb." Their problems resulted in the brutal murder of Cecile followed by the husband going to their

neighbors' house and hanging himself in a mango tree. They had fought the previous evening because Cecile had decided to leave her marriage for another man.

I immediately phoned Lucie and she answered the phone quietly saying, "bonswa ["good evening"]." I told her how I was looking at the paper and hesitantly asked, "Lucie, do you know about Cecile? Do you know she has died?" In a barely audible voice she replied. "I know that but I don't call. My head is so big I can't think. I can't think so I can't talk. Yes. She die. Cecile is dead."

Cecile moved to Miami in 1982 and worked as a clerk in a store in downtown Miami. According to Lucie she "met Cecile long, long time ago. I don't know her in Haiti but I know her long time in Miami. She used to work in one store downtown and many times I go there to buy some things and she wait on me. That's how I met her. Then we become good friends."

Cecile eventually opened her own business at Miami's #1 Flea Market in Northwest Little Haiti. One morning Luci, Sisi (Lucie's youngest daughter), and I were driving past the flea market and decided to visit Cecile. During our visit Cecile and Lucie stood arm in arm while Sisi and I looked around. Lucie purchased a pair of stockings from Cecile and before we left Sisi picked out a bra. Cecile put the bra in a bag and when Lucie went to hand her some cash, Cecile refused to take it. Lucie kept handing her the money saying..."oh Cecile, no,

m'genyen lajan ["I have money"]." Cecile again refused the money and Sisi left with the new bra.

As noted earlier, Cecile was an integral part of Lucie's ability to buy merchandise to sell in the Bahamas. She not only drove Luci in her car to purchase the items, but would also let Luci charge them on her credit card. By utilizing Cecile's generosity and integrating her into an extensive social network, Lucie was able to devise schemes to generate income for her family's survival.

Cecile's business was located near the mini-market where Lucie worked part-time. She was also good friends with Toni, who owned the store. Cecile would often provide Luci with transportation to work and then stop in periodically to see her friends. On one such visit Cecile told Lucie her birthday was the following day. Lucie put her hands in the air and said, "oh my daughter has a birthday tomorrow. I want to sing Happy Birthday for my girl." Lucie proceeded to sing and at the end reached for Cecile across the counter and putting her arms around her softly continued to sing, "happy birthday my Cecile, happy birthday to you." As she finished she continued to hug Cecile and when she released her I could see Cecile was beginning to cry.

Eight months after Cecile's 36th birthday, Lucie and I attended her funeral. Lucie was visibly upset following the ceremony for days. Many times when I visit her when she is

working at Toni's market, I find her sitting on a stool behind the counter with her bible left open next to the cash register. From the look on her face I can tell she is still grieving for Cecile. One day when I entered the store she looked up and simply said, "everyday I think of Cecile. Oh my God. She's gone. I know Cecile long time. She always make me smile and we always make big laugh. Now she's dead. I don't know what I'm going to do without my Cecile."

****VERLAIN****

When I interviewed Lucie for the Griffith project I asked her to name one person who she visits regularly and to tell what exchanges she has with that person's household. Without hesitation, Lucie answered, "Verlain." In response to the latter part of the question Lucie said, "she's my neighbor so we do everything for each other. I watch her children, let her use my phone, share food, with her. Everything. I even give her husband my nephew to be his godson because they are like my family."

In 1991 Lucie's brother's girlfriend, Mimi, gave birth to an illegitimate child. Although Lucie was upset with the situation, she made arrangements for Verlain's husband, Ramon to be the child's godparent. Since Lucie's brother was married at the time of the child's birth, he asked Lucie to find a friend who did not have any connections with him or his

wife. Lucie chose Ramon and she, Verlain, Ramon, and Mimi, accompanied the child to the baptism.

Following the ceremony, Lucie and Mimi spent the entire afternoon and early evening preparing a party to celebrate this occasion. They purchased a cake and Haitian patties from a nearby bakery and prepared fried chicken, griot, plantain, rice and beans throughout the day. Rushing around the house and finishing last minute details, Lucie said, "tonight we make big party in my house for little Emmanuel. But first we need to visit Verlain and Ramon." Lucie and Mimi then proceeded to make several trips, taking all the prepared food, and the Haitian patties next door to Ramon and Verlain. This left those of us gathered in her home (expecting a large meal) with only the cake. When I asked Lucie's youngest daughter, Sisi, to explain what was going on she shrugged her shoulders and replied, "you know my Mom, she's a Haitian. They do weird things like that all the time. Ramon don't even know the baby but they make him the godfather and now he gets all our food." Lucie would later explain how she gave the food to thank Ramon for agreeing to be a godparent to her brother's child along with showing him her respect.

Verlain did not have long distance service on her telephone. Many times when she wanted to call to Ft. Lauderdale, Pompano, or even Haiti, she would borrow Lucie's

phone promising to pay the charges later ³ (see page 132). When I asked Lucie during the Griffith interview what kinds of services she provides Verlain with, she quickly answered, "I always lend her my phone."

One day Lucie was trying to sew a pair of shorts for a friend's child and became frustrated because she did not have a pattern. I suggested she ask a neighbor to borrow one of their children's shorts so she could trace them onto a newspaper creating her own pattern. She replied, "oh yeps, that's what I'm supposed to do. I'll go ask Verlain." She put on her shoes and started to leave, then stopped whispering,

Sue, what if she don't want to give me the short pants? Some people funny that way. They don't trust no one. I know all my neighbors but maybe they scared to let me take their children's clothes. Maybe they think I lose it or forget it. Some people are that way.

³ Many Haitians have the long distance service disconnected from their phone to save money and to avoid having to lend out their own phone to others who do not have it either. Lucie eventually had her long distance service disconnected also when too many people took advantage of this situation and would not give her money towards their bill. After being out of the country for three weeks, Lucie told me, "I need you to call the phone company and have them cut my long distance. When I was in Bahamas some people make calls to Haiti, Pompano, and places like that. Now they say they don't make them so I have to pay the bill."

-Lucie often let neighbors "borrow" her telephone
to make long distance calls-

Little Haiti, 1991

In order to give an accurate account of the variety of participants in Lucie's network, I would have to include myself. As I started to visit her home on a regular basis to make photographs and attempt to learn about Haitian culture, I quickly realized it would be impossible to remain a detached observer. By becoming an active member of Lucie's network, I learned through experience the true definition of participant observer.

Initially, I felt as if I were imposing on Lucie and her family as I photographed their activities non-stop. One day I mentioned this feeling of to one of Lucie's sons and he responded, "yeah, you do take a lot of pictures, but in return my whole family has you for a friend." The feeling of unbalance in this relationship eventually began to fade as Lucie started to ask me for small favors. Although her son had a car, she would often ask me to drive her places to either visit friends and family or run errands.⁴ When her oldest son eventually moved away from Miami to attend college, Lucie began to rely more heavily on me to help her read her mail, make phone calls for her, and essentially take over the duties she had previously relied on her oldest child to do. As I began to perform these duties for her, a strong sense of

⁴ Neither Charlie nor Luci have ever learned how to drive although Luci has attempted to learn the driving rules so she can apply for her learners permit.

trust developed between us and she began to be more open with me about her inner thoughts and private life.⁵

Almost daily my phone would ring early in the morning and when I answered Lucie would ask, "Sue, you coming to see me this morning? I need your help. Oh, I almost forgot. Charlie grangou ["Charlie is hungry"]. Can you bring some pen cho [hot bread]?" On one such occasion she handed me a work search paper (required from the unemployment office to indicate what jobs she had sought for the week) and stated, "I just saw this in the mail this morning. I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I know they ask me where I look for jobs but I don't know all I'm supposed to write." Since I had taken her on two job interviews that previous week, I was able to fill out the information asked. When I finished she put her hands up high into the air and looking upward sang, "thank you God, " then turned around and looked at me adding, "thank you madmwazèl [miss]." Teasing her, I asked her why she was thanking God first when I did all the writing and she answered in a serious tone of voice, "because God is the one who gave you the intelligence to write that."

Many times Lucie and I both loaned and borrowed money from each other as sometimes the instability of my financial

⁵ It was at approximately this time I began graduate school and was actively keeping fieldnotes of her everyday activities so it was especially important for my studies that we established this trust.

situation would resemble hers. On busy nights in the restaurant I often made tips that doubled or tripled the amount of her hourly wage and on those nights I would put various amounts of money in her skirt pocket telling her I had had a good night. This would always be reciprocated sooner or later when she had a little extra money and knew I was having trouble paying a bill. One day I was with her and Charlie in the car and she asked me to stop at a Haitian grocery store so she could cash Charlie's worker's compensation check.⁶ When Lucie returned to the car she carefully recounted the money then separated part for the electric bill, part for the water bill, handed Charlie some cash, and lastly gave me \$20.00.⁷ I quickly put the money in my pocket saying "mesi, m'bezwen sa-a anpil ["thanks, I need that very much"]" and she responded, "I know that. That's why I do that."

On another similar occasion, Lucie knew I was having trouble making my car insurance payment and when I told her it was overdue she said, "why you don't let me help you? You know anytime you need money I can help you find it."

In addition to letting me research her life, and allowing me to incessantly photograph her and her family, Lucie often

⁶ These checks were very erratic and rarely came on time or in the amount that was expected.

⁷ The majority of her bills are paid in cash and in person. This is true with most Haitians who pay their bills in cash rather than writing checks and sending them through the mail.

loans me money, provides me with food, washes and irons my clothes, and insists I spend the night at her house. Although I am a full-time graduate student and work full-time, I often spend hours each day helping her run errands. One afternoon after I helped her for six hours she got out of my car saying, "poor Sue. I take up all her day. I make her take me too many places. She looks so tired. I'm sorry for that madmwazèl [miss]." Before she closed the door she re-entered the car and in a serious manner said,

I want to ask you something else. If you say no, you make me feel real bad because you not supposed to say no. I want to do something for you and you supposed to let me. I want to give you some food stamps. I just got plenty and I want to give you some. You can go to the store and buy some food. Please let me do that for you.

Discussions and Conclusions

There are numerous participants in Lucie's network, although I have only depicted ten of them. Her network for the most part is comprised of Haitian women. This mixed network of kinsmen, fictive kinsmen, ritual kinsmen, neighbors, and friends is a resilient response to dealing with the various events and disasters in Lucie's social and economic life. Generosity and exchange in the form of reciprocity are fundamental parts of this response and therefore provide the foundation for this complex network. Reciprocity can be described as a form of exchange embedded in

a long-term social relationship. It is not an impersonal, one-time transaction like market exchange (Stack, 1974).

For the purpose of providing the reader with insight into the survival strategies of Haitian women, I propose to discuss and analyze Lucie's network and how it is defined by the flow of reciprocal exchange of goods, services, valuable information, and emotional support. I will refer to her network as a "reciprocity network" because the type of exchange observed in this network is reciprocity.⁸ Although the intensity of giving and receiving is not uniform throughout this reciprocity network, there is a high intensity of flow of goods and services exchanged.

In the course of my fieldwork I documented an array of individuals participating in Lucie's reciprocity network. With the exception of myself, all of them were born in Haiti, and one of their initial destinations upon migrating to the United States was Lucie's home (i.e., Luna and Marijak). Since Luna and Marijak are both relatives of Lucie's, their mutual exchanges of goods and services with her are intertwined with and partly camouflaged by kinship relations. However, since they both lived on the generosity of Lucie and her husband upon arriving in Miami, there is a sense of obligation that remains resilient in their relationships. In

⁸ Lomnitz (1977) used this terminology also in her analysis of the networks in a Mexican shantytown.

Lucie's opinion, Luna is in a sense obligated to have a child to reciprocate for Lucie and Charlie having paid for her wedding while she was living with them. Similarly, in Lucie's opinion, Marijak's husband is obligated to trust her and her judgement in bringing a white woman to their home to ask questions about their private affairs.

Since Lucie often stayed with Marijak's family as a young girl in Haiti, she may have been acting out of reciprocity in addition to generosity when she opened her home to Marijak and her husband for two years. However, by opening her home to nine individuals migrating over the span of sixteen years, Lucie has managed to both establish and maintain strong fictive ties with these participants in her reciprocity network.

Another dimension of the relationships established between Lucie and the individuals in her network concerns those that are formed through belonging to the Baptist church. Since being a Christian also means believing all church members are the children of God and are therefore eternal brothers and sisters, a ritual fictive kinship is created. Those with Sè Ben and Sè Vijini are two examples of the relationships maintained this way. Emotional support is often provided in these relationships through prayer as evidenced by Sè Ben bringing a group of people to pray for Lucie's husband when he was ill in addition to Lucie finding comfort in

hearing Sè Ben's voice on the radio late at night. Along with emotion support, shared parental support and responsibility among fellow church members is common. So is also a sense of obligation in helping "sisters" and "brothers" cope with the minor and major emergencies in their lives. Caring for of Vijini's daughter and teaching her to pray and later on taking in Vijini's son (who appeared to be losing weight due to malnutrition) shows Lucie's willingness to foster parent a child for a member of her church (see page 105). In some ways the ritual ties acquired through the church have the density of the bond established through godparenthood.

According to Lomnitz (1977) the role of compadrazgo (godparenthood) is a mechanism for strengthening social solidarity in the networks of reciprocal exchange. Although there are formal duties associated with it that are mostly of a ritual nature, they are minor when compared to the informal duties as contained in the prevailing ideology of mutual assistance. It therefore becomes most meaningful and active in the context of reciprocity networks. Lucie receives a great deal of financial support from her youngest daughter's godfather, Toni, as documented earlier in this chapter. The intensity of loaning is stronger on Toni's part, however in return he has people he can trust to watch his store while he is in Haiti. In addition, by being chosen as a parenn (godfather) to Lucie's child, he is distinguished from others

as a person who can be trusted and therefore deserves this special honor.

Verlain's husband, Ramon, was also chosen by Lucie to be a godparent to her brother's son. By recruiting her neighbor to be godfather to her nephew, Lucie managed to reinforce her relationship with this individual and his wife who were already part of her reciprocity network.

Another dimension to Lucie's network is formed by the mutual exchanges that place between Lucie and her friends. The relationship that takes place between friends is often very active and intimate. Friends tend to be persons with whom an individual voluntarily feels intimate, rather than those they just interact with through juxtaposition at work, in the neighborhood, or in kinship groups (Wellman, Carrington, and Hall, 1988). Although the social tie that bonded Cecile and Lucie was dissolved when Cecile was brutally murdered, Cecile was, and Sè Ben and myself are considered Lucie's good friends. There is an abundance of companionship, emotional aid, and small-scale services exchanged in this section of Lucie's reciprocity network. Lucie sometimes sings songs while Sè Ben eats. Cecile would visit her at work and make her laugh, and Lucie would often call my home and leave a message on my answering machine, "Sue, where are you? I miss you. Come visit me when you come from school." These friendships take on a more functional dimension as Sè Ben

knows when Lucie is unable to buy food for her family, and I explain Luci's mail to her, help her fill out her unemployment forms, and Cecile would loan Lucie her credit card or give her rides to work.

Nini and Verlain are representative of the folks in Lucie's network who are included because they are neighbors. For the most part, these individuals gossip, visit, offer emotional support, and occasionally loan or borrow small amounts of money, goods and wares, or food. Because of their close physical proximity, these networks are usually kept intact until one member moves away.⁹ Verlain uses Lucie's telephone, while Lucie goes to her to borrow a pair of shorts. However, these situations are embedded in a precarious sense of trust and mistrust as evidenced by Lucie being hesitant to borrow the shorts because 'some people are funny,' and Lucie disconnecting the long distance service on her telephone because her generosity was eventually abused by her neighbors. Nini also represents how various parts of the network can be called on to help another member of the network in times of extreme hardship. By soliciting my help for money to give to Nini while she was unemployed, Lucie is able to provide her neighbor with some financial support. The combination of

⁹ However, this is not always the case as I have visited friends of Lucie's in different parts of town who she knew as previous neighbors but are still included in her network.

comforting Nini with emotional support (who was upset because of discrimination) along with financial support strengthens this network tie.

Along with the flow of exchanges, a precarious sense of trust and mistrust as previously mentioned is also present. Not only is this shown by Lucie's reluctance to borrow a child's pair of shorts from her neighbor, but in addition is evidenced by Marijak's husband thinking Lucie would bring someone from the government into his home although she provided him with food and shelter for two years.

Yvrose is someone in Lucie's network who is difficult to pigeon-hole into one particular category due to the complexities in their relationship. In a reciprocity network such as Lucie's, exchanges and daily dependencies greatly depend on social closeness, physical closeness, and whether the individual is tied through kinship, fictive kinship, ritual kinship, or not. Yvrose is somewhat of a family member, sometimes a neighbor, sometimes a good friend, but also someone Lucie has problems with due to what Lucie feels is lack of respect. Lucie provides food for Yvrose and her children, helps with minor emergencies, gossips with her, and helps socialize Yvrose's children. Since these children are related to her, Lucie shows a sense of obligation to make sure they are well cared for. However, Lucie in no uncertain terms felt obligated to pay Yvrose's rent when she was going to be

evicted. Also she did not approve of Yvrose allowing what was rumored to be vodou take place in her living room. The example of Yvrose also shows how fragile these networks can be although for the most part they are extremely resilient. Lucie was willing to let this part of her reciprocity network dissolve initially but a sense of obligation to Yvrose and her children seemed to force her to re-establish it. The flow of support remains for the most part to be from Lucie to Yvrose but Lucie demands respect from Yvrose in return.

Overall, the goods and services that pass hand to hand in Lucie's reciprocity network may range from a loaf of pen cho (hot bread) to the loaning of a credit card or borrowing \$500.00 to help pay for a relative's funeral in Haiti. For the most part, the individual who is the most successful usually provides Lucie with the largest amount of financial support (as evidenced by Toni's lending and giving of cash to Lucie and Charlie). However, this exchange is often considered an investment by the individual doing the giving as he/she knows how rapidly circumstances can change and therefore this generosity may someday pay off. Similarly, whenever Lucie loans me money she always makes it clear I should expect because she knows the next day she may need my assistance. Overall, in order to fully understand the survival strategies of Haitian immigrant women living in Miami, Florida, I contend that the social and economic

crucial and therefore must be considered carefully when doing research on Haitian women and how they socially and economically survive.

-Lucie is exhausted from working a "fourth shift"-

Little Haiti, 1992

CHAPTER 5

Vance talks to me like I'm a stupid person. He talks to me like I'm his maid. He's not supposed to talk to me with no respect because I'm not a stupid person. I'm one of God's people. God says everyone deserves respect, but Vance doesn't believe this. He has no respect for Haitians. And that's when my head gets big and I start to yell. I can't help it.

-Lucie referring to her male
Anglo boss

If Vance is going to make problems for me, I'm supposed to make problems for Vance.

-Lucie once again referring to
her male Anglo boss

The first time I met Lucie, she was working in a restaurant in a small cluttered area located in the corner of the kitchen referred to as "the pantry" (see page 146). I was being taken on a tour of the restaurant where Lucie had been employed for five years and I would eventually be employed for three and one half years. Before my tour concluded, the waitress gestured toward two Haitian women who had their backs to us and were busy making salads. As we got closer, I realized one of them was singing in Creole. The waitress announced, "and these are the salad ladies, Lina and Lucie,"

- "the pantry" where Lucie prepared salads for the restaurant-

Miami Beach, 1991

and whispered to me, "Lina is the friendlier one. At this point, Lina turned around, while wiping her hands on her apron, shook my hand and with a gracious smile, asked, "is it madamn or madmwazèl (Mrs. or miss)?" Lucie also turned around, nodded towards me and with a shy smile said in a heavily accented voice, "hello, nice to meet you," and then continued with her songs and salads.¹

For some unknown reason, and in spite of my tour guide's reference to Lucie's unfriendliness, I was immediately drawn to Lucie and overwhelmed with a desire to get to know this woman who was absorbed with singing as she steadily worked. From the moment we met, I became intrigued with her and wanted to find out more about Lucie and her singing. Initially I sensed she was engaged in something much deeper than simply occupying her mind while she prepared the evening salads. Often she looked troubled, but then at other times she looked

¹ Later, when Lucie and I had become good friends, I asked her why she was not very friendly towards me the first time we met. She indicated that most of her experiences with white people since migrating to the United States had not been good ones. She was upset since she was continually being discriminated against because she was black and a Haitian. She explained most of the waiters and waitresses she worked with in the restaurant did not treat the Haitian workers with respect and expected me to be like them. It took me months of pursuing a friendship with her before she finally conceded. I had asked her if I could come to her church to make photographs and initially she said no. Eventually she invited me to go to church with her family. When I became her friend she confided she did not want anything to do with me initially because I was white. However, her son convinced her to treat me as a individual and perhaps I would treat her different than what she had become accustomed to.

far away and serene. It would not be until six months later that Lucie revealed to me the importance of her singing as well as her related strong faith in God and how the combination of the two helped her protect herself from prejudice, discrimination, and disrespect.

One Sunday afternoon, while sitting in her living room following church, Lucie revealed to me that she sometimes uses her singing to protect her. At these times she felt like her singing was, "something like a blanket. A big blanket I take out and wrap myself in to protect me when people around me are mad or being disrespectful. When I am wrapped up in my singing to God, no one can make me feel bad with their words." In that same conversation I began to comprehend the importance to Lucie of being a Christian and being respected, and how every aspect of her life, including her work at the restaurant was affected by these fundamental beliefs.

For the next three years, I began to document how Lucie's work situation deteriorated as management in the restaurant changed and how she began to face oppression, prejudice and discrimination, along with disrespect. I watched Lucie's work schedule of forty hours eventually be reduced to six hours and how she attempted to cope with this as well as a variety of exploitive working conditions. This chapter will not only discuss what capitalism does to women workers and what women workers do in response, but will also highlight Lucie's active

ongoing resistance to the disrespect and discrimination she was facing on a daily basis with the restaurant's new management. My concern is not simply to demonstrate how the importance of religion and respect together with resistance in the workplace are to one individual, but to give insight into the survival strategies of immigrant women workers as a whole.

While overcoming the psychological reductionism of early assimilation studies, recent research on immigrant adaptation has decontextualized and disembodied immigrants' intensely personal subjective reaction to the prejudice, discrimination, and disrespect that many, especially minorities, women, and immigrants confront daily. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to provide the reader with an alternative that considers Haitian immigrant women's survival strategies as well as providing access to the emotion and feelings that buffer the consequences of prejudice and discrimination. I propose that Lucie is not unique as she creates a religious self-respect that both gives meaning to her life and wards off the negative and destructive attitudes and behaviors she experiences as a minority immigrant or as a black woman living in a racist society.

Sacks (1984) quotes Dr. Seuss "my troubles are going to have trouble with me" to capture not only what happens during the give and take of daily workplace life for women and what capitalism does to women workers but also what women workers

do in response. While all workers are exploited by capitalists, they are not equally exploited. Gender and ethnicity play important roles in this differentiation since men and women of the same ethnic group have rarely performed the same job. Furthermore, women of different ethnic groups have hardly ever been employed at the same job, at least not within the same workplace or region. This ethnic-typing and segregation has both reflected and reinforced the racist economic practices upon which the U.S. economy was built. The labor market's secondary sector, where people of color and most white women have for the most part been concentrated, is a tier that offers low wages together with few or no benefits. In addition it often has only temporary, part-time or seasonal work available, and little or no opportunity for advancement (Amott and Matthaei, 1991). Sacks contends that strategies, either individual or collective, are designed by women (many of whom are working in the secondary sector) to change unsatisfactory conditions for those that are oppressed (1984).

As documented in chapter three, most of the jobs Lucie has held in Miami since migrating have been in restaurants and motels where she has acquired on-the-job training. Women are overconcentrated in service sector jobs including employment in restaurants and motels. Although they make up less than half of the workforce, women are two-thirds of these service

workers. Many service jobs involve traditionally female tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for the sick, the aged, and the very young. The median earnings in these jobs was \$10,816 for full-time, full-year workers in 1988 (Amott & Matthaei, 1991). Seasonal fluctuations result in laid-off workers or severely reduced working hours making these jobs difficult to remain in for extensive periods of time. Since Lucie has a triple burden (she's a mother of five, works in the informal sector and the formal sector), she has had little opportunity to acquire the language skills and education necessary to make herself a more skillful worker.

In 1986, Lucie was employed as a worker in a tennis shoe factory in Northwest Miami. After a year of working there, her husband, Charlie, came home from his job one day and asked her if she wanted to work with him at the Crabhouse. According to Lucie,

one day Charlie came home from work and told me the kitchen manager said to him, 'Charlie, you think your madamn [wife] would like to work here in the pantry?' He told Charlie he liked his work cause Charlie is a hard worker. He keeps to himself and doesn't bother no one. He never talks back to the boss, he don't talk to no one. He minds his business and works. So I took the bus there and worked that same day. The manager told me, 'Lucie, how about you work today and fill application tomorrow?' And that's what I did. Soon after that, the manager asked Charlie, 'Charlie, do you have any sons old enough to start work? Charlie said he had one and that's when my son started to work here, too.

The Crabhouse, one of Miami's more established

restaurants, has been successfully in operation since the mid-1960's, more than a decade before a significant Haitian community arose in Miami. The restaurant has roughly 85-94 workers, including approximately 25 Haitians. The majority of the Haitian workers work in the back-of-the-house, behind the kitchen doors. These jobs include dishwashing, cooking, food preparation, and food expediting. Two Haitians do work in the front-of-the-house shucking oysters and clams for the restaurant's seafood salad bar and are given dry-cleaned, white uniforms with their names inscribed to wear since they are in view of the customers. Also, there are Haitians occasionally hired as busboys, who also work among the customers. However, with those two exceptions no other Haitians work in the front-of-the-house as waiters, waitresses, or bartenders, or in any management positions. Lucie's husband had worked there continuously since 1980 as both a dishwasher and a cook until he fell down and permanently became disabled in 1992. In addition to Lucie and her husband, Lucie's brother-in-law has worked there for seven years, and Lucie's older brother has been there for eleven years. Lucie's oldest son worked there as a busboy and food runner from 1987 to 1991 and her two younger sons have worked there as busboys in the past. Other family members, including another one of Lucie's brothers, another brother-in-law, and a nephew were employed there also in the past.

On nights she was scheduled, Lucie's duties in the restaurant included setting up the pantry area and cutting vegetables, filling plastic containers with salad dressings, and replenishing plates of cakes and pies throughout the night. Through the evening she was responsible for making salads at a pace that kept up with the needs of the restaurant. These duties were usually accomplished by 1:00 a.m. at which time she received a ride with one of her Haitian co-workers to her home in Little Haiti.

Lucie's job was assuredly repetitive and mundane and she complained about a lack of respect from some of her non-Haitian co-workers, nonetheless, her work still provided her with a sense of self-esteem and self-worth. In regards to working she said,

oh yes, I like to work. Sometimes I cook all day at home and become bored (see page 154). Going to work gets me away from my kitchen. My job at the restaurant gets no respect but I still feel good when it is busy and my work gets done. When I do a good job I feel satisfied and proud.

Generally speaking, Caribbean women place a high value on economic independence, perceive work in positive terms, and consider it important to their self image. Therefore income-earning is important to these women because it is bound up with a sense of self (Senior, 1991). Lucie was working a job she not only felt confident at, but also one where she was

-Lucie likes going to work because it gives her
a break from her kitchen-

Little Haiti, 1991

surrounded by many of her family members. She got regular pay raises, and I would often overhear the general manager call out in French, "bon soir madame ["good night madam"]" as she punched the time clock at the end of her shift. Above all, she had her singing to protect her when she experienced disrespect and her unrelenting faith in God to get her through troubled times.

In the summer of 1991, the discourse in the kitchen amongst the Haitian crew was dominated by concern about the Crabhouse's new, just-arrived management, and Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's charismatic former priest who was elected to be president. Both topics affected the atmosphere in the Crabhouse's kitchen, and both topics were included in Lucie's prayers. Some nights Lucie would boldly wear an "Aristide for President" shirt to work instead of her required, "I got Hammered at the Crabhouse" tee shirt (referring to the wooden hammers supplied to all who ate crab).² On these nights her enthusiasm for Haiti's elected president could not be contained as she and Lina would sing songs mocking the Tonton Makout, Duvalier's hated secret police. She would sing, make salads, and recite prayers in French and Creole to her God (Lucie was a member of a fundamentalist Baptist church),

² "I Got Hammered at the Crabhouse" is an euphemism for "I Got Drunk at the Crabhouse." For an avid church-goer such as Lucie, wearing this tee shirt may indicate she was not behaving in a respectable manner.

giving thanks for Aristide and allowing him to be in charge of her former country.

Later, after the coup deposed Aristide and turmoil once again encompassed the political atmosphere in Haiti, I would watch Lucie standing above the bin of lettuce with her eyes tightly closed and her hand extended high in the air as she called out, "mezanmi, Jesu, mezanmi ["oh my goodness, Jesus, oh my goodness"], oh my God" as she asked for divine help for Aristide. The political concerns Lucie had for Haiti coincided with concerns she was having regarding her job at the Crabhouse. The management that had hired her along with nine of her family members was long gone and a new management took over with their own rules and policies. Almost simultaneously, Lucie experienced a cut in her scheduled work hours. The explanation given to her referring to difficult economic times and a need for a reduction in the company payroll, was immaterial to Lucie as she asked out loud, "how am I supposed to feed my children?" when she read the newly posted schedule showing her reduced working hours.

Soon thereafter, the new management held a meeting for the entire staff alerting us to the changes they were about to make to improve profits at the Crabhouse. We were told if we were not willing to conform to these changes, we could free to leave and look for another job. Because of the language barrier, many of the newly established policies were

incomprehensible to Lucie and her Haitian co-workers. What was clear to her, however, was the tone of voice used when she was ordered to punch out earlier than scheduled during her shift and when her bi-weekly paycheck began to reflect the reduction in hours.

After several weeks of receiving reduced hours along with paychecks reduced by approximately \$40.00 per week, Lucie said in a disgusted voice, "Vance (the new general manager) is no good. The Lord gave everyone a mouth and everyone is supposed to eat. Vance doesn't care what happens to Haitians, because he has no respect for Haitians. He only wants white people in the Crabhouse." At the same time, I heard from some of my Anglo co-workers that Vance had confided that he wanted to get rid of the Haitians who had been working for years in the kitchen. This was theorized by my co-workers to be partly due to discrimination and partly due to the fact that the longer-employed workers received higher wages; therefore a good strategy to maximize profits was to hire newer workers at lower wages.

It would be approximately three weeks following this conversation that I would walk into the pantry to pick up salads and hear Lucie in the middle of a verbal confrontation with Vance in the back of the kitchen. The argument had ensued after Lucie, who was scheduled to work until 10:00, was told to punch out at 8:30. At first, she ignored the order

and continued scooping lettuce out of the bin and filling bowls with salads. This was the third successive Saturday Lucie had been told to leave work early but this was the first one she decided to assertively challenge the order. On the two previous Saturdays she would grab a bag that stored her walking shoes and personal belongs while angrily talking to herself in Creole, head to the time clock to punch out, and then proceed out the front door to catch the bus home. This Saturday, however, was different. She ignored the manager's order, prompting him to confront her face-to-face and demand she "punch out immediately" in a voice Lucie later described as having "no respect" which therefore "made me crazy." Lucie then erupted with a verbal attack as best as she could in English, telling Vance, as she had previously told me, that he was no good, had no respect for Haitians, and only wanted white people working in the Crabhouse. Lucie was the only Haitian who vocalized these feelings although these views were unanimously shared by all of her Haitian co-workers.

By this time I knew almost all the Haitian workers in the restaurant fairly well, and was well-liked by them because of my friendship with Lucie and my ability to converse with them in Creole. We would often discuss Vance and a common response was: "Vance pa bon. Li pa bon moun ["Vance is no good. He is not a good person"]." One dishwasher would tell me, "Vance bay madamn-Charlie anpil pwoblem ["Vance gives Charlie's wife

many problems"]. Another Haitian worker would complain about how disrespectful Vance was and how he treated him and the other Haitians. According to him,

Vance thinks all Haitians are stupid. I've never had a man treat me as bad as Vance. I was a professional tailor in Haiti and I have owned my own business in the United States. The only reason I left Haiti was because of the politics. I had my own business here but you know because of money that's a very hard thing to do. That doesn't mean I'm stupid. Many Haitians working in the Crabhouse are just as smart as Vance. Just because we're working in a kitchen doesn't mean we're not smart enough to work in better places.

Another cook was suspended for three days when Vance saw him eating a piece of fried chicken that he had not paid for. When I arrived at work Lucie was surrounded by a group of her co-workers and they were visibly upset. I was told they were discussing how upset they were and angry because the man had been suspended. One Haitian man revealed to me: "Babier has worked here for seven years. He worked a ten hour shift today with no food and no breaks. The man was hungry so he has every right to eat. Vance is the only person I know who would put a man on vacation for that."³

In the weeks that followed, when Lucie was ordered to leave early, I would often hear her having arguments with Vance. During this time various waitresses would seek me out

³ Putting "a man on vacation" is an euphemism for having the man suspended. Babier's co-worker may have opted to word it that way to help Babier save face.

in the dining room during my shift and tell me to go to the kitchen because Vance and Lucie were having another argument. The management ultimately responded by scheduling her to leave at 8:30 instead of 10:00 thereby eliminating the Saturday night confrontation.

In addition to reducing her hours, Lucie was also given a verbal list of expectations regarding her duties in the pantry. According to Lucie,

some bosses, Richard and Terry [the previous managers] always told me, 'Lucie, when you need help carrying something too heavy for you to lift, tell us and we'll have a man help you.' Yes, they had respect for women. They would tell my Charlie, 'can you give help to Lucie, she needs a bin of lettuce' or they would tell my son, 'help you mother with the salad dressing. It's too much for her to carry.' Now Vance tells me, 'Lucie, you do that yourself. This is your job. If you can't do it then I'll hire someone better.' That's no good. He sees I can't carry these things. He knows it is giving my back trouble. He's doing these things because he has no respect.

As the months passed, arguments between Lucie and Vance seemed to become indistinguishable from the kitchen radio tuned to a Creole station emotionally demanding Aristide's return. For the most part, her co-workers seemed to avoid coming to her aid when she argued with Vance but sympathized with her as she challenged the disrespect she felt she and the other Haitians were receiving from the new management. When I talked with her in her home, she would tell me how life in Miami was difficult because of Vance, and how life in Haiti

was no better because of the problems surrounding Aristide.

Eventually Lucie's emotional outburst began to cease as she accepted her new schedule of thirty-five hours and got used to the new expectations made of her in the pantry. Her singing and prayers resumed, and occasionally she would say to me, "Sue, I need you to help me find better job." Early in November, a new schedule was posted however, that once again triggered Lucie's rage. Her hours were further reduced giving her approximately twenty-seven hours and a young Puerto Rican man, Isaac, was scheduled to receive the hours she lost.

Lucie was convinced more than ever that Vance was discriminating against her. Noticing the disparity between the way Vance treated Lucie and the other Haitians and the other restaurant workers, I agreed with her. Since I was one of Lucie's co-workers, I had ample opportunity to watch Vance trigger Lucie's rage and saw the disrespect she often referred to. One day I overheard Lucie ask Vance for the keys to unlock the walk-in refrigerator. Instead of handing them to her, I watched him acrimoniously throw them down on a table next to her. I saw her duties increase as her hours were reduced to the point where it became impossible for her to keep pace on busy or even moderately busy nights. I often saw Vance arbitrarily send Lucie home much earlier than she was scheduled even though the restaurant would be full of customers and the need for two pantry workers was essential.

One particular evening, after I listened to Lucie argue with Vance, I watched him after she grabbed her belongings and rushed out of the front door full of rage. I then noticed when Vance turned around and smiled and laughed with the kitchen manager. Later that evening, another manager confided in me that she had asked Vance at that time what he and the kitchen manager were laughing at and he replied to her, "we were laughing about what we just did to Lucie."

I decided to gather information regarding filing charges of discrimination in the workplace with the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Center). I felt Lucie should know that there were laws to protect her if she was indeed being treated unfairly and that she was not completely powerless in her present situation because she was a black woman and a Haitian. In the United States, Haitians have become acutely aware that "Nwa pa gen pouvou-a nan peyi-a" (Blacks have no power in this country) and that social and economic privileges accrue to whites (Stafford, 1983). It is extremely difficult for Haitians to come to the United States and experience discrimination and disrespect from the dominant group while being relegated to low status because of their ethnicity.

When I went to Lucie's house to explain what the EEOC was and the procedures she needed to follow in order to file a complaint, she listened closely, and then said,

God sent you to me. Yeah, I really believe that.
My God sent you to me. I pray and I pray because

Vance is breaking my heart and he makes me feel so bad. Every time I leave work my head is so big I can't sleep. Vance makes my head big. But I don't know what to do so I prayed to God. God sent you to me. Yeah, I believe that.

I told Lucie to discuss this option with her husband and to call me to let me know if she had any questions. The following morning she called me before 8:00 a.m. happily saying, "bonjou madmwazèl, m'bezwen ale vil pou visite EEOC ["good morning, miss, I need to go downtown to visit the EEOC"). My Charlie says to go make big problem for Vance. Annale ["let's go"]. Later that morning I sat with her in the EEOC office filling out the forms for her in English and then accompanied her when she met with the case worker to help with translation. After listening to Lucie's complaint, the case worker typed the information then explained how and when Vance and the Crabhouse would be notified of the charges. She told Lucie that in the meantime she was to punch out immediately when she was told to, and under no circumstances was she to argue with the management. As we were leaving, Lucie hesitated and said she needed time to think before they mailed the charges. She said to me, "I need to pray. I need to talk to God about this before they mail the papers."

Lucie eventually changed her mind about filing the charges. After she prayed to her God and then talked to her husband, she explained,

I decided not to mail the papers. Let me tell you

why. Me and Charlie, we're okay. We could find other jobs if Vance fires us because of the EEOC papers. But Vance could make big problem for Edmond [Lucie's brother who continued to be working at the Crabhouse] if I made him mad. Do you know Edmond is living here with only two of his children? He has thirteen other children in Haiti and he's sending for five of them and his wife. Because Vance may cause problems for Edmond, I don't think I'm supposed to mail the paper.

Three months later I was waiting on a table when I looked up and saw Lucie being escorted into the manager's office by Vance and the kitchen manager, Mike. The door closed behind them and it would be forty-five minutes before she returned to the pantry. At that time, I went to see if they were giving her problems and in a very emotional voice she yelled,

they told me I'm no good. They told me to sign my name to one paper that I couldn't read. They told me 'Lucie you too slow, you don't make the salads good. We'll only let you work three nights a week until you work faster.' That's not fair. I've been working here five years and I know how to make salads. I told them to fire me if I'm so bad and I'll go to Sosyal [the unemployment office] and get money while I look for a new job. I know they thinks if they make me mad, I'll quit. Yeah, they think I'll quit.

That night the new work schedule was posted for the following two weeks. Lucie was scheduled for three nights totalling approximately eighteen hours.

Lucie decided once again to go to the EEOC and not only filed charges but had them mailed. She told me, "if Vance is going to make problems for me, I'm supposed to make problems for Vance" (very similar to Dr. Seuss' quote, "my troubles are

going to have trouble with me"). Her complaint read: "In March 1991, Vance [last name omitted] began a harassment campaign against me. I have been humiliated in front of my co-workers and my scheduled hours have been reduced dramatically. I believe that I have been discriminated against due to my sex, Female, and my national origin, Haitian." Lucie's family members did not experience any retaliation due to her filed charges but shortly thereafter, her hours were further reduced to ten hours a week.⁴

Lucie called me and asked me if I knew the last name of

⁴ In addition to reducing Lucie's hours, Vance called a meeting with the corporate heads and the other members of his management team to confront me as to "what [my] involvement was with Lucie and the other Haitians." I was threatened with termination when they heard I openly discussed how Vance was treating the Haitian workers differently than the Anglo and Hispanic workers, calling me a "trouble-maker." The workers in the back-of-the-house (the Haitians) were not allowed breaks, either for rest or for food although they were required by the labor laws. In addition, their working hours were decreased drastically, while the workers in the front-of-the-house kept their same hours, often working over-time. I responded that I would rather be labelled a "trouble-maker" than as a boss that openly discriminated his workers due to race and ethnicity. At this point Vance looked directly at me and in an indignant voice said, "I like Haitians. Who are you to imply I don't?" As he said this, he leaned forward and the spotlight above the table where we were seated cast a shadow over his face, masking his eyes. This made him resemble a devil and I took it as a sign from Above that he was lying and therefore was able to draw strength to defend myself against this gathering of corporate heads. Before I left the meeting, I was made to promise not to have anything to do with the Haitians if I wanted to keep my job. When I finally returned to the kitchen, I found Lucie praying. I whispered to her, "yo pweske revoke-m" (they almost fired me). Lucie responded, "ooh, when I hear they take you in meeting I pray and pray to make things alright for you." When I told her everything was okay, she replied, "I knew my God would take care of you."

the kitchen manager. When I asked her why, she said, when someone cause you problems, you are supposed to pray about them. Suppose you are giving me problems, when I pray I'm supposed to say, 'God, you know Sue Chaffee better than I do.' God knows everyone but I have to say your two names so he will know exactly who I am talking about to give me help.

She would continue to be plagued with problems at work and would try to resolve them with prayers. One Thursday afternoon, Lucie revealed,

today I went to my church for a jen (see page 167). You never seen a jen? It's when you go to church with a very big problem so all the people get in a group around you in the front of the church and pray to help you with your problem. Last night Vance make my head so big I couldn't sleep. So this morning I asked some people from my church for help and we had this jen.

I questioned her whether she had had another argument with Vance and reminded her the woman at the EEOC had told her not to lose her temper. She replied,

I know that, Sue. I remember what she said. But sometimes Vance talks to me like I'm a stupid person. He talks to me like I'm his maid. He's not supposed to talk to me with no respect because I'm not a stupid person, I'm one of God's people. God says everyone deserves respect, but Vance doesn't believe this. He has no respect for Haitians. And that's when my head gets big and I start to yell. I can't help it.

Lucie continued to work her two five-hour shifts for five months, waiting for the EEOC to come in and help her with her work problems. One time during this period a notice was

-Lucie would often gather with her church members for a jen
when she experienced disrespect at the workplace-

Little Haiti, 1991

posted in the kitchen stating that all staff were required to attend a mandatory meeting being held the following Saturday (see page 169). This notice upset Lucie and she complained about having to take a bus just to hear another one of Vance's meetings. In addition, she said, "that's not fair. He makes all people come to his meeting but he doesn't put all people on the schedule for forty hours."

On Saturday, when she and I arrived at the meeting, we walked towards a long table where all the Haitians had grouped together separated from the rest of the staff. Although Lucie and I sat next to each other, we were located at two adjacent tables enabling her to listen to any necessary translation. Instead of a meeting discussing rules and regulations, this meeting had a twist. The president of the company came and we were given an evaluation to fill out so we could anonymously evaluate the restaurant managers. We were told not to put our names on the evaluation and we were informed each manager was to be rated on a scale of 1-4 concerning a variety of topics; and a blank space was provided for additional comments. This information was then translated for the Haitians and at this time I took Lucie's paper from her and wrote "kitchen worker" in the space asking for occupation. I felt that "kitchen worker" was far more anonymous than "pantry worker" and therefore no one would be able to identify her paper.

Lucie was one of the last people to finish her

-Lucie attends a meeting with her co-workers where they
are allowed to evaluate the management-
Miami Beach, 1992

evaluation. At one point, she turned around and whispered to me, "Sue, why you write kitchen worker? Aren't I supposed to write pantry?" I whispered back for her to leave it the way it was. When she finished, she slowly walked up to the box containing the finished evaluations (which was carefully being guarded by the corporation's president) and tossed hers in more forcefully than necessary. Later in the car she laughed and said,

you want to know what I did? On Vance's page, I made a line through the part that said 1, 2, 3, 4 and made a big zero right next to them. And then under that big zero, I made a long row of little zeros. Yes, I did that. You know what else I did? Do you remember where you wrote kitchen worker on the top of my paper? I crossed that out and wrote 'pantry' cause I want them to know just who it was that gave Vance all those little zeros. Do you think I'm scared of him? No way. Vance is a stupid man. He doesn't show respect to black people. I want his boss to know this.

Vance was shortly thereafter promoted within the company, removing him from management from the Miami Crabhouse. All of the Haitian workers I spoke with following the promotion voiced their satisfaction upon his leaving. The day after he left, Lucie said,

my heart feel kontan [happy]. Vance did many bad things to me this past year. He made me feel bad inside. Because of him, I have to get food stamps to feed my family. You know I don't like to do that. For the first time in five years he made me lose my vacation. Before, Vance act like his father own the Crabhouse. But his father don't. If he don't, then Vance is not supposed to act that way. He have a job and I have a job. That's all. You know I pray for a long time for Vance to leave,

but sometimes God takes a long time to get things done. God made it so Vance is no longer the big boss. I prayed for that. I told you that many times. And because I prayed, Vance now has little job just like me.⁵ Now I need to pray to get my hours back. I just have to be patient and pray. I make a big smile when I heard he is gone.

Unfortunately, the EEOC's decision favored the Crabhouse over Lucie and in addition, they never alerted her to the outcome until I pursued it over the telephone. I was told they were short-staffed and finally when I talked to the original case worker, she had forgotten Lucie's individual case. Reading from her file, she reported to me the Crabhouse had responded to the charges of discrimination by saying Lucie was a slow worker, could not keep herself or her area clean. They never sent a fieldworker into the Crabhouse to investigate and they never pursued my testimony or that of other waitresses who said they were willing to speak on Lucie's behalf.

When the EEOC notification came to Lucie's house in the mail, she called me to come read the paper to her. Although I already knew their decision, I proceeded to read the paper that her charges "were unfounded." This upset her greatly since she had put her trust into a government agency in the

Although I tried many times to explain to Lucie that Vance was being promoted instead of demoted, she refused to acknowledge this. She was right. Approximately a year later, I heard he was unhappy with his new position and wanted to come back to manage the Miami Crabhouse.

U.S. for the first time. She listened carefully then said, "they say I make lie? They say that what Vance did is okay?" With her voice rising she continued, "they say they don't do nothing? Well they don't have to. My God already take care of that for me. Vance is gone. He has little job now. He's not there to bother me no more. I should have known the government would never help me because I'm Haitian."

Vance was replaced by the previous kitchen manager, Mike, who had always assisted Vance in his oppression of Lucie. Therefore, her situation never improved. Eventually Mike had her scheduled for six hours a week, placing her alone in the pantry on busy Friday nights. She knew she was the only pantry worker who worked unassisted on a busy night but would shrug her shoulders when I would ask her if this upset her. "I know they try to make me quit, but now I only want them to fire me so I can collect my Sosyal [unemployment]." Her hours remained unchanged for the next six months until Lucie's brother called her one evening to say her name was completely removed from the newly posted schedule. She decided to dress in her uniform and show up for work as usual and make them tell her in person that she was fired.

Later she laughed when she told me,

when I got to work Friday night I see Mike when I come in the door. He say to me, 'Lucie, I want to talk to you.' I say 'okay boss, give me one second, I need to punch my time card.' I run by him and I know he running right behind me. He look mad now. He say 'Lucie, I need to talk to you

now.' I keep running to the computer and say, 'can you wait boss? I need to punch my card before 4:00.' He say in big voice, 'Lucie, wait. I don't want you to punch your time card.' Yeah, he say that. I make little joke on him because I know I already fire but I want to give him headache like he gives me.

When I asked Lucie if she got upset with Mike she replied,

no, he tell me work is slow, he has no place for me. He don't make me mad. Before I go I tell him, 'Mike I need you to write on one piece of paper why you fire me then I can take this to Sosyal [unemployment].' Now he get mad. He say, 'I never give any person piece of paper when I fire them. I never heard of that before. No, I don't give you nothing.' I start to leave and I know he was happy, then I turn around. I tell him in loud voice, 'what about my paycheck, you don't give me that either?' After he give me my paycheck I leave the Crabhouse. I'm happy because I'm never going back there again.

Discussion and Conclusions

According to Mahalia Jackson, "there's something about music that is so penetrating that your soul gets the message. No matter what trouble comes to a person, music can help [her] face it" [(1985, p. 454) as in Hill Collins, 1990]. Similarly, for Lucie, "my singing is something like a blanket. A big blanket I take out and wrap myself in to protect me when people around me are mad or being disrespectful. When I am wrapped up by my singing to God, no one can make me feel bad with their words."

This chapter has described the various resistance tactics Lucie employed to resist racism, disrespect, and discrimination in the workplace. I contend these tactics represent another dimension of the strategies she employs as a Haitian immigrant woman in order to survive socially and emotionally. These survival strategies involved a wide array of activities that included wrapping herself up in a blanket of singing for protection, as well as having direct and indirect confrontations with her employer. In addition she utilized legal resources and employed white alliances to help her with her struggles in the workplace. Lucie also gathered emotional support and aid from fellow-church members and most important, maintained an unrelenting faith in her God. I contend the combination of these activities allowed her to combat the indignities and disrespect she was faced with in the workplace as a result of being a Haitian immigrant woman.

As a domestic worker, Sara Brooks notes, "I may not have as much as you, I may not have the education you got, but still if I conduct myself as a decent person, I'm just as good as anybody " (Simunsen, 1986 as in Hill Collins, 1990). As a restaurant worker, Lucie notes, "Vance act like has father own the Crabhouse. But his father don't. If he don't then Vance is not supposed to act that way. He have a job and I have a job. That's all." The effort to maintain dignity in a low-status occupation is a continuous struggle for women workers.

However, a sense of self-worth and a fighting spirit is often present as evidenced by these two women's quotes.

According to Thornton Dill, Black womens' ability to convey their self-worth is a result from having a support system including family members, friends, and various organizations, especially the church (1988). Lucie certainly has this support system as evidenced by members from her church gathering to pray for her following one night when "Vance make [her] head so big [she] couldn't sleep." Lucie was able to call on their spiritual support to help buffer the disrespect she was experiencing from Vance.

The notion of respect as being an important cultural value has been vastly addressed in literature on the Caribbean. It has been cited as being a fundamental moral concept, central to one's existence as a human being (Wilson, 1969). Also in Caribbean regions, respect is association with women who are members of the church, theoretically because the church is part of the legal society. Since women can participate officially in the church, they are therefore regarded as "carriers of respectability" (Wilson, 1969).⁶

I suggest that the rage that Lucie felt when Vance treated her with disrespect was a direct consequence of his attempts to interfere with and threaten a value she is

Besson (1993) challenges Wilson's thesis that Afro-Caribbean women are passive imitators of Eurocentric cultural values of respectability.

culturally entitled to. Not only is she an official in her church (she serves as a deaconess) and therefore qualifies for respect, but as already noted, she feels she is "one of God's people" and "God says everyone deserves respect."

Respect ideally implies avoiding a confrontation and not challenging an individual (Abrahams, 1969). Unfortunately Black women in the United States live in a society where no one is obligated to respect them. However, these women's voices from a variety of sources resonate with a demand for respect (Hill Collins, 1990). Direct confrontations with an employer is a strategy women workers have developed in order to resist what they considered to be unreasonable treatment (Thornton Dill, 1988). Lucie certainly had these confrontations when she became filled with rage and erupted into a verbal argument with Vance. This, however, created a paradox for someone like Lucie who migrated from a place where respectable people avoid confrontations but is employed by a general manager who "has no respect." Therefore her "head gets big and [she] starts to yell."

As well as having direct confrontations with her boss, Lucie also had indirect confrontations. Giving Vance "a long row of little zeros" on his performance evaluation as a manager and with defiantly crossing out "kitchen worker" and writing in "pantry worker" because she wanted Vance's boss to know "just who it was that gave Vance all those little zeros"

was certainly a form of resistance. In addition, playing a "little joke" on her employer by trying to proceed to punch in for work when she knew she was fired (thereby upsetting him because he had to physically run after her) was another form of indirect confrontation.

Other survival strategies Lucie employed to maintain dignity and respect in the workplace were to utilize legal sources and to make white alliances. She attempted to combat her oppressed situation and trusted my judgement (her only white friend) to pursue filing discrimination charges against Vance with the EEOC. Haitians living in the United States and in Haiti have a fear and mistrust of government agencies stemming from a long history of political corruption and oppression in their homeland. Lucie was nervous about filing the charges, fearing her family members would be retaliated against when management received word of her official complaint. Since the Crabhouse does not have a union to protect it's workers from unfair labor practices, Lucie drew on her alliance with me and put her faith in the legal protection supposedly offered by the EEOC.

Over all, women workers who are oppressed in the workplace due to their gender and ethnicity, employ a variety of survival strategies to buffer themselves not only from the consequences of prejudice and discrimination, but also from disrespect. For Lucie, religion is the central core of her

life. Therefore she drew on inner tactics (e.g., her faith, her singing, and her spirituality) and when combined with more overt tactics (e.g., her rage) she managed to combat the indignities she was challenged with in the workplace and maintained a sense of dignity and pride.

Due to a combination of geographic, historic, social, and political factors, many Haitians have left their homeland and moved in large numbers to the United States. Research has been done concerning Haitian migration and the problems surrounding their immigration status (see Stepick, 1986, 1992; Laguerre, 1984; Bushnell, 1980). However, for the most part, this research tends to treat them as a homogeneous group, failing to address gender differences. It also does not address micro-level processes for the most part, including the survival strategies of these immigrants. Therefore, I hope in this thesis to add a new dimension to the existing literature on Haitians living in the United States - in particular Haitian women.

Lucie, a Haitian immigrant woman who has relocated her household to the United States, employs several strategies to ensure her family's socioeconomic survival. This final chapter will address the major themes I have featured in varying degrees in the main body of the text.

Women's Work

According to Senior (1991) women's work is multidimensional, embracing what takes place in the public arena and what takes place in the home. Ward notes in many

parts of the world, including the United States, many women not only work a double shift, but many now work a "triple shift," so that each day they labor at some combination of housework, homework, and/or peddling and at formal work in factories or in agriculture or services (1990). Yelvington takes this one step further and contends a "fourth shift" needs to be taken into consideration when theorizing about women workers to represent the networking they do in order to subsidize capital (1991).

Given that Lucie's daily activities include housework, engaging in Miami's formal and informal sectors, as well as maintaining a complex reciprocity network, I contend she is representative of a woman Yelvington refers to as working a "fourth shift (see page 144)."

Since migrating to the United States at the age of 37, Lucie has had little opportunity to acquire the language skills and education to make herself a more skillful worker. Therefore, she has many constraints against her when she enters the formal labor market. In addition, this labor market is a place where gender and ethnic segregation and inequality are present. Since she is basically unskilled, she has for the most part held jobs in Miami's service sector where low wages prevail, few or no benefits are available, and the work is often part-time, temporary, or seasonal.

Given the ethnographic data, I contend Lucie is representative of those faced with oppression and

-Lucie generates money by babysitting for children and sewing clothes to sell to her neighbors and friends-

Little Haiti, 1991

-Lucie purchases a hat from a Haitian vendor to send to her Mother in Haiti-

Ft. Lauderdale, 1992

discrimination as a result of gender, and ethnicity. While not all management discriminate, some clearly do. Due to this, I feel it is important to provide detailed descriptions of how discrimination towards immigrant women is perceived and what their strategies are to cushion the impact. In addition, this research provides insight into the resistance tactics Lucie employed as an immigrant women worker, including singing, direct verbal confrontations, and indirect confrontations.

As well as combating discrimination and oppression, Lucie also buffered herself against the disrespect she experienced in the workplace. She utilized various strategies in her search to retain her dignity, including using white alliances, legal resources ¹, and most important, the church.

Informal Sector

Senior notes that women's broad-based elaboration of strategies for the survival of themselves and their families goes far beyond the possibilities offered by wage labor. Women's strategies for survival or "making do" also include self-employment, male support, kin and friendship networks, pooling resources in the family home, and getting support from

¹ As noted in chapter 5, Lucie was eventually laid off at the Crabhouse. Although she said this did not anger her, she still told me she wanted me to help her file charges again because she still felt she was being discriminated against. However, this time she wants to approach Legal Services, which is quite active in Little Haiti and comes recommended to her by other Haitians.

adult working children (1991, p. 129). In order to supplement the paycheck she received from the restaurant, Lucie also generated additional income through her activities in the informal sector.

Taking on the role of sole economic provider in her household, Lucie showed resourcefulness, resilience, and an entrepreneurial drive to ensure her family's economic survival. According to Yelvington (1991), the emphasis on entrepreneurship is indicative of an individualistic ethos, which is found throughout the Caribbean. Given the presence of a large number of cottage industries in Haitian homes, along with the unrelenting presence of Haitian women selling their goods and ware on side streets in Little Haiti and at local flea markets, I argue Lucie's informal activities are quite similar not only to Haitian women, but Caribbean immigrant women as a whole (see page 147).

According to Amott and Matthaei (1991), informal and underground economies comprise a growing part of the work experiences of many racial-ethnic groups. They also note that while detailed studies of women's roles in the informal economy of many Third World countries are underway, little is known about women's participation in the informal economies of the United States. The detailed descriptions of Lucie's informal endeavors yields some insight into the different dynamics and strategies encompassing immigrant women's participation in the United State's informal sector. I

contend that Lucie, as well as other immigrant women who are over-burdened with financial demands, is active in both the informal and formal sectors as a survival strategy.

Reciprocity Networks

For the most part Lucie's social and economic life is permeated with both acts of reciprocity and mutual exchanges. Therefore, I contend a reciprocity network is used by Lucie as another survival strategy and ultimately provides her, as well as other Haitian immigrant women, a base for obtaining and ensuring her family's socioeconomic survival.

Family and to a less extent friends and neighbors play a major role in the survival strategies of Caribbean women and might be a response to what outsiders discern as "no visible means of support" (Senior 1991). Building a mixed network of kinsmen, fictive kinsmen, neighbors, and friends is a resilient response to dealing with the various events and disasters in Lucie's life. Generosity and exchange in the form of reciprocity are at the core of this network. According to Yelvington (1991), reciprocity involves moral debt. That is, the obligation that is involved in exchange can be used as a tool to dominate others when a person has no other power resources to achieve such ends.

The goods and services that pass from hand to hand are not uniform in content or value, nor in the direction or

intensity of flow between Lucie and members of her network. However, the economic security that can be obtained through reciprocity networks is crucial for her and other Haitian immigrant women in order to survive.

Where Do We Go From Here

There are several directions for new research that can benefit from this ethnographic data on Lucie and other Haitian immigrant women living in south Florida. Many of these directions include the areas that I already discussed including women's work, women's participation in the informal sector, networking as a survival strategy, and the issues of respect and dignity.

In addition to expanding on the research mentioned above, new inquiries should address those areas that continue to be obstacles for women similar to Lucie who are struggling daily to ensure their family's economic and social survival. These areas should consider dealing with empowerment issues, alternative ways to obtain credit, as well as increasing economic opportunities for women thereby enabling them to achieve their goals and responsibilities as mothers and caretakers.

Researchers wishing to expand in areas contemplating groups who are for the most part devalued in this country and labelled as undesirable first need to consider how to teach these groups to assert themselves politically instead of being

victimized. They somehow need to be taught how to become involved in the political process even though their time is limited due to working a third or fourth shift in order to survive. Teaching people they have the power to change the system will not only benefit them externally (through increased political power) but also internally (through higher self-esteem).

Researchers also need to recognize the factors that prohibit women similar to Lucie from achieving their goals as entrepreneurs. For the most part, difficulties in obtaining credit handicaps Lucie as she tries to pursue different entrepreneurial endeavors. This should be recognized and alternative ways to secure credit should be investigated.

Women like Lucie have a strong potential for leadership, a sense of purpose in their lives, and a willingness to work to improve the situation of their families. Unfortunately, there is a lack of recognition of Haitian immigrant women's contributions of the social and economic development to their communities and American society. If awareness of their contributions reached the status quo, perhaps they would be treated with the respect and dignity they so strongly want and deserve. Research that dispels the myths and prejudices that impede their success and encourages respect should be increased and somehow made available to the general public. Ideally, this would translate into better treatment in the workplace, in government institutions (e.g., HRS offices), and

in the different communities that comprise south Florida.

Conclusion

By focusing on Lucie and her survival strategies, I hope to have increased the understanding of Haitian immigrant women and 1) their economic behaviors which ultimately spill over into other social and cultural realms as well as the importance of religion, respect, and resistance in helping these women buffer themselves against the consequences of disrespect, prejudice, and discrimination.

In conclusion, the goal of my research has been to increase the understanding of the different devices employed by Haitian immigrant women, who are devalued in this country, and show how their survival strategies, resourcefulness, and resilience allows them and their families to survive.

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