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MORNE-VERT, MARTINIQUE REVISITED:
SOCIAL CHANGE IN A PLANTATION
ECONOMY

BY

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This paper briefly describes the village or commune of Morne-Vert as reproduced by Horowitz and based on data presented in his dissertation (1959) and later publication *Morne-Paysan: Peasant Village in Martinique* (1967). I compare these descriptive data with data collected during my stay in Morne-Vert twenty years later (1976-77). Unlike Horowitz, who has seen the village as approximating a closed peasant community, I view the changes during the past twenty years (as well as the origin of the village) in terms of interrelations which involve a larger plantation economy and society. An accurate interpretation of social change seems impossible if one relies on Horowitz' model of Morne-Vert--a village without "class" divisions. Furthermore, changes in land tenure and use do not allow a closed community nor "classless" view of Morne-Vert.

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Morne-Vert, a small village consisting of about 1,700 people, is located 4.8 kilometers inland and approximately 380 meters above the coastal village of Carbet on the island of Martinique. Michael Horowitz conducted anthropological research in Morne-Vert between 1956 and 1959. The central problem leading Horowitz to Morne-Vert involved the task of constructing a typology of community forms associated with West Indian agrarian populations. Drawing on the community level approach of Arensberg (1955), Horowitz described and analyzed Morne-Vert in terms of the people within the village, the spacial characteristics of the village, and the time schedules or daily, weekly, and annual routines of the village. These variables were used as the basis for collecting data and in creating a model of Morne-Vert which represented the empirical structural and functional features of the community. Horowitz described Morne-Vert as a closed cooperate peasant community.

Horowitz understood that the social evolution of Morne-Vert related to the larger plantation economy in Martinique. The "larger setting" figured extremely important in the community study approach of the 1950's. Therefore, his studies of Morne-Vert includes information on colonization, sugar, slavery, indentured labor, and emancipation. In fact, according to Horowitz, the region which is now called Morne-Vert exists because maroons and emancipated slaves settled in the hilly area. Unfortunately Horowitz does not carry this historical concern through in analysis. As a result the data presented necessarily depicts the village as empirically isolated from the "larger setting" which created it!

This paper briefly describes the village or commune of Morne-Vert as Horowitz reproduced it, based on the data presented in his dissertation

(1959) and later publication Morne-Paysan: Peasant Village in Martinique (1967).¹ Secondly, I compare these descriptive data with my findings from Morne-Vert twenty years later (1976-77). Unlike Horowitz, who has seen the village as approximating a closed community, I view the changes during the past twenty years (as well as the origin of the village) in terms of interrelations with a larger plantation economy and society. An accurate interpretation of the changes seem impossible if one relies on Horowitz' model of the village--a village without "class" divisions. Changes in land tenure and use do not allow a closed community and "classless" view of Morne-Vert.

Morne-Vert 1956: Equalitarian and
Homogenous Peasant Village

Morne-Vert earns its name from the green hills and deep valleys which remain relatively green even during dry season due to greater rainfall in this area. The terrain becomes increasingly rough ascending from the coast near Carbet; changing from rolling hills with rather deep valleys some of which cradle streams which ultimately drain this area to mountains that have steeper sides and which culminate in the high mountains of Morne Modests and Morne Piquet. These two mountains, and the large valleys to the sides of them, effectively isolate Morne-Vert geographically from the surrounding communes--with the exceptions of Carbet and to a lesser extent Bellefontaine. Morne Piquet and Morne Modeste form part of a larger cluster of mountains, the highest of which is Mont Pele at 1,397 meters above sea level. Nestled within this mountainous area (see Figure 1) are the homes and fields of peasant cultivators who still

provide portions of the provisions for the island's population. During Horowitz' field research, Morne-Vert was one of the more productive peasant villages. The produce from Morne-Vert supplied the nutrition needs of urban populations in St. Pierre, and especially Fort-de-France.

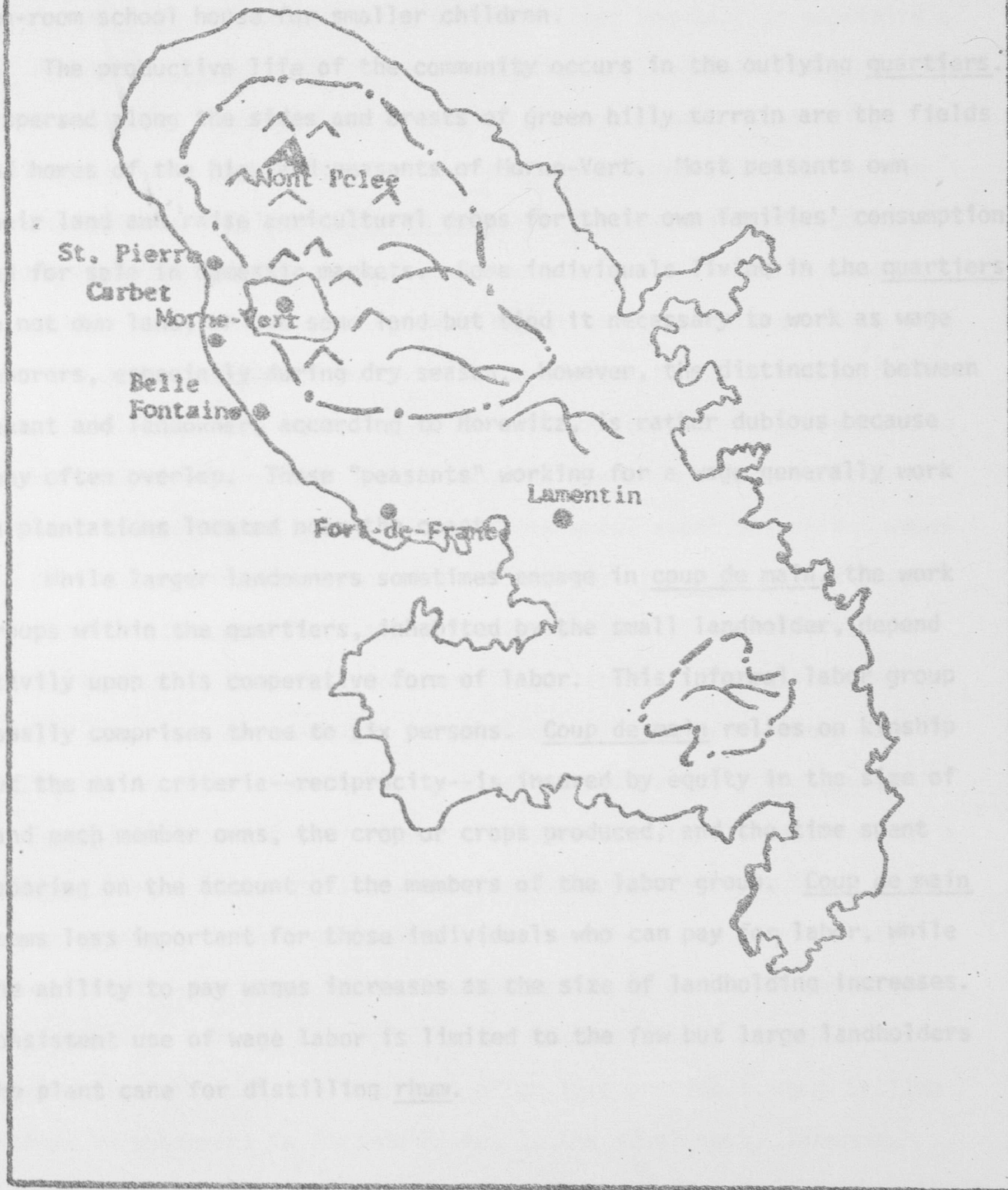
Morne-Vert as a Closed Community*

Because of its geographical location, Horowitz characterized Morne-Vert as being rather isolated. Three unpaved roads connect the village to the coast; one, of about three kilometers, meets the coast at a relatively high and unpopulated point from the sea; another links Morne-Vert with the coastal village of Carbet; a third connects Morne-Vert to Bellefontaine, a fishing village similar to Carbet and located a few miles south of Carbet. In the absence of these difficult roads Horowitz assumes that the dense escarpment of this mountainous area must have frustrated attempts to penetrate this area during early settlement of the island. Further, he argues that after successful introduction of sugar cane in the second half of the 17th century, Morne-Vert (as well as other mountainous highland areas of Martinique) were considered without economic value.

Following the road from Carbet, one ascends higher along a twisting and narrow road until reaching the center of the village. As Horowitz describes it, the hills and valleys are criss-crossed with "odd-shaped little plots meandering paths, and little huts placed in no obvious relation to each other. Some of the hilltops are plain green meadows with cows pasturing there (1967: 19)." In the surrounding quarters,* one finds dwellings placed apparently here and there, each one on or near a

*Horowitz' data will be narrated in the "ethnographic present."

Figure 1.--Map showing location of peasant producers in Martinique



A list of French and creole terms used is provided in the glossary at the end of this paper

plot of cultivated land. The village lacks a mechanical system of water supply, lacks electricity, and few roads are amenable to an automobile. A few bars and stores exist in the bourg, and one quartier has its own two-room school house for smaller children.

The productive life of the community occurs in the outlying quartiers. Dispersed along the sides and crests of green hilly terrain are the fields and homes of the highland peasants of Morne-Vert. Most peasants own their land and raise agricultural crops for their own families' consumption and for sale in domestic markets. Some individuals living in the quartiers do not own land, or own some land but find it necessary to work as wage laborers, especially during dry season. However, the distinction between tenant and landowner, according to Horowitz, is rather dubious because they often overlap. Those "peasants" working for a wage generally work on plantations located near the coast.

While larger landowners sometimes engage in coup de main, the work groups within the quartiers, inhabited by the small landholder, depend heavily upon this cooperative form of labor. This informal labor group usually comprises three to six persons. Coup de main relies on kinship but the main criteria--reciprocity--is insured by equity in the size of land each member owns, the crop or crops produced, and the time spent laboring on the account of the members of the labor group. Coup de main seems less important for those individuals who can pay for labor, while the ability to pay wages increases as the size of landholding increases. Consistent use of wage labor is limited to the few but large landholders who plant cane for distilling rhum.

*A list of French and creole terms used is provided in the glossary at the end of this paper.

Three basic types of land tenure exist: property owner, colonage (share tenancy), and money-rent (metayages). Colonage usually refers to moitie or tiers, where the owner obtains either one-half or one-third of the produce. Colonage offers an alternative to land-less individuals who would otherwise have to depend strictly on wage labor. Similarly, individuals with limited capital but possessing more land than can be worked by one's family or coup de main realize increased productivity by offering land for colonage. Money-rent occurs infrequently and it is usually associated with very fertile but small parcels of land.

The urban markets of Fort-de-France provide the main outlet for peasant produce. Two buses leave the commune every morning loaded with produce and women destined for the several peasant markets in Fort-de-France. Several forms of social relations exist among the market women. The most important one (especially on Saturday, the main market day) consists in (1) the wife or other female relative of the cultivator taking the bus to Fort-de-France, renting a space in the market and selling the produce directly. In addition, (2) the produce may be consigned, on commission basis, to a market specialist (vendeuse or marchande) living in Fort-de-France. The produce can be consigned to a vendeuse living in the village, who does not operate on as large a scale as the vendeuse in Fort-de-France. Finally, (3) a few women in the community purchase crops for resale in the nearby coastal communes of Bellefontaine, Carbet, and St. Pierre. These villages contain fewer people than Fort-de-France and they offer less profitability. Selling produce to consumers in Fort-de-France is the ideal goal. However, many women combine two or more of these alternatives depending upon their

particular situation, and the agricultural cycle.

There are other economic tasks associated with the village, such as the several stores in the bourg, which employ a few people, and the wage or salaried jobs associated with the state: school teacher, policeman, postman, forest ranger. While these economic activities contribute to the village economy, Horowitz emphasizes the main activity of peasant farming in order to highlight the closed nature of the village.

Social Stratification: Morne-Vert

As a Classless Village

Horowitz concludes, "formally, it is possible to impose a system of stratification on the data from Morne-Paysan, based on criteria of land ownership ... The system would also have to include the categories of non-agricultural skilled laborers, shop keepers and civil servants (including the teachers) (1959: 122)." However, Horowitz unequivocally rejects any notion of "class" even though his data may support a class analysis. As he puts it, "...the behavioral correlatives of the system (i.e. a class system) would not be answered by the scheme (1959: 124)." This appears to be the case because

...relative possession of wealth indicates very little else in the community. The categories do not form self-conscious groups with a high degree of internal association. There are no general patterns of reciprocal expectations between the persons in any one category and those in any other. In short, wealth differences do not result in a class system in the community. (1959: 124)

Thus, Horowitz recognizes status differences among the members of the village. However, he assumes that the character of Morne-Vert, as a tightly intergrated community, better reflects the essentially equali-

tarian nature of the community "in spite of status differences which occur (1959: 110)." The following descriptive data are presented in order to show that "although there are considerable variations in such formal characteristics as wealth, occupation, and education, a rigid class system does not operate in the community (1959: 110)."

First, in the absence of other information, a person from Morne-Vert is considered a small landowner by the wider Martiniquan society. Apparently, this belief stems from the fact that representatives of the island plantocracy (Béké) do not live in the village. Also, the village contains few East Indians or other evidence of indentured labor which do correlate with lowland plantation areas. Horowitz seems to be suggesting a relationship between skin color and/or ethnicity and size of landholdings, and that these likely associations are recognized by the society at large. By comparison, residents of Morne-Vert think of "their" village in terms which reflect small-scale agriculture.

Secondly, Horowitz argues that kinship ties among members of the commune and lack of prestige ranking usurp "class" divisions. "One might label Morne-Paysan almost a kin settlement. No family which has large land owners among its members does not also have impoverished ones (1959: 124)." Prestige ranking within the community varies with respect to personal characteristics rather than wealth or even education (although the later is important). In support of this proposition, Horowitz states:

I asked a number of informants to rank some thirty persons in the community, including several sets of siblings with identical inheritances. There was a high degree of reliability among the rankers. A person was accorded high rank who was generous in relation to his means, who was religious without being self-righteous, who met his obligations to his friends,

godchildren and relatives, who worked hard, who was educated without being a snob, and who increased his property by self-effort rather than through inheritance. Also important was physiognomic approximation of Caucasoid features... (1959: 124)

The opposite of these characteristics are of course ranked low, as those people who drink excessively or squander property.

The village lacks residential segregation based on wealth. "Wealthier people tend to live in more substantial homes, either in large old wooden structures dating back fifty or more years, or in recently constructed cement houses with tiled floors. A number of these have both electricity and an integral water supply (1959: 125)." Horowitz quickly points out, however, that adjacent to any of these homes are the "wattle and daub hut with a mud floor and thatch roof" of the cultivator.

Larger landowners have some power based upon land tenure and the selections of tenants; however, Horowitz suggests that tradition militates against the use of this power:

Most of the arrangements of tenancy last for many years; an heir may inherit the tenants along with the land. Insofar as the tenent maintains the productivity of the land he is not dispossessed. (1959: 126)

In addition, claims of kinship can almost always be brought to soothe tensions that may develop in the relationships between owner and tenant:

"Relatives are not supposed to haggle with each other" (1959: 126).

Finally, Horowitz suggests that skin color as an element of prestige ranking carries less significance in Morne-Vert in comparison to urban settings.

Apparently, this is true despite a later statement that "...to some degree, light skin color and large properties were transferred, either by inheritance or falsified acts of sale, to colored children by their white

fathers at the turn of the century (1959: 126)."

Horowitz describes Morne-Vert as (1) a closed community, and (2) as a community which has egalitarian (i.e. classless) social relations. Yet, Morne-Vert has changed significantly since Horowitz' field study. For example there has been a sharp reduction in cultivation, heavy labor migration to Fort-de-France, and Morne-Vert is presently being advertised as an excellent location for summer vacation homes. How does one explain these changes? One popular approach inadvertently creates economic and social models based on a "traditional/modern" opposition. Social and economic change takes place through the penetration of "modern" influences into a "traditional" community. Some social scientists with an interest in economic development claim that this process allows greater efficiency in allocating resources as well as economic growth or development in the traditional society (cf. Barth 1967). Models based on this premise, however, cannot deal with situations, as in the Caribbean generally, where the "traditional" peasant community developed as part of a "modern" plantation economy.

Social and Economic Change: Morne-Vert in 1977

My first contact with Morne-Vert occurred in November of 1976. The road from Carbet appears rather narrow, but it is now asphalted. As one travels the main road leading to the center of the commune via Carbet, instead of odd shaped little plots and meandering paths and little huts placed in no relation to each other, one finds very nice and obviously rather expensive homes. Looking to the north from the side of this road, one can also see a number of other expensive dwellings all of which appear rather new. As I approached the center of the village, I observed several

more dwellings under construction.

Other indications of "modernization" became evident as I approached the center of the bourg. Homes made of cement (somewhat more modest than those passed earlier) replace the wooden structures described by Horowitz. Only a few wooden structures remain along this street and most of them are uninhabited. The marie, dispensaire, scolaire, and P.T.T. have been reconstructed or made larger and more modern. In addition, the road to Bellefontaine is partially asphalted, while the other main roads have been completed. Frequently traveled roads within the quartiers are partially paved in cement: It remains one of the promises of the newly elected mayor and his co-joints to further improve the roads within the quartiers. Electricity and clean piped water from a filtered water supply now serve residents of Morne-Vert. Only the several households removed spatially from convenient points to tap electrical lines are without electricity. Individuals without filtered water are those unwilling to pay for it.

Unfortunately, the reduction of "peasant" cultivation in Morne-Vert seems associated with modernization. Now, relatively few fields give the appearance of a recent harvest, or pending cultivation. But under closer examination, vestiges of the past are clearly evident in the growth covered hillsides and staircase like ridges. Now and then, one can see, in addition to modern homes, some rather large parcels of enclosed land which are used for raising cattle. Occasionally, I would observe the lone male or female cultivator bending over and tending a relatively small parcel of land, usually located on the side of a hill.

The busses which once mainly served the purpose of transporting

women and produce to the peasant markets in Fort-de-France now serve the function of local passenger transportation to Bellefontaine, Carbet, St. Pierre, and Precheur. Market women may be seen carrying limited amounts of produce on these busses, but such women can be better described as "peddlers" who must be content with selling in the smaller marketplace located in St. Pierre or other nearby communes. Since the agricultural productivity of the village has decreased significantly, fewer women have enough produce to warrant the daily trip to Fort-de-France. Those women having husbands or relatives with a truck can obtain transportation if the amount of produce warrants a trip to the Saturday market. However, the busses are now involved in an intra-village transportation network.

Two taxi-collectifs (new Peugeot 504 station wagons), which serve the villagers in the longer trips to Fort-de-France, supplement the busses. Each commune provides at least one taxi for the explicit purpose of transporting people to and from Fort-de-France, stopping to let people out or in along the way. The Morne-Vert taxis serve students who must travel to Carbet, or anyone needing transportation to Fort-de-France where the most important administrative functions are located, not to mention the major commercial establishments.

Peasant Production in Plantation Economy and Society

Even upon my arrival, it seemed clear that any attempt to understand even these first and superficial observations could no longer support the "closed community" notion which Horowitz created from his observations. Major influences (departmentalization, other state level influences, and changes in the export marketing conditions) have created the constraints in which social relations within the village have changed. These factors

were "external" to all the villages in Martinique, yet common to all of them. I view the influences themselves as part of higher levels of human interaction (and over time). An understanding of these macro influences requires redrawing conceptual boundaries in other analytical terms; in terms of the whole island of Martinique for example; or rather even in terms of the départments d'outre-mer and France, and their respective economics. In any case, an equalitarian and strictly micro level analytical view of the village seems inappropriate.

In other words, what should be considered "external" theoretically depends on at what level conceptual boundaries of the village are drawn. However, such boundaries should remain abstractions--they should never be reified. Even where communities are actually isolated (by mountains and lack of external social relations), one should not simply assume that change does not take place. Also, the analytical utility of conceptual boundaries should relate to the particular problem or question posed. In Horowitz' work the tendency to view Morne-Vert as isolated grew out of his research problem. Regardless of one's research problem however, this problem of boundary is magnified severalfold if social relations "outside" the commune of Morne-Vert (or even "within" the commune viz., the state) are minimized in terms of significance. Horowitz anticipated the social and economic changes in the village in his later publication (1967). Yet, recognizing them, how does one comprehend the changes that took place in Morne-Vert?

Changes in Class Relations: The Macro Level

Although originally made possible through slavery, the plantation economy of Martinique quickly evolved into an internally dynamic social

system. Slavery itself cannot be viewed outside of a larger social context; in particular, European conquest and colonization of the New World (cf. Williams 1944). The establishment of slavery as well as other changes in class relations in Martinique including the development of a Martiniquan society, must be understood in terms of articulation between developing class relations in Martinique (or the "periphery") and those which were crystalizing in France (or the "core"). I have found it useful to conceptualize this articulation in terms of "macro" and micro level processes. The major shifts in macro-level class relations have had a great impact on micro-level processes, such as those in Morne-Vert.

Here it is only possible to summarize the major changes at the macro level. First, the displacement of a short-lived Martiniquan subsistence economy, which was established between 1635 and 1670, was the result of behavior on the part of the monarch, merchant capitalists in the metropole, as well as class conflict in Martinique. Later, the creation of a slave based sugar economy in the French territories, again determined by class interests in the metropole, developed qualitatively different economic systems within overseas French territories in comparison to emerging capitalism in the metropole. At the same time, the quasi-state level administration within Martinique became dominated by the large estate planters. A social system began to evolve in Martinique in terms of patterned interactions among the planters, merchants and African slave labor.

Secondly, abolition of slavery was due to class interests within the metropolises and within various areas of the New World. Capitalism

requires free labor: Yet the productive activity within the slave based plantation economy was linked to production processes in the metropole. Therefore, once slavery blocked further economic development in the core, new (free) productive relations in the peripheral areas of the New World were also required. Limitations set by a slave based economy was partially responsible for the abolition of slavery.

Thirdly, in a plantation economy where commodity production is restricted to one or two agricultural crops, the transformation of the economy into diversified commodity production--which may allow many new combinations of technology at lesser labor inputs--is much more difficult to achieve, even under free labor. Consequently, a labor shortage was experienced in Martinique shortly after 1848, as many ex-slaves found their labor better suited for their own hillside, primarily subsistence based, production. The labor shortage was ameliorated by the indentured servants, a program developed jointly by planters and the French state. However, this did not prevent the establishment of a strong peasant sector in the economy including a concomitant demand for the peasant's produce by a growing society.

Fourthly, between 1848 and 1946, the planters in Martinique experienced numerous crises due to the vulnerability of monocrop production under free labor and unpredictable market conditions. The French state as well as the quasi-state administration in Martinique intervened numerous times to stabilize the economy; in 1889 through changes in technology which made grandes usines possible and through quota production after World War I. Even after World War II (which led to the assimilation law of 1946) the plantocracy increased its hold over the economy,

though Martiniquans and planters alike had expected otherwise. During these numerous crises, the peasant sector of the economy experienced growth!

Finally, the assimilation law of 1946 caused greater integration of Martiniquan and French economies. As a result, monopoly capital further transformed the Martiniquan plantation economy. The economy today is highly dependent on direct expenditures from the French state; the plantation sector is highly subsidized by the state, and there is a highly developed commercial import sector importing almost everything through a French system. By comparison peasant cultivation is all but moribund. Class relations today reflect the social consequences of monopoly capital and the heavy dependence on public expenditures.

Can these changes in class relations within Martinique support the view that posits a "traditional or peasant" versus "modern" dichotomy? Obviously, not. Yet, as we have seen, the commune of Morne-Vert had been described in just that way. Furthermore, while it is true that class relations in Martinique were constrained by macro level class interests acted out between the metropole and Martinique, it is not totally accurate either to view all human behavior in Morne-Vert as totally dependent on macro level constraints. Rather, it is useful to view micro level processes in Morne-Vert against (1) the major shifts in macro level class relations summarized above, and (2) the current problems in a plantation economy.

Current Problems in a Planation Economy

Sugar production, virtually the sole item produced for export between 1700 and 1900, is today primarily restricted to the Lamentin valley,

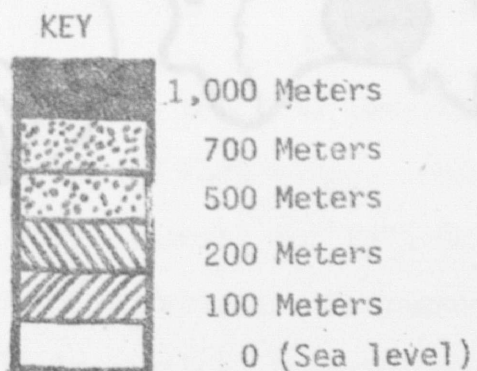
Riviere Salee, and Tartane areas of Martinique. These relatively flat locations allow the use of mechanical canecutters and other modern techniques. Cane cultivation also exists elsewhere on the island, but it requires great amounts of wage labor in employing cane cutters; consequently, the tonnage in these hilly areas is low. Figure 3 indicates the location and tonnage for the 1972 cane harvest. In recent years, these figures have diminished substantially, especially in Riviere Salee, as a number of grands usines have closed since 1972.

Other plantation crops have replaced sugar as primary exports. Banana production, for example, is more profitable and has replaced the production of sugar in importance. Exportation of fresh pineapple, beginning in 1971, has declined substantially since then due to the problem on conservation. However, the production and exportation of canned pineapple has increased since 1971 and now provide a significant part of total Martiniquan exports. The graph below illustrates the rises and declines in the production of sugar, bananas, and pineapple from 1971 through 1975.

Other productive activities assume less importance in terms of exports but are nevertheless important in terms of internal development strategies. These include the produce of the small cultivator and the fisherman's catch, as well as the milk and cattle industries. In addition, electricity, water, and most recently the refining of oil, supply expanding internal markets. Other industries, with the exception of tourism and construction, are very small and include areas such as the fabrication of cardboard boxes, plastics, mattresses, furniture, and cement.

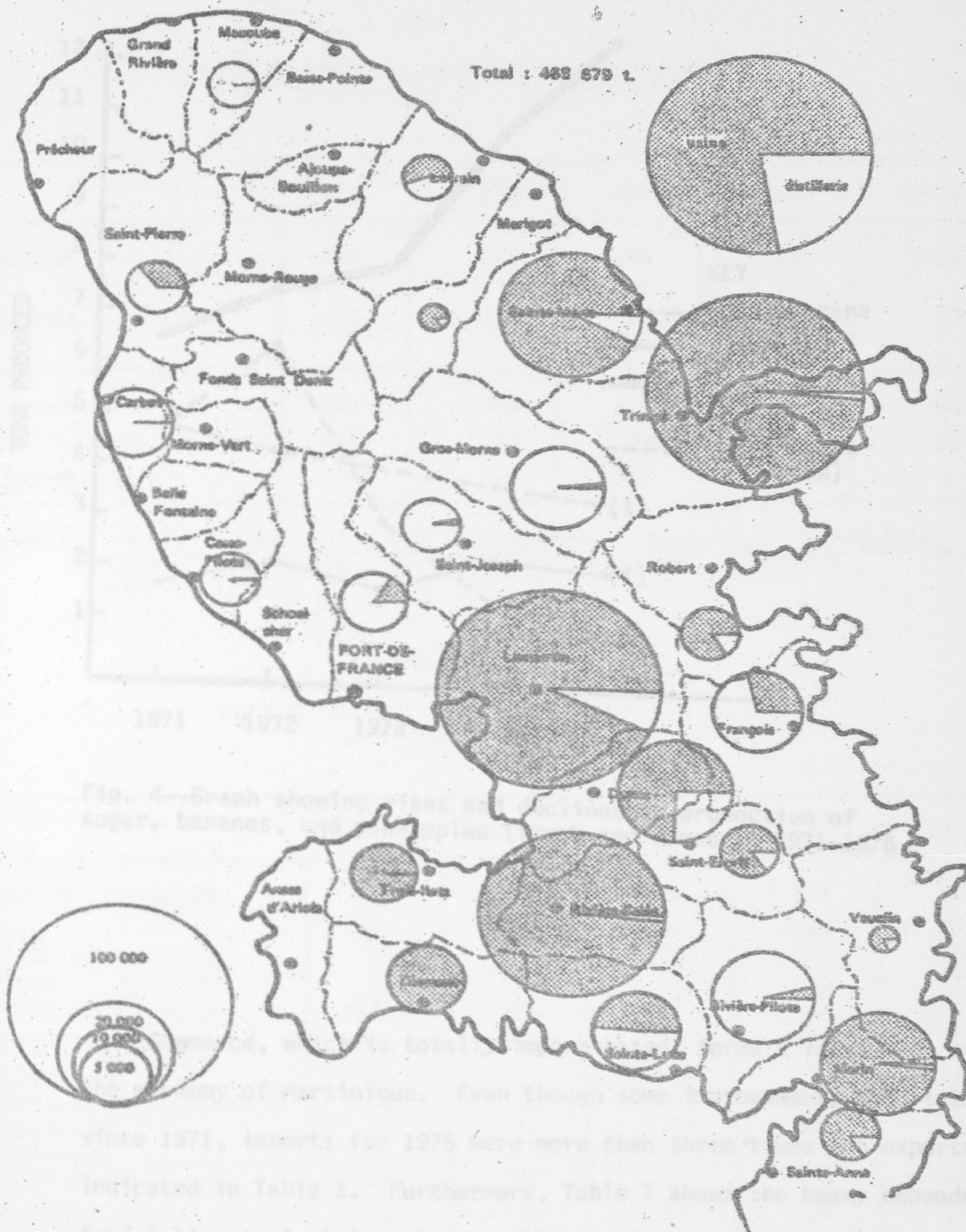
Figure 3.--Map showing brute cane production in Martinique, 1972.

Figure 2.--Relief Map of Martinique



Note the correlation between sugar cane (usufruct) production in 1972 and the relief (see Figure 2) of Martinique. The correlation reflects the use of mechanized cane cutters in areas that are relatively flat.

Figure 3.--Map showing brute cane production in Martinique, 1972.



Note the correlation between sugar cane (usine) production in 1972 and the relief (see Figure 2) of Martinique. The correlation reflects the use of mechanized canecutters in areas that are relatively flat.

TABLE 1
BALANCE OF TRADE IN MARTINIQUE 1971-1975
(In millions of Francs)

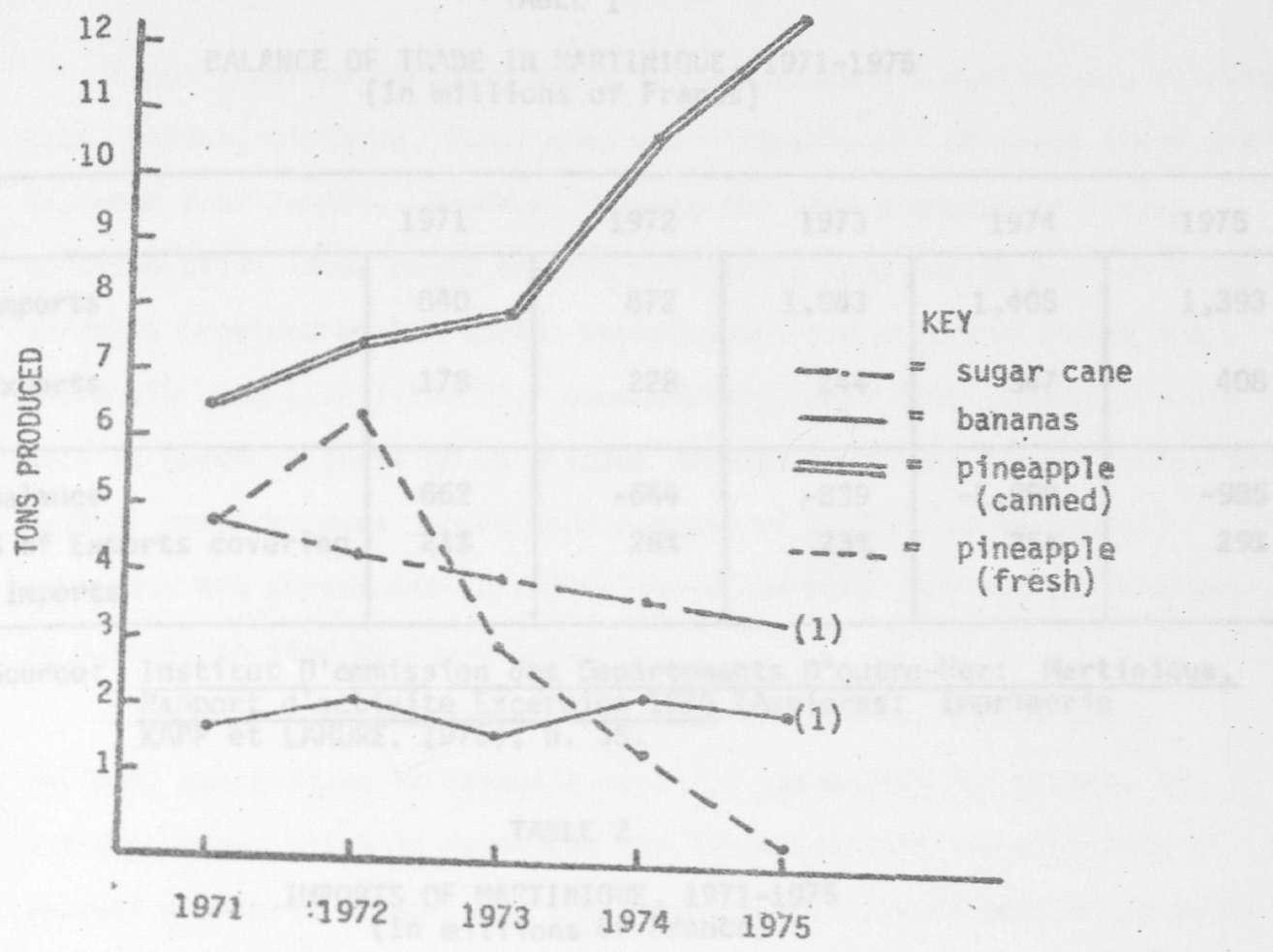


Fig. 4--Graph showing rises and declines in production of sugar, bananas, and pineapples (fresh and canned), 1971-1975

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Consumption Goods	413	454	546	612	670
Food	169	184	222	253	276
Clothing	58	69	75	87	102
Textiles	47	57	61	65	77
Other goods	139	144	187	207	215

Commerce, which is totally import-based, forms a large part of the economy of Martinique. Even though some improvements have taken place since 1971, imports for 1975 were more than three times the exports as indicated in Table 1. Furthermore, Table 2 shows the heavy dependence on food (alimentation) imports, roughly one-fifth of all imports for 1975.

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
TOTAL	840	872	1,083	1,405	1,393
Yearly Variations	+4%	+4%	+24%	+23%	-1%

Source: Ibid., p. 32

TABLE 1

BALANCE OF TRADE IN MARTINIQUE, 1971-1975
(In millions of Francs)

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Imports	840	872	1,083	1,405	1,393
Exports	178	228	244	347	408
Balance	-662	-644	-839	-1,058	-985
% of Exports covering Imports	21%	26%	23%	25%	29%

Source: Institut D'emmission des Departements D'outre-Mer: Martinique, Rapport d'activite Exercice 1975 (Asnieres: Imprimerie KAPP et LAHURE, 1975), p. 35.

TABLE 2

IMPORTS OF MARTINIQUE, 1971-1975
(In millions of Francs)

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
<u>Consumption Goods</u>	413	454	545	612	670
Food	169	184	222	253	275
Clothing	58	69	75	87	102
Taxis	47	57	61	62	77
Other goods	139	144	187	210	216
<u>Production Goods</u>	243	236	295	366	353
Fertilizer	14	15	15	26	22
Construction materials	61	69	96	109	96
Commercial vehicles	46	31	33	42	48
Other goods	122	121	151	189	187
Natural Gas	65	50	71	230	179
Miscellaneous	119	132	172	197	191
TOTAL	840	872	1,083	1,405	1,393
Yearly Variations	+4%	+4%	+24%	+30%	-1%

Source: Ibid., p. 32

Other imported consumer goods include household appliances, television sets, radios, clothing, furniture; and virtually all of these items are imported from France. However, despite the high standard of living possible given these goods and the relatively good health and education services provided by the state, unemployment and underemployment are extremely high (see Table 3). Consequently, many Martiniquans are not able to purchase these goods without making great sacrifices; socialized medical services does insure some measure of uniformity in medical care, but the consumption of other goods and many services are limited to a small portion of the population.

High unemployment, heavy dependence on imports, a high trade deficit, specialized large-scale monocrop production for export, an infrastructure which is developed for the production and marketing of several plantation crops, and the socio-cultural conditions which exist in Martinique due to the evolution of the economy--these are all factors which serve to define the Martiniquan economy as a plantation economy (cf. Beckford, 1972).

The Micro Level and Morne-Vert

We may view the macro constraints within which social relations in Morne-Vert changed in terms of objective differences in individuals and their relationships to micro productive activity in the village, regardless of (1) personal identification, (2) kinship relations, (3) prestige ranking, (4) no residential segregation, (5) lack of differences in dress, (6) traditional land tenure arrangements and (7) skin color. These variables should not represent independent

*Excluded are 210 hectares of state forest and .3 hectare of land owned by the commune.

Source: Michael Horowitz, *Morne-Peyssan: Peasant Village in Martinique*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), Table 2, p. 30.

TABLE 3

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MARTINIQUE, 1972, BY SELECTED MONTHS
(In Percentages of Work Age Population 15 years+)

MONTH	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
January	20.1	34.0	26.3
May	15.1	31.1	22.3

Source: L'Emploi en Martinique. Resultats des Enquetes de 1971 et 1972 (Carbet: Imprimerie COPYRAPID, 1973), p. 75.

Note: The higher rate of unemployment in January for both men and women reflects the seasonal variation in the production of cane and bananas.

TABLE 4

LAND DISTRIBUTION IN MORNE-VERT

Size of Holding (ha)	Number of Holdings	Percent of Total Holdings	Total Size (ha)	Percent of Total Area	Mean Size (ha)
less than 0.01	38	25.5	0.1905	0.02	0.0050
0.01 to 0.9	37	24.8	5.7394	0.66	0.1551
1 to 2.9	7	4.7	14.9891	1.72	2.1413
3 to 9.9	42	28.2	211.3661	24.25	5.0325
10 to 19.9	15	10.1	230.4730	26.44	15.3649
20 to 39.9	5	3.4	128.7020	14.77	25.7404
40 to 59.9	3	2.0	147.5225	16.93	49.1741
60+	2	1.3	132.5800	15.21	66.2900
TOTAL	149	100.0	871.5626*	100.0	5.8494

*Excluded are 210 hectares of state forest and .9 hectare of land owned by the commune.

Source: Michael Horowitz, Morne-Paysan: Peasant Village in Martinique, (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1967), Table 2, p. 30.

factors which determine social relations in the village (i.e., non-stratification based on wealth). Rather the changes which have taken place in Morne-Vert associate with the distribution of productive resources within the village and the changing (micro) class activity based on them. The dynamics of micro class relations, as they changed over time, tends to increase social stratification in terms of kinship affiliation, prestige, color, personal identity, residential segregation, and so on. Thus, as "economic development" or "modernization" was made possible due to changes in the development efforts of the state and other macro processes in a plantation economy, increased social differentiation within Morne-Vert occurred. However, it is important to realize that the changes "within" Morne-Vert were determined by the prior existing productive resources in the village and a class structure based on them. The most important productive resource was the land.

On this basis, "class" did exist in Morne-Vert in terms of differential access to the economic resources needed for production. Subsistence, even for the large landowners, was closely tied to the labor power of the small landholding but able-bodied peasant families. This situation, that small of part of Morne-Vert that Horowitz did describe, may have existed prior to the changes I observed in Morne-Vert. However, Morne-Vert as characterized by Horowitz may have represented one period in a historical continuum.

In order to understand the changes which have occurred in Morne-Vert, one has to view class as defined in terms of the resources used in production (not wealth or status): It is important here to focus on the changes in production. By so doing, perhaps we shall realize the

inaccuracy of Horowitz' closed, classless, traditional description of Morne-Vert.

Changes in Productive Relations in Morne-Vert

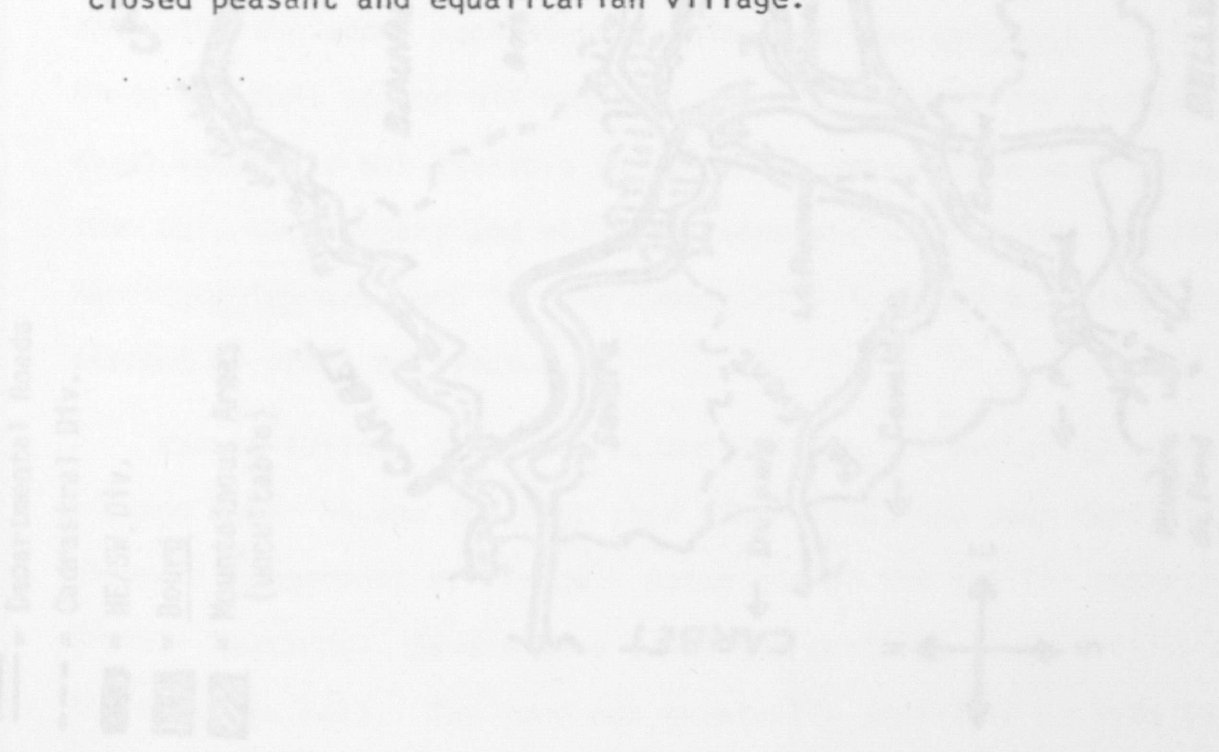
Land Use and Tenure

The extent to which Morne-Vert can be considered a closed peasant community would depend significantly on the use of land within the village. One would not expect to find significant portions of land planted in cane because cane is a plantation crop. The distribution of land in Morne-Vert as presented in Horowitz (1967) indicates ten holdings in excess of twenty hectares, as indicated in Table 4. Horowitz' reference to wage labor on land planted in cane may therefore refer in part to these holdings. While Horowitz did not have the advantage of the cadastral maps showing location of land and landholdings in detail, the proximity to larger landholdings (planted in cane) would seriously call into question the closed community structure which he described.






Distribution

Referring then to the map of the commune (Figure 5) one can draw a convenient line which, in terms of the land ownership, easily separates the large and small holdings. It is not possible to give exact boundaries, but to the northeast of the commune, especially in the areas of Union and Mont Joly, live the smaller landholders. The productive activities of individuals living in this area would approximate those of a peasant. To the southwest existed (c. 1956) the lands of six prominent families controlling from twenty to seventy-five hectares of land; five of the families had owned distilleries.

The landholdings of Severe, Dupuis, and Pettraud all extended beyond the administrative boundary, and those of Dupuis and Pettraud at one time extended almost to the littoral. Other substantial landholdings existed outside of the commune but within five or six kilometers walking distance, such as those of Calvalerie. Those families with extensive holdings within the commune include Berard, Le Rumeur, Breton, and Severe as shown in Figure 5. Those families which owned distilleries were Dupuis, Berard, Le Rumeur, Breton, and Calvalerie, all located within the administrative boundary of the village with the possible exceptions of Dupuis and Calvalerie. All of these families are descendants from the earlier planter class and, although they may be "illegitimate" and mulatto, their association with the planter class provided access to relatively large amounts of land. Thus, simply in terms of the distribution of land, it appears inaccurate to characterize Morne-Vert as a closed peasant and equalitarian village.



KEY

-  = Departmental Roads
-  = Cadastral Div.
-  = NE/SW Div.
-  = Bourg
-  = Mountainous Areas (uncultivable)

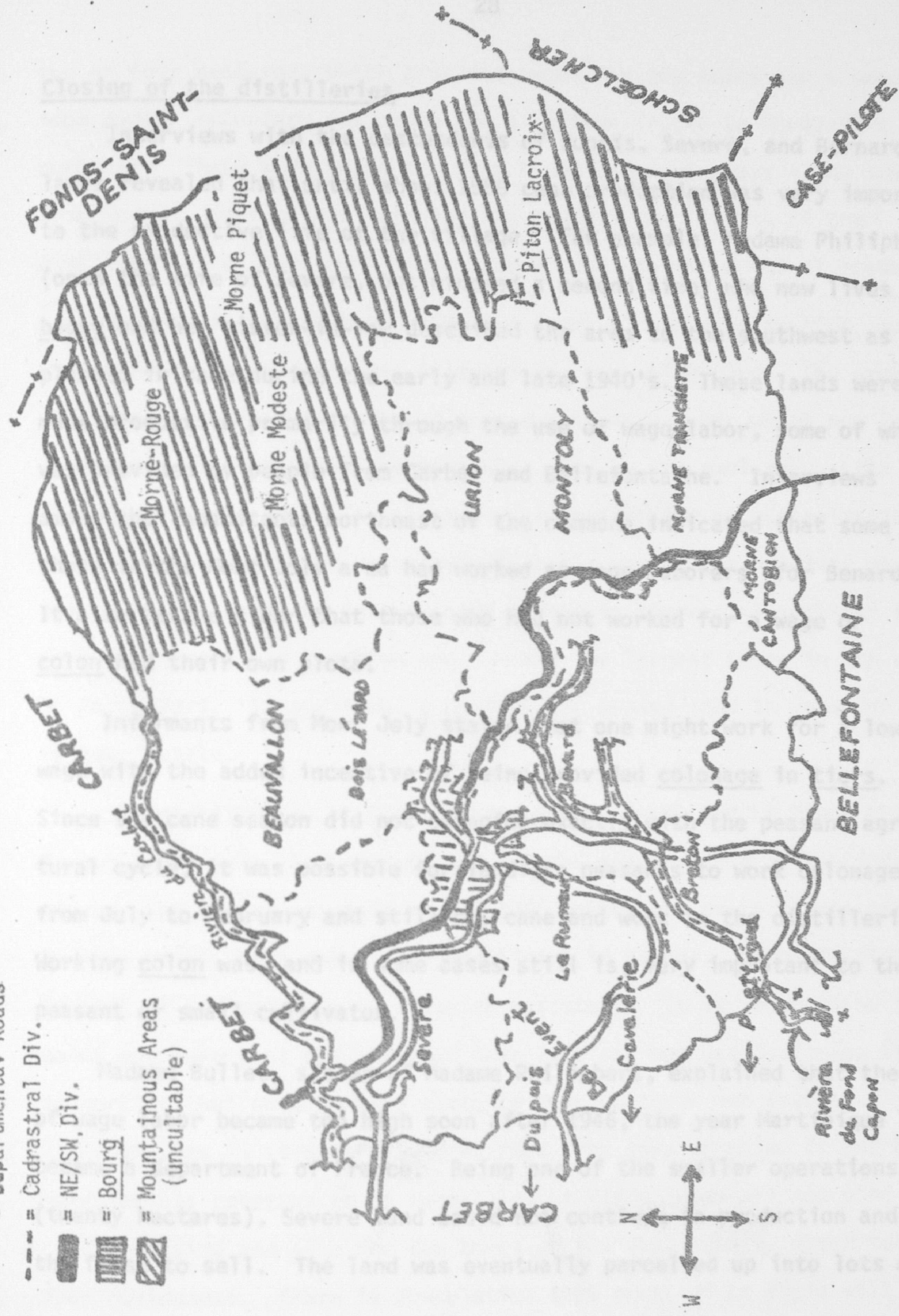


Figure 5.--Map of Morne-Vert

Closing of the distilleries

Interviews with the descendants of Dupuis, Severe, and Bernard lands revealed that until about 1958 cane production was very important to the productive life of the village. For example, Madame Philipbert (once the wife of Severe, but widowed a second time) who now lives in the bourg and her sister-in-law described the area to the southwest as partly planted in cane during the early and late 1940's. These lands were made productive primarily through the use of wage labor, some of which was provided by people from Carbet and Bellefontaine. Interviews among the inhabitants northeast of the commune indicated that some of those in the Mont Joly area had worked as wage laborers for Benard. It also became clear that those who had not worked for a wage or colon had their own plots.

Informants from Mont Joly stated that one might work for a low wage with the added incentive of being provided colonage in tiers. Since the cane season did not coincide exactly with the peasant agricultural cycle, it was possible for landless peasants to work colonage from July to February and still cut cane and work in the distilleries. Working colon was, and in some cases still is, very important to the peasant or small cultivator.

Madame Bullet, sister of Madame Philipbert, explained that the cost of wage labor became too high soon after 1946, the year Martinique became a department of France. Being one of the smaller operations (twenty hectares), Severe land could not continue in production and was the first to sell. The land was eventually parcelled up into lots of

two or four hectares, which provided homes for the heirs and a vacation home and/or secondary residence for a Fort-de-France to Morne-Vert commuter: These were among the nice homes one would pass along the road from Carbet, just before entering the bourg. The closing of the distilleries followed soon after Severe land was taken out of production.

The distillery of Maniba (Berard land) closed down in 1960, as estimated by an unrecognized illegitimate son of Benard. The problem was again explained in terms of the cost of wage labor which now includes social security that must be partially paid by the employer. (The hilly terrain of Morne-Vert did not admit the possibility of mechanization which took place on the relatively flat and very large holdings on the island.) The heirs of Benard lands engage in commercial activity in Fort-de-France, and they own and operate the largest store in the village of Morne-Vert. In addition, a part of the Benard land is used for raising cattle.

The distilleries at Fond Moulin (Breton land) and La Vigie (Le Rumeur land) were also closed, and for the same reasons as mentioned above. The former was sold around 1960, after the death of the owner. The two heirs, both women, are now living in France. La Vigie closed in 1955 as estimated by my research assistant. It is interesting to point out here that the owner of this land did not use just wage labor to work it, but gave workers plots to work on their own account. Although this is structurally different from coup de main, it has been nevertheless referred to as such. The La Vigie lands are now used for cattle raising and also for the homes of the descendents, which total four residences. There is speculation that parts of La Vigie will soon

be made available to the real estate market.

Monsieur Dupuis explained that his parents came to Martinique from Mexico at the turn of the century and purchased the land from its white owners, who in turn had acquired the land after many other transactions. Dupuis land was much more extensive then (covering about one hundred hectares) according to M. Dupuis, the only heir who now looks after the remaining thirty-five or forth hectares. A portion of the remaining land is now used for colonage (with individuals from Bellefontaine). Dupuis heirs (they number four) no longer own land within the commune because this portion of their land was taken out of production: Their distillery closed between 1955 and 1958. After the death of the elder Dupuis in 1969, the heirs agreed to sell some of the land to a real estate speculator who parcelled it in order to sell the lots for residential and vacation homes.

Cattle raising and other land use

As pointed out above, the larger parcels of land in Morne-Vert were either parcelled and sold for residential housing, or fenced off and used primarily for raising cattle--after the closing of the distilleries. Some of the Dupuis and Benard lands remain in colonage; however descendants and affines of Benard raise cattle on most of their land. In fact, cattle raising is very important in Morne-Vert even among smaller landholders. The table below, constructed from information in the Recensement General de l'agriculture en Martinique, indicates the correlation between number of cattle and size of landholding in the commune.

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF CATTLE WITH RESPECT TO
SIZE OF LANDHOLDING

Size of Parcel	Number of Cattle	Number of Parcels	Number of Cattle Per Parcel
Less than 3 Hectares	385	139	2.8
3 to 10 Hectares	235	38	6.2
Over 10	157	13	12.1

Notes: The number of parcels do not necessarily correspond to the number of property owners.

Recall also that most of the holdings greater than three hectares exist in the southwest portion of the commune.

Source: Recensement General de L'Agriculture en Martinique, 1973, (Fort-de-France: Le Service Statistique Agricole), p. 95.

The other major change in land use and tenure involves the parcelling of land to sell as residential subdivisions. This occurred first on Severe land, although the homes were used for the descendants of this property. Dupuis land, however, was used to create the subdivision known as Bell-Event. The homes in this area (see Figure 5) are rather expensive and they house wealthier Martiniquans who commute to Fort-de-France. In addition to subdividing, land is also sold to the occasional consumer who wishes to have a weekend cabin and/or garden. The climate, peaceful atmosphere, and fresh air of Morne-Vert offer a striking contrast to the

crowded, hot, and noisy living conditions in Fort-de-France. Morne-Vert land sells well as an ideal location (only twenty minutes from Fort-de-France by car) for a secondary, vacation, or permanent residence.

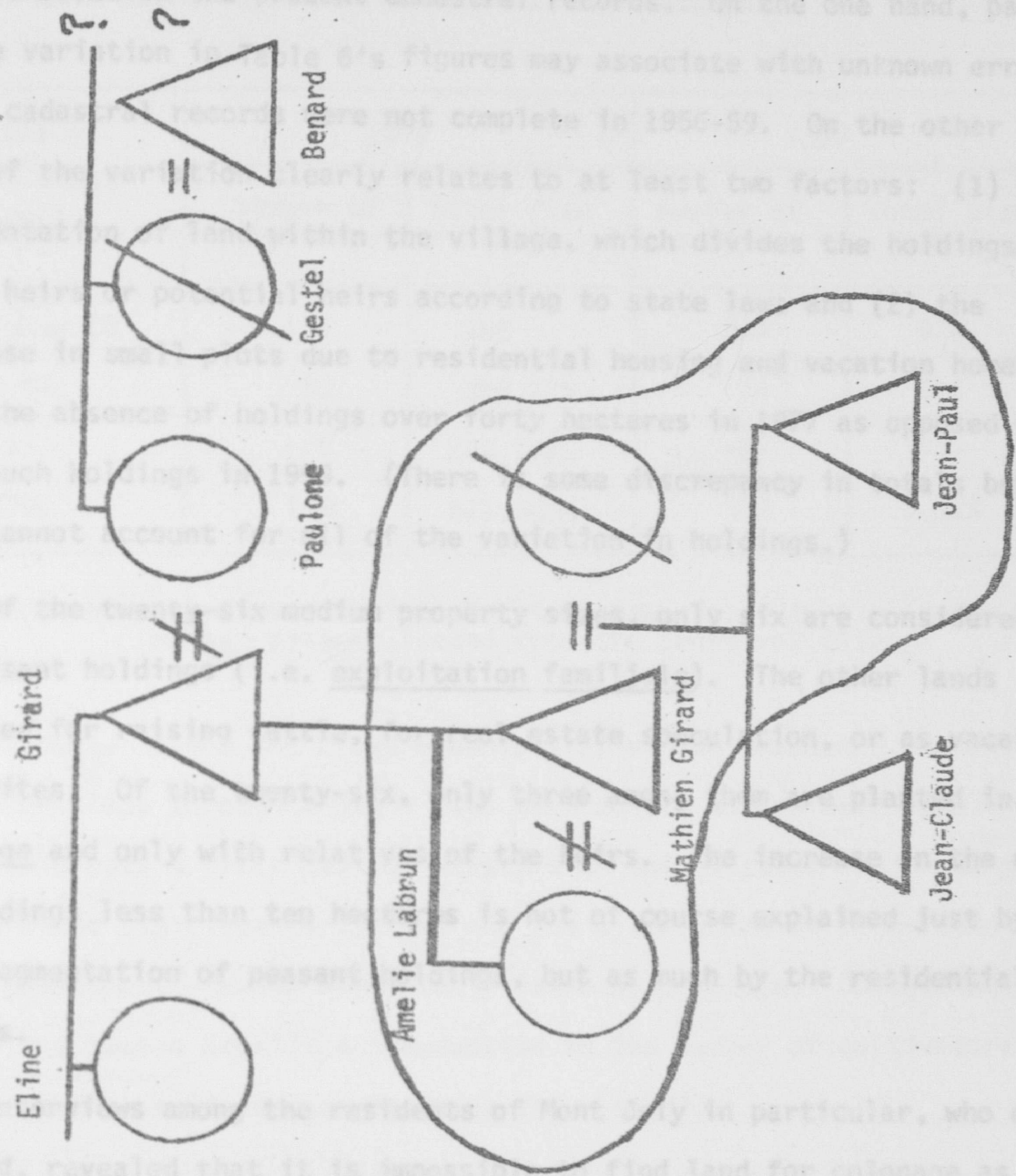
The development of Morne-Vert as a tourist attraction also relates to the demand for country cabins. Morne-Vert is located very close to St. Pierre which was destroyed during the eruption of Mont Pelee in 1902. St. Pierre has become a "must see" item on the sightseeing tour which circles the island. Also, the proximity of Morne-Vert to Mont Pelee, and the fact that the erupting volcano avoided hitting the Morne-Vert region yet utterly destroyed St. Pierre, provide reasons enough to make the short 4.8 kilometers inland trip from Carbet. And of course, located in Carbet one finds the Maison de Columbus, a pension which doubles as the house that Columbus built when he landed on Martinique. These tourist attractions work as many French tourists look for lodging in Morne-Vert, and other rural areas. Lodging in rural areas is generally cheaper and the environment much better than in Fort-de-France.

Some individuals in Morne-Vert attempt to supply the required lodging and they are quick to sell Morne-Vert as a tourist attraction. There are two pensions in the village. A number of homes in the bourg are there for the explicit purpose of rental to vacationing Martiniquans or French Tourists.

Consequences for Peasant Production

These changes in land tenure and use are also reflected in the distribution of holdings within Morne-Vert today. Table 6 regroups

Figure 6.--Girard Household



Horowitz' land distribution data (Table 4) and includes the distribution of land based on the present cadastral records. On the one hand, part of the variation in Table 6's figures may associate with unknown error since cadastral records were not complete in 1956-59. On the other hand, some of the variation clearly relates to at least two factors: (1) the fragmentation of land within the village, which divides the holdings among heirs or potential heirs according to state law; and (2) the increase in small plots due to residential housing and vacation homes. Note the absence of holdings over forty hectares in 1977 as opposed to five such holdings in 1959. (There is some discrepancy in totals but this cannot account for all of the variation in holdings.)

Of the twenty-six medium property sizes, only six are considered as peasant holdings (i.e. exploitation familiale). The other lands are used for raising cattle, for real estate speculation, or as vacation home sites. Of the twenty-six, only three among them are planted in colonage and only with relatives of the heirs. The increase in the number of holdings less than ten hectares is not of course explained just by the fragmentation of peasant holdings, but as much by the residential parcels.

Interviews among the residents of Mont Joly in particular, who owned no land, revealed that it is impossible to find land for colonage as a result of these changes in land tenure and use. Occasionally land does appear available for money-rent, but it is much too expensive, especially considering the additional costs of production such as seeds, fertilizer, insecticide, labor, and the expenses related to marketing

TABLE 6
 LAND DISTRIBUTION IN MORNE-VERT, 1959 AND 1977

Size of Holding (ha)	1959		1977	
	Number of holdings	Total size (ha)	Number of holdings	Total size (ha)
less than 10	124	285	520	518
10-40	20	359.175	26	511
40+	5	280.1025	-0-	-0-
TOTAL	149	871.5625	546	1,029

Source: Based on Horowitz, Morne-Paysan, Table 2, p. and my own data collected from the cadastral files.

the produce. Given the close kinship ties of the peasantry, access to land functions through kinship ties with others who do have land. However this puts a great deal of pressure on the existing land base given the present distribution of land and the dissolution of prior land tenure arrangements--which were partly based on colonage. Consequently, there has been a significant reduction in the number of cultivators in Morne-Vert as indicated in Table 7 (on p. 37).

Vestiges of past social relations remain within the decaying peasant production of Morne-Vert. In fact some of these social relations resemble those described by Horowitz. One peasant household (Figure 6), that of Monsieur Mathien Girard, provides an example. Mathien works coup de main with his brother, Louis, who is a member of another house-

hold. Mathien typifies the peasant productive strategy in that he grows several different crops, uses simple technology and cooperative labor, and stays away from the expensive and risky crops such as tomatoes. Mathien produces only what he requires for basic subsistence.

Mathien has one son working in Paris, which is typical because many young adults have migrated out of the village to Fort-de-France or the metropole. Another son, Jean-Paul, remains in Morne-Vert and works a small plot on his own. While Amelie and Mathien are not married, they do live together and Amelie transports all the produce (including Jean-Paul's) to the St. Pierre market. Amelie typifies the increasing marginality of the peasant market women; she seldom makes the trip to Fort-de-France because she rarely has enough produce to warrant it. Based on my estimation, one of Amelie's produce bundles (for a Saturday) could not have come to more than twenty dollars. Also important in this illustration is the fact that Paulone, Mathien's maternal aunt, owned the land which Mathien works colon. However, I traced the former rights in this land back to Benard through a conjugal tie between Benard and Gestel. Mathien could not complete this relationship between Benard and Gestel, but he was sure that the area he works was once owned by Benard.

Changes in labor relations

The Girard household is somewhat typical, but only in terms of illustrating past social relations, not present ones. With the changes in land tenure and use are concomitant changes in forms of labor. Given both the reduction of colonage and the closing of the distill-

TABLE 7
 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS IN MORNE-VERT ENGAGING IN
 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, 1961-1973,
 BY SELECTED YEARS

	1961	1967	1973
Agricultural Producers in Morne-Vert	230	92	71

Sources: Recensement Général de l'agriculture en Martinique, 1973,
 (Fort-de-France: le Service Statistique Agricole), p. 194.

I.N.S.E.E.--Résultats statistiques du recensement général
 de la population des départements d'Outre-Mer, 1961, 1967
 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale).

eries, the landless or small landholding peasant families have had to engage in other forms of work. Younger men and women (many having gone to school in Fort-de-France) attempt to find employment in Fort-de-France or the metropole.

Labor migration to Fort-de-France (other than selling in the peasant markets) was less common during Horowitz' stay in the village. But today, it is much more common for "peasant" women to work as domestic servants in Fort-de-France (or in Morne-Vert) when they do not sell produce in the market. A few male cultivators living in Morne-Vert work as dockers in Fort-de-France. For the most part, the remaining cultivators in Morne-Vert engage in various productive activities ranging from roadwork in the commune (paid for by the state) and mending fences,

to working as gardeners for wealthier Martiniquans in the Morne-Vert area or Fort-de-France.

While younger Morne-Vert residents leave the commune permanently, wealthier Martiniquans move to the commune. Some of them are weekend vacationers, but there are a number who have become permanent residents as evidenced by the Belle-Event subdivision. The state employs a sizeable percentage of the new residents, and by virtue of this income they live quite comfortably in Morne-Vert. These new residents also provide odd jobs (e.g., domestic service) for very poor peasant men and women.

Reflected in Table 8 are the changes in forms of labor within the village. The table indicates the percentages of the work force engaged in various socio-professional activities in 1961 and 1967. As evident, the percentage of agricultural producers has dropped from 63.3% to 37%. There has been an increase in the percentage of civil servants, no doubt associated with the recent residential housing made available in Morne-Vert.

Peasant marketing conditions

In the past, when the agricultural productivity of the village was high, many peasants complained about the lack of roads in the quartiers. Market women labored in order to carry produce to points where transportation could be provided. This meant a rather long trip for some of the women, having to walk all the way to the center of the bourg where the busses were located. Now that some roads exist, the present complaint concerns lack of transportation. As one informant put it, "ou est le car maintenant, depuis il y a les routes?" The taxis provide

TABLE 8

WORKING POPULATION WITH RESPECT TO SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL CATEGORIES, MORNE-VERT, 1961, 1967
(in percentages of total work force)

CATEGORY	1961	1967
Agricultural Producers	63.3	37
Agricultural Workers	9.2	7.6
Fishing Industry	-0-	-0-
Primary Industry	1.0	-0-
Secondary Industry	5.4	9.2
Civil Servants	6.9	18.0
Workers in the Private Sector	1.5	3.3
Non-Agricultural Workers	6.9	12.8
Service Industry	5.5	9.8
Miscellaneous	.3	1.2

Source: I.N.S.E.E.--Résultats statistiques du recensement général de la population des départements d'Outre-Mer, 1961, 1967 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale).

the only means of getting to Fort-de-France markets. The drivers charge eight francs one way for the passenger and five to ten francs for the produce depending on the size of the package. Included in the mounting expenses of the women is a two francs rental fee which must be paid by every women in the marketplace, every day. Total expenses mount quickly and can easily reach forty-five to fifty francs per day.

Heavy migration to Fort-de-France (pop. 110,000) contributes to its popularity as a market place. Thus, in addition to the expenses, the competition for a space in the markets has become extreme. The main market in Fort-de-France seldom has a space available on a Saturday after four o'clock in the morning.

In addition to the main (indoor) market in Fort-de-France, there is the La Floral market place. La Floral does not provide cover and there are no stalls per se. Women simply spread their produce on the ground on top of burlap bags. A few of the more prominent market women have created easy to assemble stalls which they erect every morning. Competition at the La Floral market is also very strong, especially on Saturdays. Some women do not attempt to find a place in the markets, rather they become mobile peddlers sitting on streetcorners throughout downtown Fort-de-France.

Conclusion

Horowitz' analytical unit of analysis unintentionally fractures the social relations that existed within the village of Morne-Vert. As pointed out earlier, this issue relates to Horowitz' closed community perspective, and related research problem. The fracturing of social

relations within Morne-Vert was also an outcome of Horowitz' view of social stratification in the commune, a view based strictly upon Weberian definitions of class (i.e. wealth and status). "Class" in Weberian terms generally denotes an aggregate of individuals who share the same wealth or economic situation; while status refers to the evaluations which individuals make of one another and their social position. Based on this understanding, Horowitz de-emphasized "wealth" differences in favor of status--by virtue of kinship and tradition--which determined the classless and peasant character of the village. All of which seemed quite accurate, empirically, in 1956.

However, changes in land tenure and use do not allow a closed-community-classless view of Morne-Vert. I have presented data which establishes important relationships between the large and small landholders within the village, both in terms of changing land and labor relations. These micro level changes in class relations were influences occurring after departmentalization in 1946.

"Class" defined in terms of access to economic resources requires an analytical unit composed of the complete social system involving (at the micro level) larger landholders in Morne-Vert, as well as the peasant. Conceptualized in this way, social relations are not incomplete and social change and stratification appears as an internally dynamic process. In this case, social change does not necessarily depend upon modern agents of change penetrating a traditional social structure. A false traditional/modern dichotomy, which many social scientists have constructed in their efforts to understand social change and

GLOSSARY

economic development, is revealed. Also, class structure, here taken to mean patterning in the differential access to resources used in production, should not be dismissed as unimportant by virtue of status variables. Class dynamics, here taken to mean increasing mobility and differentiation in terms of wealth, status, and power variables, cannot exist in a social vacuum, as it were. Such mobility must take place within a definite economy and society.

3. Colonage:

Sharecropping of land.

4. Colon:

In the seventeenth century the term referred to a planter, today a sharecropper, or sharecropping.

5. Coup-de-main:

A form of co-operative labor exchange.

6. Departments d'outre-mer:

French overseas territories. An extension of the political/administrative units of France to Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion and Guyane.

7. Dispensaire:

A small building containing minor medical supplies. A nurse and a doctor are usually available on a regularly scheduled basis.

8. Distillerie:

Distillery (for manufacturing rum).

9. Exploitation familiale:

Family owned and cultivated land.

GLOSSARY

1. Béké:
A white person born in Martinique and descendants of the slave-owning planters. The Béké are endogamous, and remain the economic aristocracy of the island.
2. Bourg:
The center of a village or commune. Usually denoted by the church, stores, and state related services.
3. Colonage:
Sharecropping of land.
4. Colon:
In the seventeenth century the term referred to a planter, today a sharecropper, or sharecropping.
5. Coup-de-main:
A form of co-operative labor exchange.
6. Departments d'outre-mer:
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7. Dispensaire:
A small building containing minor medical supplies. A nurse and a doctor are usually available on a regularly scheduled basis.
8. Distillerie:
Distillery (for manufacturing rum).
9. Exploitation familiale:
Family owned and cultivated land.

10. Usine:
Factory.
Grandes usines:
Large factories used in processing cane.
11. Marchande:
An individual engaged in buying and selling.
12. Marie:
Mayor.
13. Métayages:
Cash-tenancy of land.
14. Moitié-moitié:
50 per cent division of harvest from land held in colonage.
15. Moribund:
Having little or no vital force left, dead.
16. Pension:
A small family owned hotel or boarding house, usually catering to tourists.
17. P.T.T.:
Post and Telecommunications, the postal, telephone and teletype services.
18. Quartiers:
Regional areas of Morne-Vert. Most quartiers were single properties in the nineteenth century but now they identify areas of the village as well as cadastral classifications.
19. Rhum:
Rum.

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20. Scolaire:

School house.

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21. Tiers:

Colonage based on 2/3 for colon and 1/3 for owner of the land.

22. Vendeuse:

A woman who habitually sells in a peasant marketplace.

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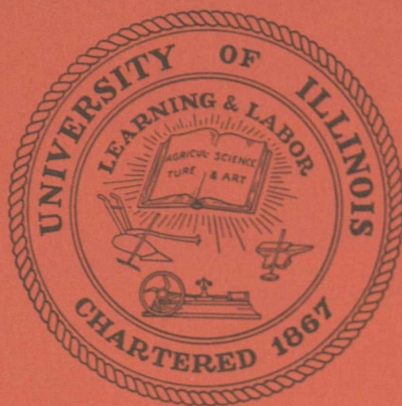
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