An Analysis of the Psycho-Social Adjustment Patterns of the Haitian "Boat People" in New Orleans, in 1981

Elisabeth Babette Wainwright
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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AN ANALYSIS
OF THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT PATTERNS
OF THE HAITIAN "BOAT PEOPLE"
IN NEW ORLEANS, IN 1981.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the
School of Social Welfare
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

by
Elisabeth Babette Wainwright
B.A., Louisiana State University, 1977

C. 2
1982
MANUSCRIPT THESIS

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Mrs. Paula Singer who has never stopped believing in me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my research advisor, Dr. Charles Grenier, for his patient guidance throughout this entire project. I am also grateful to Dr. Evelyn Reed of the L.S.U. School of Social Welfare for her kindness in sharing knowledge and material with me. My appreciation goes also to Mrs. Mary Balthazar also of LSU for providing me the opportunity to do my internship with the Haitian refugees in New Orleans under her supervision.

Gratitude is expressed to Michelle Rashnavad and Joceline Archer, counselors at the Fort Lauderdale Haitian Refugee Center, for sharing time and information.

I also would like to thank Yves Point du Jour, counselor at the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami, for his helpfulness in the early part of this project.

Appreciation is also expressed to Pauline Theriault, employment counselor at BETA in Fort Lauderdale, for gathering much of the information used in this research.

The author wishes to thank Dr. Paddy Poux, Director of the Haitian Resettlement Center in New Orleans for his suggestions and the use of his thesis.

Appreciation is also due to professor Max Carre from CHISS in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, for sharing advice and material for this research.
Much gratitude goes to Alfred Wainwright from Port-au-Prince and Raymond Lahens from Leogane, Haiti, for room, board, and transportation. Gratitude is also due to the Reverend Pere Joseph Lafontant, Pastor at L'eglise du Sacre-Coeur de Turgeau in Port-au-Prince for all his suggestions and advice. Deepest appreciation is due to all my Haitian compatriots living in America and in Haiti who have opened their homes, arms and hearts to me. Without their help, there would be no study.

My gratitude to Mrs. Elizabeth Davis, English teacher from Baton Rouge Episcopal High School, for her help in proof reading.

Finally, I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to my companion, Jane Zanotti, for helping me keep body and soul together with her tremendous material and emotional support. Also to her I am forever indebted for long hours of typing, ensuing backaches and eye strain.
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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to analyze the psycho-social adjustment of the recent Haitian refugees in the United States. Emphasis was placed on their social, political and economic attitudes, and on relevant cultural and socio-demographic characteristics.

For comparative purposes the study included a sample of Haitian refugees living in the United States and a matched sample of Haitians living in Haiti.

In-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted in New Orleans, Fort Lauderdale, Miami and various provinces in Haiti. In addition, a creole translation of the Middletown Alienation Scale was administered to subjects in New Orleans and in Haiti.

Findings indicate that 100% of the Haitian refugees experienced powerlessness, meaninglessness and normlessness. 95% were estranged from work, and 50% were culturally estranged.

Scores from the Haiti group did not differ from the U.S. group on powerlessness, meaninglessness and normlessness. However, 27% were estranged from work, and none were culturally or socially estranged.

Subjects from the provinces were significantly more alienated than subjects from Port-au-Prince.

Farmers and fishermen were more alienated than laborers.
Subjects wishing to return home to live were more likely to be alienated.

No relationship was found between age, number of dependants, voodoo belief and alienation dimensions, contrary to the expectations as hypothesized.

Both groups reflected high levels of alienation; however, the U.S. group was significantly more alienated than the Haiti group, as predicted.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Refugee Situation in the World

During the first eighty years of the twentieth century, more than 100 million people were forced to flee their homelands for various reasons, the most prevalent one being the search for freedom.

In the United States, Ellis Island remains a silent witness to this fact. For over five decades, 16 million people from all over Europe have entered this country through its gates.

During World War I, thousands of people from Russia moved to Central and Western Europe and Asia. About 400,000 Germans fled Nazi Germany. Between 1923 and 1939, Fascism in Italy forced 200,000 Italians out of their country. Three hundred thousand Spaniards moved to France and Central and Latin America during the Spanish Civil War.

World War II drove about 40 million people out of their homelands. Various conflicts thereafter were to cause more uprootings. In 1947, the creation of two states, India and Pakistan, created massive refugee situation. About 700,000 Palestinian Arab refugees were displaced by the Arab-Israeli war. The Communist takeover in China sent another stream of refugees through Asia. In the 1950's, fighting in South
Korea put about 9 million refugees to flight. At the same time, Castro's regime in Cuba sent 700,000 people seeking refuge in the United States.

Duvalier's tyranny in Haiti forced countless Haitians to escape to the United States, Canada, Europe and Africa. In the 1960's, the war in Vietnam added its share to the large number of refugees in the world. In 1971, fighting between India and Pakistan left about 10 million people homeless. The long war in Indochina made refugees of millions more. (Refugee: A World Report, 1979.) In Africa, where war, revolution and unrest are common occurrences, the refugee number rises to 4 million; the highest in the world. (International Migration Review, 1981.)

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established to protect and aid refugees throughout the world. It defines refugees qualified for assistance as: "Those who have either been stripped of their citizenship, displaced from their home countries through war or civil strife, or are in danger of persecution based on race, religion, national origin or affliction from particular social or political groups."

At present there are millions of refugees in the world. Europe has 500,000. Asia has about 1.5 million. Africa has 4 million. In Oceania, there are about 10,500 refugees.
Latin America, the total reaches about 285,000. In 1978, the United States had approximately 1.5 million refugees of which 873,714 were Europeans, 168,146 were Asians, 370,620 came from Cuba and 96,659 Asians were accorded legal status in this country (Report of the UNHCR, 1980). The Haitians add about 60,000 to the refugee number.

While most refugees entered the United States by air, a significant number reached its shores by boat. The Indochinese, the Cubans and the Haitians made up the recent refugee influx known as the "Boat People."

Unlike the earlier Cuban and Haitian migration, the new wave of refugees is comprised of the socially, politically and economically alienated class in their home countries. In addition, the Haitians differ from the other groups in that they are the first and only group of blacks to ever land on U.S. shores since slavery. This group is the only one to whom asylum has been refused. The Southeast Asians and the Cubans are nearly all resettled in various states throughout the nation, while the status of the Haitians remains in limbo. The Justice Department contends that 97% of them do not meet the United Nations requirement for refugee status, since they are only fleeing economic hardship. (Morning Advocate, December 1981; United State Senate Hearing Ninety-Six Congress.)
The Haitian emigration began shortly after the 1959 presidential election of Francois Duvalier. Intolerable social, political and economic oppression by right-wing dictatorial government was the basic reason behind the flight of both the masses and the elite class of Haiti. The pattern of migration, however, differed greatly amongst these two groups.

The well-to-do Haitians, who came primarily from Port-au-Prince, were able to meet the financial and social requirements of the passport and exit visa, and used this privilege as their escape tickets when life under Papa Doc became intolerable. This group was comprised of the educated Haitians: the professionals, teachers, lawyers, doctors and other members of the bourgeoisie who quickly settled into professional jobs in the United States, Canada, Europe and Africa. (Allman 1979, Poux 1973.) (Table 1.) Few of these people have ever requested political asylum. They simply fulfilled the necessary requirements to remain in the host countries. In the United States, many paid thousands to immigration lawyers in order to gain permanent status. Poux also found out that some Haitians managed to "get lost" in the United States, many after their non-immigrant visas expired. Allman estimates a total of 450,000 Haitians living in the United States in 1980. He
assumes that less than 100,000 of these Haitians were legally admitted to the U.S. as immigrants between 1956 and 1980. A look at the number of Haitians admitted into this country by occupation reveals to us that farmers and laborers make up an insignificant number of legal immigrants (Table 2). This group of people always had to resort to less prestigious and often illegal means of immigration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North America:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caribbean:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinique and Guadeloupe</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin America:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Guyana</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latin American Countries</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Europe:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other European Countries (exp. West Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Sweden)</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Africa:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: James Allman "Haitian International Migration: Some Policy Considerations" March 1981
Table 2

HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED IN TO THE U.S.

BY MAJOR OCCUPATION

YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housewives, children, others with no occupation</td>
<td>3,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operative—except transport</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service worker—except private household</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen, kindred workers</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, kindred workers</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, technical, kindred workers</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer—except farm</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private household</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport equipment operator</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers, administrators—except farms</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm laborers, foremen</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales workers</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers, farm managers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,470</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1980
The Haitian poor originate from the rural coastal areas suffering from drought or aftermath of hurricanes (Appendix I). They receive practically no attention or help from the government and must fight alone for their survival. These people make up 95% of the laborers, fishermen, farmers, street peddlers and other marginal groups whose illiteracy, social class and other attributes constitute automatic denial of exit visas by the Immigration Bureau. In the face of so much oppression, these Haitians can only run away from the island. Some have to sell land and cattle to pay for the passage. Some of the women and children who make the trip across get free passage or get it paid for by relatives already in a host country. Others leave behind tremendous loans which are usually paid off with their first few pay checks. Until recently, a Haitian could travel legally by plane to Miami for about $300 which included $100 for passport and exit visa, plane ticket and compulsory travel insurance. Since 1979, the passport has gone down to $29 for one year, improving somewhat the situation of the departing Haitian. (Allman 1981.) There are many emigration requirements besides the financial ones which the majority of the Haitians are unable to fulfill. Consequently, these people leave the island illegally, paying up to $1300 for passage to the U.S. (Allman 1981, Lahens 1980.)
A large number of Haitians from the rural sector who left during Papa Doc's regime had to settle in menial agricultural jobs in the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas. (Lahens 1980, Poux 1973, Allman 1981, Lundahl 1980.) The recent influx of Haitian "Boat People" came primarily from the northern region of Haiti, devastated by drought and also quite accessible by boat to the U.S. shores, (Appendix III). Quite a few, though, were illegal workers who were being expelled by the Bahamian government. (Lahens 1980). Nine thousand of these Haitians requested political asylum. Based on review of individual cases by the INS, the Department of State and UNHCR, only a few hundred of them have been granted this asylum. However, court injunctions against deportation proceedings have made applications for asylum an effective technique for prolonging the Haitians' stay in the U.S.
C. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE HAITIAN EMMISSION

Haitian Social System

Haiti is a small nation measuring 10,000 square miles (about the size of the state of Vermont) with a population of 5.7 million. In 1804, it became the first independent state in the world to be established through a slave revolution. Today Haiti is hardly the "pearl of the Antilles" that it once was. Its soil, no longer rich, produces barely enough for the country's consumption. Haiti has always been predominantly rural. It is a society of peasant renters, free holders and squatters surviving primarily on their small acreage where intensive farming is still practiced with ancient tools and the slash and burn techniques. Voodoo rituals such as a service to Zakka, the god of agriculture, are also greatly incorporated into the Haitian agricultural methods. (Laguerre 1980.)

Although the Haitian Republic is officially Roman Catholic, voodoo beliefs and practices still influence all aspects of the people's lives. It is safe to assume that 99.9% of the Haitian people believe to some degree in voodoo. The strongest believers, however, remain amongst the 95% illiterate rural sector. The non-voodoo believers are found among the 5% educated class. Papa Doc, himself of rural background, gained the trust of the masses by declaring himself their voodoo father. (Hurbon 1979.) He
adopted the nasal speech, dark glasses and clothing of Papa Guede, spirit of the dead, in order to further mystify the masses from whom he created his faithful army of bloodthirsty Tonton Macoutes. To these he gave power to destroy the educated class.

The Haitian social classes are two well-defined entities. There is a small dominant educated group, the elite; and there is a large, illiterate and somewhat submissive mass. It is almost impossible to cross class barriers in Haiti. There is no social mobility; one is born and dies into one's class. Money does not offer social mobility as in America. Many of Papa Doc's Tonton Macoutes have acquired great wealth through the extermination of members of the elite class, yet practically none are ever allowed into the elite social circles. The Haitian social classes have very little in common. The elite, who have conspicuously lighter complexions and finer features, are culturally French and adhere to the Catholic religion. Their children attend private schools, go to summer camps and belong to social clubs. There is a difference even in their diet as most of the food consumed by the elite is taboo in the rural culture. The elite trust the skills and knowledge of modern doctors and have access to private hospitals. They are granted exit visas upon request, which allows them to travel overseas at will. Visiting foreign
lands has always been a passion for the well-to-do class. Thousands visit the United States every year. (Table 3.) Many elements in their surroundings attest to this fact: their foods, clothing and elaborate architectural and interior designs of their homes, which cover a wide range of foreign influence from French Colonial and Victorian styles to Swiss chalets and ultra modern affairs perched on the hills of Bourdon, Petion Ville, La Boule and Kenskoff. (Appendix 1.)

Unlike the elite, the rural class is practically 100% black African. They speak only Creole; a blend of French, Spanish, English and West African dialects, and practice voodoo. Their primary place of socialization is the market place as most attend neither school nor church. Many still live in African-style mud huts where entire families usually share two rooms. There is no electricity and no running water, and entire days are spent tending to survival needs. Children under six often walk a mile to fetch water or to go to the market for their families. The extended rural family includes the men's outside wives and their offspring as well. Polygamy is legal and accepted as an indication for social status.

The rural class harbors a basic distrust for modern medicine, and they are greatly skilled in traditional healing. The Hougans or Mambo are usually the first ones
consulted in case of physical or mental illness. If the illness does not have a supernatural source and is thus beyond the healers' skills (leprosy, cataracts, etc.) the person will usually go untreated. There is a dearth of money, medical supplies and doctors. There is only one doctor to 30,000 Haitians. (Moore 1981.)

Table 3

HAITIAN VISITORS TO THE U.S. BY AIR AND BY SEA

AND BY AREA OF CONCENTRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Air</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>By Sea</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>6,126</td>
<td>Florida State</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>11,893</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>5,138</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23,959</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About fifty students graduate each year from medical school, and all emigrate rather than be placed by the government in rural areas where lack of hospital and medical supplies leave them helplessly at the mercy of the traditional healers who often have no tolerance for competition. The experience at the State University hospital, where these young doctors are trained, usually motivates them to emigrate. Medical interns in Haiti have testified that patients without beds are left to occupy the hospital floor. Untagged newborn babies are piled up like meat on tables were they often fall off. Indigent mothers usually leave the hospital with someone else's brain damaged or contused baby. Yet, no one is allowed to complain out loud, fearing retaliation from the government men.

Few Haitians struggle for social reform. They simply flee their homeland. Tourist visas are still the means of entry for many who manage to remain in the United States illegally.

HAITIAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Haiti is considered the poorest nation in the world. 75% of its 5.7 million inhabitants are unemployed. The average income is $200 per household a year. (Faulkner 1981, Allman 1981, Moore 1981.) The main occupation is
agriculture which employs 85% of the population. Because of high population density and scarcity of arable land (33% of Haiti being extremely mountainous and arid in some parts), intensive farming to the point of soil exhaustion is the means of survival. Poor farming techniques and erosion are the primary contributors to the most serious problem facing Haitian agriculture today. (Lundahl 1978.) There is practically no erosion control and no other technical guidance offered to the farmers who can only rely on the crude techniques of their African forefathers.

Everyone must work in Haiti as a means of survival. There is no social welfare system to help the children, the old and the disabled. There are no child labor laws. There is a high percentage of workers under fifteen years of age. Women make up about 55% of the labor force. They are employed in all activities as survival does not allow for sexism on the job. With no retirement age there is also no respite for the aged who must work until the end. The few rural children who attend school are taken out after a while to help in the family's survival efforts.

Because the soil is the sole supporter of the Haitian rural families, erosion is devastating. Government help means ultimate land seizure; therefore, suspicious farmers do not accept the assistance that is sometimes offered them. Unable to feed themselves, they fall victim to malnutrition
and associated diseases. It is believed that Haiti has the highest incidence of malnutrition among children in the world. (Lundahl 1978, Moore 1981.) It kills 50% of all children born before they reach the age of four. It also limits the nation's average life span to about 45 years. The United Nations believes that 500,000 Haitians have died of starvation since 1975.

In a desperate attempt to survive, many people from the rural areas have migrated to the capital city, and swelled the population in Port-au-Prince to 800,000 inhabitants. (Moore 1981.) Because of their illiteracy, the few who find work are often employed in menial government jobs in the sanitation department and public works or are hired in private homes and institutions as maids and yardmen. These workers earn between $8.00 and $15.00 a month. They are sometimes mistreated by their well-to-do employers, but more often they and their families are protected, helped and educated by the employers. Some of the ones who remain unemployed become store front dwellers and street beggars who must at times steal for their subsistence. Others migrate seasonally to the neighbouring Dominican Republic to work in the sugar cane and coffee harvests. These migrants endure atrocities and extortion at the hands of the Dominican police in order to bring home about $40.00 after six months of hard labor. (Moore 1981, Allman 1981.)
Since the advent of baby Doc, Haiti has become once again a haven for foreign investments, industrialists and assembly factory owners. There are about 200 foreign companies in the country, half of them American, paying an average of $2.00 a day for long hours of manual labor and exemplary dependability. Interests from foreign industries and other foreign aids go straight to the president's private fund, which is now estimated at one billion dollars deposited in Swiss banks. The United States once withdrew 80 million dollars in proposed aid to Haiti because the government would not agree to change its corrupt practices. (Saturday Review, 27 October 1979.)

Many Haitians with some education and some government contacts find work as civil servants. Salaries in these jobs are slightly higher than the menial jobs, but they are paid irregularly or not at all. Because their appointments are largely political, civil service workers dare not complain for fear of reprisal. Most revert to corruption. It is not unusual for workers to solicit money for their services at places such as the customs office, the immigration bureau, government records offices, vehicle registration and licensing, phone and electric companies, the post office, the passport bureau and many others. This illegal but tolerated practice helps only the rich who can afford to pay extra for the services. The poor who need a
service are often put off until they either find something to pawn or give up altogether. More often the poor in Haiti do give up altogether, and are overtaken by feelings of alienation. Risking their lives on shark infested seas is, for some, a final attempt of survival.

HAITIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Haitian boat people, like their middle class compatriots who left in the early 1960's, are fleeing political, social and economic oppression of the Duvalier dictatorship. So far, during this regime 40,000 people have been executed. Fifty thousand have starved to death, about 30,000 are simply missing and countless others are either imprisoned in subterranean chambers or exiled. (Hurbon 1979, DESEPH 1981.)

During his lifetime Papa Doc ruthlessly suppressed all civil rights and declared himself the mystic father and the sole representative of the black masses. Duvalier harbored tremendous hatred for the mulatto class. Being himself of rural background, his voodoo beliefs captivated the masses who gave him total allegiance. Members of the elite who rejected voodoo suffered endless persecution and torture in the hands of his zombified army. Entire families were massacred. The lighter skinned bourgeois class was constantly terrorized a la Gestapo. Members of the clergy,
educators, university students and other professionals were routinely gunned down. Many escaped through exile.

The Haitian people offered no resistance when, at his death, Papa Doc left the reins to his young son. Faithful supporters of Papa Doc were soon to be rendered impotent by Baby Doc's new regime which, in contrast to his father's, is totally pro-mulatto. He created a new army of 6,000 trained men, "the Leopards," to replace his father's Tonton Macoutes. Many black skinned officials were replaced by the lighter skinned class. Even those in exile were invited to return home with no fear of retaliation. In order to insure U.S. support and aid, Baby Doc made some slight social improvements, but new flows of repression were to return at the time of the Reagan administration. (DESEPH, May 1981.)

The masses felt further betrayed when Baby Doc married a member of the bourgeoisie in a five million dollar affair. At the same time thousands of them were risking their lives on flimsy boats in search of better life.

In recent history, Haitians have rarely attempted to ameliorate their lot at home. Instead they have chosen to leave their country and search elsewhere for their human rights. The few who have dared to protest or even complain have either been shot on the spot or arrested. Recently workers at the Peligre hydro-electric plant were executed for complaining about not having been paid their salary.
(DESEPH, May 1981.) Also recently, in 1979, both Haiti and its neighbor, the Dominican Republic, were accused before the United Nations of organized slavery by the London Anti-Slavery Society. (DESEPH, May 1981; Allman 1981.) Apparently, Baby Doc had sold 19,000 workers to the Dominican Republic for the sum of 1.5 million dollars which went to his private account.

In November of 1980 a three-year old Haitian democratic movement was squashed when the 800 journalists and intellectuals who comprised its membership were either arrested or exiled in a supreme denial of freedom of speech (Haiti Observateur, Dec. 1980; DESEPH, May 1981.) In short, political freedom does not exist in Haiti. Yet the Reagan administration refers to Haiti as a friendly nation and plans to strengthen its investment and trade relationship with the government "in the hope of fighting a fictitious communism rather than a concrete right wing tyranny." (Traub 1981.) Negotiations are under way to build an American military base in Mole Saint Nicola in the Northwestern tip of Haiti. (Haiti Tribune, 2 Dec. 1981.) (Appendix II) This area of Haiti was offered to the United States by Papa Doc over twenty years ago. This region has served as departure point for most of the refugee boats. It is suffering from a devastating drought about which nothing is being done since the largest portion of foreign aid goes
directly to the president. Haiti receives 150 million a year from the U.S. (DESEPH, May 1981.) The people can see only Baby Doc's expensive cars, yachts, mansions and lifestyle. This year, however, Haiti was not mentioned in the U.S. economic plans for the Caribbean although the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practice for 1981" noted some improvements in Baby Doc's regime.

Baby Doc's politics seem similar to Idi Amin's. It is the product of a deranged mind allowed control over an entire nation. His psychological problems were confirmed through testing (Haiti Observateur, 5 March 1982).
D. THE HAITIAN REFUGEES' SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES

There are about 60,000 Haitian "Boat People" in the United States, half of whom live in Miami, Florida (Allman 1981, Martelly 1981, McGrath 1982). This group, made up of 75% males, 22% females and 3% children, are strongly determined to better their lives (Martelly 1981). Many of these people spent four to six weeks at sea packed in flimsy boats which often offered no resistance to the high winds. An unknown number drowned or starved to death before reaching their goal; quite a few drowned Haitians were discovered on Florida's beaches on two occasions (Miami Herald, 27 Oct, 1981; Haiti Observateur, 9 April 1982). According to Martelly, many had to resort to such desperate means of survival as eating toothpaste and drinking their urine. Some women had to agree to gang rape in order to secure protection aboard these boats. Many watched helplessly as relatives and friends plunged or were thrown overboard to their death. A number were sacrificed to some gods by their voodoo captain in a well-publicized incident at sea (Miami Herald, Oct. 16, 1981; Sunday Advocate, 4 April 1982).

Cruelty must have occurred on other refugee boats. The Haitian "Boat People," however, unlike the Vietnamese and the Cubans, are not receiving the attention and help necessary to relieve their trauma and ease their
psychosocial adjustment process in the United States. Instead, over 2,000 are imprisoned like criminals in various concentration camps (Bajeux 1981, Mahoney 1982, McGrath et al 1981). Some submitted to humiliation and degradation by Immigration officers who shaved their heads and washed them with pumps. (A la Auschwitz.) (Petit Samedi Soir, 25 April 1980.) There are also some indications that hormones are being added to the refugees diet at the camps in order to inhibit sexual desires. In both Fort Allen and Krome Avenue camps, 61 cases of morphological deformation called prolactinoma have been discovered amongst the men. (Bajeux 1981, McGrath 1982.) It is believed that the beef fed to these men was treated with high levels of estrogen.

The Haitians risked their lives to reach the shores of freedom only to face the insurmountable barriers of American racism. Hoping, that the intolerable conditions in this country will force them to give up and voluntarily return home, the INS appears adamant in its refusal to grant them legal status. The United States is willing to pay air fair back for anyone willing to return to Haiti. So far, less than 300 have asked to be sent back rather than suffer further atrocities in the camps (Haiti Observateur, 18 December 1981; Sunday Advocate, 29 December 1981; Sunday Advocate, 29 November 1981).

Although the conditions in the United States turned out
prices by store employees.

Another aspect of the Haitian refugees' misery in the United States; is the inhumane migrant worker's lifestyle. Haitians are hired because they are eager to work and do not complain of mistreatment. They live in filth and squalor, work long hours for a pittance, and accept all sorts of inhumane treatment because they are unfamiliar with laws designed to protect farm workers. They suffer from a language barrier and, most important of all, these people for the most part do not have any concept of their human rights. Such concepts never existed for them in Haiti. Ward Sinclair of the Washington Post tells how employers provide these Haitians with drugs and alcohol to "keep them happy." (Sunday Advocate, October 4, 1981). These migrant workers suffer much degradation, sometimes at the cost of their own health and sanity. Nurses at the migrant camps in Virginia and Maryland have found "a lot of depression and anxiety" among these people "in addition to gastritis and peptic ulcer disease which has to be related to the pressure the Haitians are under." (Sinclair 1981.) Many of the refugees are responsible for the survival of large families left behind in Haiti and for this reason they are willing to suffer much hardship in America.

The Haitian refugees have suffered inhumane treatments in their home country for 25 years and have managed to
to be shocking and disappointing for the Haitian "Boat People," most feel that at least in this country, a job can guarantee their subsistence, whereas in Haiti they cannot always expect to be paid for their labor. The Haitian refugees passively endure the maltreatments of their capitalistic and racist employers with only the hope of receiving a meager paycheck at the end of each pay period.

In Miami where a large number are struggling for subsistence, countless unfortunate incidents of cruelty to Haitian refugees are brought everyday to the attention of the refugee centers and the media. During interviews with workers at the Fort Lauderdale Haitian refugee center, I learned how white employers often slapped and beat their Haitian workers, how they denied them bathroom privileges and lunch breaks, required overtime work and unscrupulously payed them less than their total working hours. One tends to wonder if Haitians in Florida are not assuaging white America's desires for omnipotence by fulfilling the role of slaves which is assigned to them. The Haitian "Boat People" have been turned into targets of hatred, and scapegoats by American ghetto blacks. Haitian social workers at the refugee center are harassed by phone and through the mail by angry black Americans. Haitian women and children seeking care at some hospitals in Fort Lauderdale are left unattended, and Haitian customers are quoted exhorbitant
retain some dignity which is being eroded gradually by the denial of legal status in this country. Their shaky status and the constant threat of deportation are major factors in their maltreatment, since as a group, they do not have much legal protection in this country.

These illegal migrants, however, cannot be deported without due process.

A decision by the federal district judge James L. King in June of 1980, ruling in a class action law suite brought by over 4,000 Haitians, required the INS, which is criticized for its treatment of Haitians, to present a plan to reconsider the request of the Haitian Boat People for asylum. (Allman 1981.)

For the refugee, illiteracy presents a tremendous barrier to adjustment. Unable to communicate their feelings, their anxiety level remains high and their frustration is often translated into displaced anger and aggression. Vicious fighting among men is a common occurrence. During the writer's internship last year at the Drysades YMCA in New Orleans, I witnessed daily fights and stabbings and heard murderous threats among the Haitian refugees. Yves Point du Jour, a worker at the Miami Refugee Center and Michelle Rashnavadi from the center in Fort Lauderdale, both naturalized Haitians, reported similar behavior during our interviews. Many refugees in New
Orleans and Florida blame the aggressive behavior of their compatriots on their voodoo affiliation. My social work education and skills conflicted with my cultural values in the case of an eighteen year old refugee whose behavior was clearly psychotic and warranted commitment in this society, but in Haiti, it would be viewed and treated as a simple case of voodoo possession. Michelle Rashnavadi encountered similar situations and her prompt intervention prevented a psychiatrist from committing a young female refugee to the Florida state mental hospital. The belief system of the Haitian boat people is a factor influencing their adjustment in this country.

According to many authorities, (Kunz 1981, Khoa 1981, Beyer 1981, Stein 1981, Cohon 1981), refugee social background can be a predictive factor in adjustment in the host country when this background examined along with the variety of circumstances which awaits there. Khoa and Vandensen attribute the Southeast Asians' smooth adaptation to the various aspects of U.S. culture to the adaptable nature of this group of people as reflected in their religious belief and culture as a whole: Unity in diversity, they say, has always been a favorite motto of the Oriental sage. Beyer contends that racial factors can also be a barrier to refugee assimilation. Unlike the other groups of refugees, the Haitian "Boat People" suffer the
double curse of being both black and illiterate. During the long history of American hospitality, never before has such a large group of black refugees reached her shores. These "Boat People" may have to face some unprecedented adjustment problems which could be predicted through analysis of these various factors. It may then be possible, with appropriate intervention, to prevent some of these adjustment problems. By understanding the socio-cultural background of these refugees, as we now understand the Cubans, the Southeast Asians and others, the intervention of social service professionals and para professionals will be more successful than a trial and error approach.
CHAPTER II
RESEARCH PROBLEM

A. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE


In agreement with Stein's suggestion that the refugee situation should be viewed from a broad historical perspective instead of "temporary and unique events," this review will emphasize the general and comparative aspects of the refugee experience.

In 1971, Creel conducted a sociological study of the Cuban refugees living in New Orleans. Some of his findings indicated that religion was a factor in refugee adjustment since the Catholic Cubans who resettled in predominantly Catholic areas experienced fewer adjustment problems. Another finding relevant to the present study is that 13.3 per cent of the professional group in Creel's sample, and 39.4 per cent of the other groups reported that they would return to Cuba to live if it were to achieve a government
acceptable to them. Creel noted that the upward income mobility of Cuban professionals favored acculturation, while the downward mobility of the other groups detracted from early acculturation.

Gremillion and Hitzman studied the adjustment of adult Vietnamese in the Baton Rouge area and obtained some inconclusive results. They found contrary to their expectations that the higher these refugees' income, the less adjusted and the more unhappy they were. They speculated that this tendency might be caused by the fact that circumstances in America do not allow them to live up to their potential. Finnan conducted an ethnographical study on the Vietnamese people in California and found that downward occupational mobility led some to experience mental health problems.

In contrast to Finnan's group, and from what we know of the Haitian refugees' background, these people are experiencing upward social mobility in the United States, even while living at the American poverty level. This sudden change is potentially stressful and could lead to eventual feelings of alienation and apathy. (Mead 1970, Merton 1967.) Language barrier is a problem for many refugee groups but, for the Haitians, this condition is compounded by their illiteracy and creates a situation which could require greater efforts in adjustment and, according
to Vinokur and Seltzer (1975), may involve a rather damaging level of stress. The smooth adaptation predicted for the South East Asians by Khoa and Vandense (1981) is hardly possible for the Haitians, whose deprived background renders them totally ignorant of many aspects of living in the modern world. Also, if we take into consideration Kunz’s theory and compare factors contributing to the Haitians’ flight with factors awaiting them in the United States as discussed in Chapter II, we would have a hard time predicting a smooth psycho-social adjustment.

The Haitian refugees are actively searching for meaning in their lives in the United States, but are constantly faced with language and culture barriers. Complications distort their perception and interpretation of situations and are an important determinant of behavior (Wolfe 1958). The refugees have difficulty understanding the concept of time and money management since they have never held formal jobs and never saw weekly paychecks prior to emigrating. A Haitian usually makes about $200 a year in Haiti. Hard workers as they may be, most Haitians have never learned the discipline of work and react in anger and sometimes quit their jobs in America when a paycheck is less than the previous week’s because of erratic work attendance. There is great pressure for them to conform to the U.S. social norms for their survival. Unequipped to process either the
verbal, written or even symbolic information which bombards them everyday, they revert to active observational learning (Rokeach 1968). Consequently, they are prone to adopt, without much understanding, many of the behavior patterns characteristic of the lower socio-economic classes. Kleinman and Daniel believe that cross cultural encounters are apt to facilitate refugee social and cultural adjustment, but the writer questions whether the nature of these encounters could not be a detriment to the refugees' psycho-social adjustment. In his 1973 thesis on the Haitians' assimilation in New York City, Paddy Poux found that most of the Haitians studied were not satisfied with their lives in America. His findings were similar to Finnan. But, unlike Finnan, he suggested that this unhappiness was the result of some "inner roots in the Haitian mentality and behavior such as pessimism and insularity bound by a religious (animistic) relinquishment pattern." Finnan simply pointed out that the Vietnamese had to mold their sense of selves to fit the job, whence the severe effect of downward occupational mobility.

All the above studies cited have dealt with refugees who have had some education in their home countries. Creel's sample were all skilled and educated. In Gremillion and Hitzman's study, 83% of the Vietnamese subjects had at least a secondary school education. Finnan's subjects were
a group of electronic students in California. Kleinmann and Daniel looked at "language education and social services" and therefore dealt with a literate group. In Poux's sample, sixth grade was the lowest level of education. Unlike the above studies, this study is dealing with subjects who can neither read nor write, and speak only Creole. No such group of refugees is found in the literature, although a small unpublished paper on the transcultural processes in mental health of Cuban refugees was presented by Dr. Jose Szapocznik from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Miami in May of 1981. In his paper, Dr. Szapocznik considers some important cultural characteristics of the 1980 Cuban refugee population. He discusses the fact that the young Cubans differ culturally from the older ones. These Cubans tend to be present oriented; a time orientation which makes difficult any motivation on the basis of longterm goals. Cubans are accustomed to very small personal space due to scarcity of housing in Cuba and overcrowded conditions in the cities. Emotional attachments are highly valued. These marginal people may have learned to rebel against the oppressive system of their country and may have internalized their rebelliousness which may cause great difficulty in changing their behavior towards authority. These Cubans have some alternate belief system; such as Santeria and Espiritismo.
which can become a critical ingredient of mental health delivery in America. These characteristics have a lot in common with the ones discussed in Chapter I and will be further discussed in a later chapter.
B. RESEARCH GOALS

1. The primary goal of this study was to identify various factors and conditions affecting the psycho-social adjustment of the Haitian "Boat People" in the United States. To achieve this goal, two samples of Haitians were surveyed in face-to-face interviews; a U.S. sample and a Haiti sample. The following methods were used:
   a) Levels of alienation were measured using the Middleton Alienation Scale described below.
   b) Alienation levels were compared between the "Boat People" and Haitians living in Haiti.

2. The second goal is to analyze comparatively the political, social and economic attitudes in terms of the following socio-demographic variables:
   a) age
   b) province of origin
   c) number of dependants
   d) occupation
   e) degree of voodoo belief
   f) residential preference (U.S. or Haiti)

3. Sample for this study consisted of two groups of male Haitians; a U.S. group and a Haiti group. The U.S. group was made up of twenty-one Haitian refugees living in the New Orleans area. The Haiti group was comprised of eighteen Haitians living in Port-au-Prince and five other Haitian
provinces, two of which (Port de Paix and Leogane) were busy areas of refugee departure. (Appendix IV)

Attempts were made to match the two groups on the following characteristics: Age—16 to 55; Province of Origin—Northern, Southern and Port-au-Prince; Last Occupation in Haiti—farmer, fisherman, laborer; Education—all illiterate; Spoken Language—Creole. The two groups were relatively homogenous in terms of background characteristics.

The Dependent Variable

After careful review of the literature, the Middleton Alienation Scale was chosen for its linguistic simplicity which facilitated translation into Creole, and also allowed for easier comprehension by an unsophisticated subject group. This scale consisted of six items, measured on a binary scale. 1) Powerlessness, 2) Meaninglessness, 3) Normlessness, 4) Cultural Estrangement, 5) Social Estrangement, 6) Estrangement from Work.
MIDDLETON ALIENATION SCALE

1. Powerlessness: There is not much that I can do about most of the important problems that we face today.

2. Meaninglessness: Things have become so complicated in the world today that I really don't understand just what is going on.

3. Normlessness: In order to get ahead in the world today, you are almost forced to do some things which are not right.

4. Cultural Estrangement: I am not much interested in TV programs, movies or magazines that most people seem to like.

5. Social Estrangement: I often feel lonely.

6. Estrangement from Work: I don't really enjoy most of the work that I do, but I feel that I must do it in order to have other things that I need and want.
CREOLE TRANSLATION OF THE MIDDLETON ALIENATION SCALE

1. Pa gin anyin m' ka fe po kalite problem ki gin yin nan le mond.
2. La vi ya si komplike ke m' pa konprann sa kap pase.
3. Defwa ou neg biome fe de bagay ki pa tro bon pou li ka rive nan la vi ya.
4. M' pa two interesse nan gade televizyon, sinema, li jounal, ak lot bagay ki interesse lot moun.
5. Defwa m' senti mwen pou koom nan la vi ya. M' senti mwen san soutien.
6. M' pa telman rinmin travay map fe ya, men mwen biome fe li pou' m ka achté sa' m vle' ak fe' sa' m vle' pou mwen viv.
In addition to the scale, it was decided to conduct in-depth, face-to-face interviews to validate the Middleton Scale responses and in order to gather more subjective information and assess the Haitians' attitudes on the social, political and economic aspects of life of the subjects in both the U.S. and in Haiti. Interviews were semi-structured and open ended. They were based on the following outline, to give an equal chance to all the subjects to discuss the same items.

INTERVIEW OUTLINE

Subjects of discussion were: Housing, Education, Employment, Leisure Activities, Friendships and Religious

The questions were open ended as follows:

1) Tell me about...
2) How do you feel about...?
3) What changes, if any, would you like to see?
4) If changes were made, how differently would you feel?
5) How do you expect the above areas to differ in the U.S.
6) What is the basis of your expectations?
7) How long would you want to stay in the U.S.
8) What changes would you like to see in Haiti before you return?
9) How would you like to see yourself five years from now?

The interviews emphasized the personal feelings and experiences of each subject. It was made clear to each
subject that no names would be used in the study.

The interviews were conducted in Creole.

Data from the U.S. group was collected during my internship at the Dryades YMCA in New Orleans during the 1981 Spring semester. I met individually with the Haitian refugees twice a week for a period of over three months. These Haitians provided me the entree to their towns and villages in the form of letters, gifts, photos and checks to be handed to relatives and friends.

Data from the Haiti sample was painstakingly collected over a four-week period of travelling rough roads over mountains and through rivers, riding in trucks overloaded with human beings, baskets of produce, live chickens, pigs and goats. The interviews were conducted on street corners, at the market place, on public transports, and two of them in a dug out canoe. Interviews were conducted with anyone willing to talk, but only eighteen male subjects matched the characteristics of the U.S. group closely enough to be used in this study. Some interviews were short, while others lasted half an hour. Care was taken not to be obtrusive, so as to avoid arousing the suspicion of the local government people, whose resentments towards anyone connected with the refugee situation was well known. Consequently, a cassette recorder which was brought along was only used a few times. Variance was used to test the hypotheses, and the
conventional .05 level of significance was used as the statistical criterion.

C. HYPOTHESES

1. Alienation levels will be high in the U.S. sub-sample.

2. Alienation levels in the U.S. group will be higher than the Haiti sub-sample.

3. The younger group of refugees will be less alienated on the scale than the older group.

4. The Northerners will be more alienated than will the Southerners and both groups will be more alienated than the group from Port-au-Prince.

5. The refugees with many dependents in Haiti will be more alienated than the ones with fewer dependents.

6. The fishermen and farmers will be more alienated than the laborers.

7. The voodoo believers in the U.S. will be more alienated than the Christian converts.

8. Subjects in the U.S. who wish to return home, eventually will be more alienated than those who wish to remain in the United States.
CHAPTER III
FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The findings for this study are based on the responses of thirty-nine male Haitians: Twenty-one Haitian refugees living in New Orleans, and eighteen Haitians living in Haiti. The data was compiled from in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews and oral administration of a Creole translation of the Middleton Alienation Scale. This study was conducted during the months of January through December 1981.

The results of this research are:
1. General Profile
   a) The majority of the U.S. group originates from the provinces: 52% Northern, 53% Southern and only 5% from Port-au-Prince, as shown in table 4.
   b) The mean age for the U.S. group is 28.3.
   c) The average number of dependants is 3.9.
   d) Last occupation in Haiti: 58% Farmers, 29% Fishermen, 14% Laborers.
   e) 81% of the U.S. group admitted to a high degree of voodoo adherence.
### Table 4
**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF 21 REFUGEES LIVING IN NEW ORLEANS 1981**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Province of Origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Category</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Dependents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 or more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last Occupation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishermen</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree of Voodoo Adherence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
f) As shown in Table 5, 100% of the U.S. group expected to go home at least for visits, while 48% wished to return home to live "when the government returns to normal."

Table 5

RESIDENCE PREFERENCE
OF HAITIN REFUGEES LIVING IN NEW ORLEANS IN 1981. N = 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREFERENCE</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return to Haiti for Visits</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return to Haiti to Stay</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Return to Haiti</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

g) In contrast to the refugees, their relatives expressed no desire for their eventual return since "We are keeping alive, thanks to the money they send us."

h) All the U.S. subjects admitted that their biggest problem in this country was adjusting to the high crime rate in their neighborhoods. They all had been either robbed or mugged.

i) 100% of the subjects interviewed believed that life was better in America because "People are free to become what they want."
j) Table 6 shows the extent of upward mobility experienced by 100% of the subjects.

Table 6

COMPARISON OF MONTHLY INCOME BETWEEN U.S. AND HAITI FOR
21 HAITIAN REFUGEES LIVING IN NEW ORLEANS. 1981.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTHLY INCOME</th>
<th>HAITI</th>
<th>UNITED STATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to $50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to $100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to $150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150 to $500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over $500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

k) The Haiti sample matched closely the characteristics of the U.S. group. 39% were from the North, 44% were from the South, and 17% were from Port-au-Prince as represented in Table 7.
Table 7
COMPARISONS OF THE TWO GROUPS ON BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS:
FREQUENCIES, PERCENTAGES, & MEANS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVINCE OF ORIGIN</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>HAITI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>11 (55.3%)</td>
<td>7 (38.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>9 (42.8%)</td>
<td>8 (44.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>1 (4.7%)</td>
<td>3 (16.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE AGE</td>
<td>28.3 years</td>
<td>28.3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE # DEPENDANTS</td>
<td>3.1 people</td>
<td>3.9 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCCUPATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>12 (57.1%)</td>
<td>6 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishermen</td>
<td>6 (28.5%)</td>
<td>6 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>3 (14.2%)</td>
<td>6 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIDENCE PREFERENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) The average age is 28.3, and the average number of dependants is 3.1. Occupations are equally represented in this group. Degree of adherence to voodoo is uniform, and 33% of the subjects interviewed expressed no desire to go to the United States, as shown in Table 8.
Table 8
RESIDENCE PREFERENCE OF HAITIANS LIVING IN HAITI IN 1981.
N = 18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would like to go to U.S.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not like to go to U.S.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Statistical Results

a) The U.S. Group scored 100% on the first four items of the scale: Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, Normlessness and Cultural Estrangement. 95% scored on Item 5, Social Estrangement. 50% scored on Item 6, Work Estrangement. See Table 9.

Table 9
ATTITUDINAL PROFILE FOR THE FULL SAMPLE:
A PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaninglessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normlessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Estrangement</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Estrangement</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Estrangement</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) There was no difference between the two groups in their scores on the first 3 items. However, none from the Haiti group scored on Items 4 and 5 and only 27% scored on Item 6. See Table 10.

c) As recorded in Table 10, subjects from both groups originating from the provinces scored significantly higher on the last three items than did the ones from Port-au-Prince.

d) Age and number of dependants showed no connection with the subjects' scores on items 4-5-6.

e) Farmers and fishermen scored higher than laborers, as shown in Table 10.

f) Voodoo belief had no significant relationship with the scores, contrary to expectations as hypothesized.

g) Subjects wishing to leave their present residence (U.S. -- Haiti) were more likely to score higher on items 4-5-6, as represented in Table 11.
**Table 10**

**BREAKDOWN OF ALIENATION LEVELS BY MAJOR BACKGROUND VARIABLES, FULL SAMPLE: Attitude on Items 4-5-6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>ITEM 4</th>
<th>ITEM 5</th>
<th>ITEM 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skill</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishermen</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Province of Origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residence of Preference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave (return)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

RESIDENCE PREFERENCE AND SCORES ON ITEMS 4-5-6.

FULL SAMPLE, N=39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Go</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Go</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

h) As indicated in Table 12, both groups scored higher on the Middleton Alienation Scale, however, the U.S. group scored higher than the Haiti group than as hypothesized.

i) In the U.S. sub-sample, alienation levels among farmers and fishermen were higher than laborers (Table 13).

j) Alienation levels were higher for the province subjects than the ones in Port-au-Prince, in the U.S. sub-sample (Table 14).

k) In the U.S. sub-sample, subjects who decided to stay in the U.S. had lower alienation levels than those who decided to leave eventually (Table 15).

l) Results of a t-test for difference-of-mean for age by alienation category, (dichotomized as alienated or not alienated), showed no statistical
difference at the .05 level, or the six attitudinal scales.

m) Results of a t-test for difference-of-mean for number of dependents by alienation category (dichotomized as alienated or not alienated) showed no statistical difference at the .05 level or the six attitudinal scales.

The above review of the findings supports hypotheses 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6, while hypotheses 3, 5, and 7 are rejected.
### Table 14
ALIENATION LEVELS BY PROVINCE FOR U.S. SUBSAMPLE. \( N = 21 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE</th>
<th>NORTHERN</th>
<th>SOUTHERN</th>
<th>PORT-AU-PRINCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( N = 11 )</td>
<td>( N = 9 )</td>
<td>( N = 1 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Powerlessness</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meaninglessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Normlessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultural Estrangement</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>0.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Estrangement</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Work Estrangement</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>100.0**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( P = 0.601 \)

** \( P = 0.537 \)

### Table 15
ALIENATION LEVELS BY DECISION TO STAY OR RETURN TO HAITI FOR U.S. SUB-SAMPLE: \( N = 21 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE</th>
<th>REMAIN</th>
<th>RETURN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( N = 10 )</td>
<td>( N = 11 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Powerlessness</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meaninglessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Normlessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultural Estrangement</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>70.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Estrangement</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Work Estrangement</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>100.0**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( P = 0.136 \)

** \( P = 0.353 \)
Table 12

ALIENATION LEVELS FOR HAITIANS IN U.S. AND HAITI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>HAITI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Powerlessness</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meaninglessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Normlessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultural Estrangement</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Estrangement</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Work Estrangement</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13

ALIENATION LEVELS BY OCCUPATION CATEGORY FOR U.S. SUBSAMPLE, N = 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDE</th>
<th>FISHERMAN</th>
<th>FARMERS</th>
<th>LABORERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Powerlessness</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meaninglessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Normlessness</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultural Estrangement</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>0.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Estrangement</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Work Estrangement</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P = 0.127

** P = 0.301
B. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Findings in this study indicate that over 85% of the refugees are from the Northern and Southern provinces in Haiti with the biggest number coming from the Northwest area. About 90% are farmers and fishermen. Their mean age is 28.3 with a standard deviation of 10.3. They have 4 dependants on the average, and the majority adheres to voodoo. None of them wish to cut loose their ties with their home country, although only 48% wish to return home to live someday. This view sharply contrasts with that of their relatives and friends who are surviving from the dollars sent home monthly from the refugees. All the subjects interviewed, admitted to experiencing a sharp upward economic mobility.

Although the sample for this study was not a true random sample, it is felt that the profile in this study reflects the characteristics of the Haitian "Boat People" in general. We arrive at this confirmation by taking together the survey, the writer's experience, travels, interviews of subjects and other Haitians in New Orleans, Miami and Haiti. It is safe to generalize the findings of the entire group of Haitian "Boat People" living in the United States. This group is composed of 75% males who have lost their land to local authorities and witnessed the death of friends and family members caused by
malnutrition, disease and mistreatment at the hands of the government officials. Few of them have dared rebel against the politics of their country. Instead, they let their mass exodus speak of their rebellion from Duvalier's tyranny. Fewer women and children took to the sea. They remained behind, subsisting on monthly checks from their husbands and other relatives in America.

The high level of alienation indicated in the findings could be due to the resulting feelings of powerlessness, meaningfulness and normlessness of the rural Haitians after twenty-five years of suffering from social alienation and other types of oppressive treatment at the hands of the dominant group within their home country. For these people, emigrating could be interpreted either as an ultimate attempt at survival or a suicide act.

The "Boat People" in the United States reflect a higher level of alienation than the Haitians in Haiti although their treatment in this country is relatively more humane than it has ever been in their home country. All the subjects agreed during the interviews that life in America was better than Haiti. Most of them felt that substandard housing in America was far more suitable than the thatch covered dwellings, lacking electricity and running water, which they had left behind. Unlike Haiti, their rented houses and apartments are equipped with
running water and have beds and windows. Most of all, there is no more threat of being washed into the sea by a hurricane. In the U.S. they can always count on getting paid for their labor and, in case of injustice, feel free to complain without fear of retaliation by government men. For the ones who are imprisoned, meals, beds and showers are provided. In contrast to the Haitian jails, there are no routine beatings and torture by prison guards. The relatively superiority of life in America is the pull factor in the influx of these "Boat People." However, many refugees experience great disappointment with various aspects of living in America, since 48% of the subjects interviewed do not wish to spend their entire lives in this country. The push factor for this group must have been largely political. They only wish to remain here until the Haitian government "returns to normal."

In order to understand the high scores made by the subjects on Cultural, Social and Work Estrangement, let us apply some of the characteristics of the new wave of Cuban refugees (Chapter VI) to the Haitian group. Dr. Szapocznik (1981) contends that there are some important cultural characteristics of the Cuban refugee population that should be considered. The following reflects very well the mentality of the Haitian "Boat People" as will be discussed.
Time orientation of the Haitian refugees is similar to the Cubans, as they deal mainly with the present. There is great difficulty in postponing gratification which is perhaps due also to the fatalistic view of this group. This difficulty has a potential effect on their adjustment in this society where time is a factor in all aspects of life: from employment to insurance, from interests on savings and loans to relationships. Time factor is also the cause of the impulsive nature of some of these men who would rather quit their jobs than wait six months for a pay raise.

The need for small personal space is another characteristic shared by the recent wave of both Cuban and Haitian refugees. This need could be potentially troublesome in a culture which demands great interpersonal distance. In Florida crowding sometimes causes problems with landlords who discover six or seven people living in the one bedroom apartment they rented to a refugee.

Their deep emotional attachments came across in interviews with employees and co-workers of Haitian refugees, both in New Orleans and in Fort Lauderdale. These people respond with warmth and much physical expression when treated fairly by the Americans. Friendship and family are important forces in their lives.
This type of emotional response creates potential conflict in a society where attitude toward friendship is more casual.

The refugees may have learned to rebel against the excessively oppressive system from which they came and may have great a deal of internalized rebelliousness toward authority and social norms. This may explain in part why these gentle "Boat People" sometimes fight so viciously among themselves.

Hypotheses 2, 4 and 6 were rejected, as no relationship was found between the refugees' age, number of dependants, alternate belief system, and their level of alienation. It was predicted that those with higher degrees of voodoo belief would experience greater problems of adjustment due to the loss of their spiritual and emotional support. In Haiti, the rural people consult their Hungans and Mambos in time of stress and for daily life decision making as well. These healers fulfill the roles of physicians and psychotherapists who confer with various spirits before rendering their diagnoses. In agreement with Dr. Szapocznik, this writer believes that the refugees' belief system would have a critical role in their psycho-social adjustment in America.

This conclusion is due mainly to the type of mental health services available in this country. Haitians are
accustomed to their traditional healers who can reach out
to them in the language of magic and mythical beliefs
(Rubenstein 1976). Kiev makes an insight comparison of
the Hungan and the psychiatrist. He notes that much of
the paranoid psychosis among Haitians in Haiti were
accompanied by religious delusions based on voodoo
beliefs. In working with their patients, the Hungans
applied theories which included ideas on etiology,
heredity, patient responsibility, disease description,
prognosis and treatment. They diagnose a number of
syndromes suggestive of depression, schizophrenia, acute
mania, hysteria, paranoia and mental deficiency. They
recognize the treatable from the untreatable and provide
individual and group therapy. Simpson (1978) adds that
spiritual possessions cannot be equated with mental
illness, since it is a relief from anxiety which serves as
a cathartic therapy. Many Haitian "Boat People,"
traumatized by their long voyage, exhibit bizarre symptoms
which could promptly be diagnosed as psychotic by American
mental health professionals (Chapter I). This writer
believes that if voodoo does in fact influence the "Boat
People's" behavior, this factor was not adequately
measured in this study. Voodoo belief amongst the Haitian
"Boat People" can also determine their reaction to medical
treatment. Some refugees in New Orleans and in Florida
admitted to discarding entire vials of prescribed medication only because they did not trust the doctor.

A higher degree of alienation from work was also found among the Haitian subjects in the U.S, despite the fact that they earn in a month what could take two to three years in their country. According to Mostwin, work satisfaction depends on free choice of occupation, which is not always possible for an immigrant. The Haitian refugees are hired in menial jobs using advanced technology, such as vacuum cleaners and dishwashers, about which they understand nothing. Most find no meaning in their work and admitted that the money was their only incentive. The few who found jobs using their occupational skills as fishermen and farmers expressed more satisfaction during the interviews. They feel more at one with their environment. Money is not their sole incentive, as they experience pleasure and pride in displaying their skills. Menninger (1975) contends that there is no evidence that work in itself is pleasurable. It is, rather, the conditions of work which may determine whether or not the worker will be satisfied.

A 9-to-5 job can be a stifling experience for a Haitian refugee who never learned the discipline of work. Like the Vietnamese in Finnan's study (1981), these refugees will have to make various adjustments to fit
their jobs. Their values create potential conflicts at work and hinder their adjustment process; in contrast, their middle class counterparts had an easier integration into this culture because they held values similar to the dominant American ones (Cohon 1981).

In addition to the above mentioned factors, we must not forget to mention the most obvious and detrimental factor in their adjustment into this racist society; their race. The Haitians make up the largest group of black refugees in the United States; a group of people who voluntarily migrated to this country. For a long time, pro-American propaganda was spread throughout Haiti, not so much by the Haitians already abroad, but by American industrialists on the lookout for cheap peasant lands and, perhaps most influential of all, the returning Haitian migrants seeking prestige by displaying their "Americanization."

Although disappointed with many aspects of living in America, all the subjects believed that the United States is the place where "people are free to become what they want." These Haitians completely lack the concept of racism which they encounter on a daily basis. Their trust of the white world makes them easy prey on the job, in the market place and in their neighborhoods. Their gentleness is easily misinterpreted as meekness or coyness by
Americans who hold generalized perceptions and misconceptions of the black race. A Haitian is not a "black person" in the American sense. His consciousness is not raised on a background of American slavery. He has no conscious need for black power. He has no reason for resentment and hatred, and feels no need for vengeance. However, racially motivated mistreatment by Americans might create a self-fulfilling prophecy and add an extra burden to the American social structure. Their denial of immigrant status by the INS is already being blamed on U.S. racism (Brown 1981, NAACP, Jesse Jackson), the latest charge cited in an article by William Raspberry for the Washington Post (Morning Advocate, March 16, 1982).

According to many social scientists (R. I. Merton 1949, G. E. Simpson 1953, C. Germain 1973, B. Mohan 1980), the interaction between human behavior and social environment can create situations so varied that to be understood they need to be examined on all possible dimensions. The Haitian "Boat People" left an environment which was oppressive, but familiar. In America, they have to face oppression in a totally foreign milieu with no reference point. Their distorted perceptions will undoubtedly lead to variations in their responses and adjustment in the United States (Simpson 1953, Moos 1976). There are many variables which could affect the response
of a minority to racial discrimination: parental advise and training; level of education; income; occupational status; individual temperament; group cohesiveness; solidarity; nature of contact; region of the country; nature of surroundings; group support/opposition to prejudice; age; color variation. The Haitians rate poorly on all these variables, except in individual temperament, as they are overall a friendly group of people. Simpson also offers three types of responses which could be expected: avoidance, aggression and acceptance. In Haiti, these people passively accepted their lot. Perhaps their aggressive urges were vicariously assuaged by the constant political violence surrounding them. There is practically no crime in Haiti other than the politically motivated violence. This is an interesting fact which might be partly explained if we accept Simpson's theory (1978) that the Haitian people derive relief from anxiety in their voodoo possessions. He further notes that these cathartic therapies provide for these people's robust mental health (in Haiti). One might ask, what means can the Haitians employ to achieve the same goals in the United States? What type of adjustment can these people possibly make with such a high level of of alienation? It is obvious that the "Boat People" have already accepted many of the American values. However, the question
remains: Will they ever (be allowed to) gain access to the means, being the "lowest men on the totem pole?" If so, how long will it take, considering that almost fifty percent of these refugees wish to return home eventually? Will they adjust at all or will they contribute to more social problems, similar to the black Americans, whose adjustment has been retarded by this social system for their past hundred years of freedom. In light of this, the chance of a healthy adjustment of the Haitian "Boat People" is doubtful.
CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK

A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The goals of this study were to identify various factors and conditions affecting the psycho-social adjustment of the Haitian "Boat People" in the United States. In depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted and a creole translation of the Middleton Alienation Scale was administered to twenty-one male subjects living in New Orleans and eighteen Haitians in Haiti, closely matched on various background characteristics.

Findings indicate that 85% of the "Boat People" came from rural areas of Haiti, their average age was in the late 20's, and they had four dependants on the average. They were mostly farmers and fishermen and admitted to various degrees of adherence to voodoo, with 20% of them denying any voodoo belief whatsoever. However, in depth interviews convinced the author that these refugees would not hesitate to revert to voodoo practices in time of need. Forty-eight percent wished to return home to live, although their relatives in Haiti expressed the opposite view. Having someone in the U.S. guarantees their survival in Haiti. One hundred percent of the U.S. subsample agreed that crime such as mugging or robbery is the biggest problem they face in this country. However,
they all believe that life in America is better than Haiti "because people are free to become whatever they want."

One hundred percent of the subjects were experiencing tremendous upward mobility.

Scores on the Middleton Alienation Scale indicated a high level of alienation in both groups with significantly higher scores among the U.S. group. Contrary to predictions, no relationship was found between the subjects' scores and their age, number of dependants and voodoo belief.

Finally, some important cultural characteristics were discussed in connection with the findings: time orientation, personal space, emotional attachments and internalized rebelliousness toward authority.

Overall findings from this study did not predict a smooth psycho-social adjustment for the Haitian "Boat People" living in the United States, in contrast to the first wave of Haitian and Cuban refugees. This writer also feels strongly that race must not be ignored as an important factor in the refugees' adjustment.
B. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

All the subjects interviewed in this study expressed a rather strong belief that America is the place "where people are free to be what they want." This belief is amazingly congruent with the views on American cultural pluralism held by many social work professionals: Pantoja and Perry 1976, G. R. Keller 1972, H. P. Trader 1977, B. Mohan 1980, and others. It is the contention of these authorities that America is a culturally pluralistic society which advocates individual expression in their search for meaning within the context of the "American Dream" (Pantoja and Perry, 1976). This concept appears to be the pull factor in migration to this country. The open arm policy of the United States has always guaranteed a berth to the uprooted and the oppressed. The social work profession in America has always lent its efforts and commitment to helping all people achieve social adjustment.

The profession has changed with the years and through accumulated knowledge has become more effective in its helping role. Individuals live in constant interaction with their social environment, and they will respond to variations in this environment (Allport 1968). This knowledge has guided the social work field throughout all its levels of practice. It has served as the undergirth
in its contacts with the numerous immigrant groups who have settled in this country, from the early nineteen hundreds to the present. Because of its "diverseness", the social work profession appears to be the profession best able to meet effectively the needs of the various refugee groups in America. Delving into numerous undertakings and carrying on various activities to better meet the needs of refugee people, it has been instrumental in the successful resettlement of the Indochinese and Cuban refugees. When conflicts emerged on the Texas coast between Vietnamese and American fisherfolk, social service workers were instrumental in helping to dispel misconceptions held by both cultures (P. D. Str, 1981; Refugee Reports, May 1, 1981). Regardless of their needs, refugees living in this country continue to establish rapport with the social work field. From research to programs, from policies to services, the field of social work continuously strives to meet both social and individual needs of these people.

According to this study, there are about 60,000 Haitian "Boat People" in the United States. Two thousand of them are being kept in jails and camps seemingly for having committed the crime of running away from an oppressive government. These people are separated from their family members who are in some cases sent away to
different states because INS officials seem to assume that Haitians do not have families in the true American sense. These refugees are frequently abused by many people because their gentleness is misinterpreted as submission.

These Haitians remain in a state of limbo because the INS will not grant them legal status based on the same requirements for political asylum through which other peoples, most recently the Salvadoreans, are accepted. This treatment of the Haitians stands in sharp contrast to both the ideology of cultural pluralism and the values held by the social work profession. Mistreatment of any group of people in a society can only pose a hindrance to their healthy adjustment.

The subjects studied in this research do not seem conscious of their alienated condition. The relative ease with which their basic needs are met in America contributes to their distorted perception of the American social conditions. Their concept of social justice and human rights appears to be non-existant when the only problem they admitted facing in this society was the high level of crime in their ghetto neighborhoods. What of the greater human injustices bombarding them on all sides? What of the employers who pay them six hours for every twelve hours of work? What about the landlords who rent them roach infested, uninsulated apartments in previously
abandoned buildings and charge them nearly half of their monthly earnings? What about the social isolation caused by language and culture barriers? How will we discriminate between mental illness and the aspect of voodoo possession? How will the mental health of these people be affected by so much stress?

How will these "Boat People" be educated to insure healthy adjustment in this society and in their home country upon their return? As a diverse profession, social work is certainly capable of answering these questions. However, to what extent is the social work field willing to "stick out its neck" for a group of socially disabled black refugees when it has not been able, in all its years of existence, to promote full growth for generations of black Americans. A few social work professionals have displayed commendable honesty in pointing out the differential treatment of blacks in the social work field. Trader (1977) admits that social welfare does not promote the general welfare of members of oppressed minorities. She further explains that most theories are culturally based. This view is in agreement with Mohan's (1980) contention that most of the theoretical frameworks in vogue are inspired by the status quo. This status quo, he feels, breeds inequality in the form of numerous forces of dehumanization. Chestang (1972) explains that the
feelings of powerlessness, helplessness and hopelessness experienced by the black minority group in this country are the result of social inconsistency and institutionalized disparity between word and deed. This, he says, in addition to other types of injustices, deprives this group of a feeling of self worth and esteem. Stone (1977) explains that integration is a necessary condition for the eradication of white racism at both the individual and institutional levels. Weiss (1974) found that institutional racism was the underlying factor in the low participation of blacks in mental health clinics. He explains that racist expectations influence most research on blacks. We need to keep in mind the controversial Moyenihan report on the black family. Kline (1969) believes that racism in America creates tensions leading to free floating aggression. When viewed in connection with the Haitian "Boat People," Kline's belief can be rather alarming. In support of Kleine, Kitano (1974) advocates equal status contacts and knowledge and attitudinal changes in order to attack ethnocentricity which he feels is the basis for racism.

Let us agree at this point that, in view of the above arguments and facts, the social work field cannot be unaware of the racism existing in its midst. Helping individuals adjust to this environment without a
concomittant attempt at improving it, is in fact, forcing upon these individuals the acceptance of injustice and dehumanization. The social work field must acknowledge the impact of racism throughout all its levels of practice. Should we accept this as fact, it follows that we should then accept Resnich's position (1980) that social workers should not separate themselves from the political ideas of the country where they practice. We go against our values when government and social policies are allowed to dehumanize entire groups of people.

American social welfare has always led the way in fostering social work and social services in developing countries. It is once again being challenged to help the Haitian "Boat People" in their psycho-social adjustment in this country, to effectuate the social changes necessary for the prevention of further Haitian migration and to insure their healthy functioning upon their eventual return home.
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APPENDIX I
MAP OF HAITI
APPENDIX II

MOLE SAINT NICOLA AND CUBA
APPENDIX III

COMMON ROUTE OF THE BOAT PEOPLE
APPENDIX IV

AREAS OF REFUGEE DEPARTURE
VITA

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TITLE OF REPORT OR THESIS
An Analysis of the Psycho-Social Adjustment Patterns of the Hatian "Boat People" in New Orleans, in 1981

APPROVED:

Supervisor or Chairman

Dean, School of Social Welfare

DATE 5-20-82