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# “Doing Business:” The Changing Shape of Grass Roots NGOs in Haiti

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

“DOING BUSINESS:” THE CHANGING SHAPE OF GRASS ROOTS NGOs IN  
HAITI

By

Jessica Covell

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

December 2013

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Doing Business in Haiti: The Changing Shape of  
Grassroots NGOs in Haiti

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This study provides an in-depth look at a NGO in Haiti that is attempting to generate some of its own revenue as opposed to relying solely on donor support. This case may prove to be a watershed and represent a new paradigm in development. The creation of micro-businesses and support for the state show signs of creating a more long term, sustainable solution to sanitation needs in Haiti. While the success or failure of this venture falls outside the scope of this study, it identifies emerging trends that may support the venture. The study concludes that while there is a long road ahead and many challenges there is potential for a small, grassroots non-profit to change the development paradigm. Additional research on the topic is called for as well.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have increasingly become key players in development, especially in those countries lacking effective government institutions and infrastructure like Haiti. Traditionally donor supported organizations; some non-profits are now seeking to poses rudimentary elements of profitability into their operations. The central question posed by this dissertation is, What has lead some NGOs to seek profitability in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world? Secondary questions include what is at stake and for whom when non-profits implement new models and in effect start "doing business?" Is such a transition possible at all? If it is possible, what does a profitable NGO contribute to Haiti or development in general?

A mere 700 miles from the United States, Haiti seems worlds away. 80% of the Haitian population lives under the extreme poverty benchmark of \$150 per year and 80% of the population suffers from some form of malnourishment. People regularly die of preventable diseases, a disproportionate number of which are women and children.<sup>1</sup> Many of the challenges Haiti faces come from its geographical location,

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<sup>1</sup> Project Medishare

from the hurricanes that bear down on it on a seemingly annual basis to the fault line where the recent earthquake occurred and devastated its capital. The fact that it is an island means that many things have to be imported into the country, so for example development projects that have been modeled after those in Sub-Saharan Africa cost much more to implement.<sup>2</sup> Its central location in the Caribbean, lack of strong government, and porous border has made it a trafficker's paradise. It is home to some 9.8 million people.<sup>3</sup> It is the most densely populated country in the Western Hemisphere. It is also the home of countless non-profit organizations and International Organizations working to improve conditions and promote development.<sup>4</sup>

NGOs are key players in Haiti and the phrase "NGO Republic" is both troubling and accurate. The country is a patchwork of NGO projects with little cohesion and confusing coordination. The lack of a strong state has created the space for NGOs and from the moment you land in Haiti the only thing more striking than the strong international presence is the poverty. NGOs range in size and scope and are all over Port-au-Prince. Set in the context of a strong UN presence the sheer number is

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<sup>2</sup> See The Millennium Village

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Development Index 2008

<sup>4</sup> The word "countless" is intended literally; there is no database or source that tracks the number of NGO's working in Haiti.

astonishing, pre-quake estimates put the NGO population at 10,000 plus.

If your goal is to build a school, you have already got it wrong.

Yet even with the large NGO population and The UN roles firmly entrenched (or as some may argue because of it) Haiti has continued to fail. Projects start and stop and new ones begin on top of where the old ones fell. NGOs want to step in and help, they want to build their own projects- not maintain projects started by other groups. With little to no government control infrastructure is left half-built or maybe even completed but with no long term plans for its continued support. The dependency cycle is firmly entrenched and NGOs are at its center. The simultaneous and awful truth is that NGOs are both provider of goods and services and perpetuator of dependency. The basic formula is donors provide funds and NGOs implement projects. In the best of cases, the NGOs directly interface with the population that they are serving and have some sort of plan long term. And even then, they are failing. Without institutions capable of supporting and limiting NGO work the donor driven model has really only served to

create the need for more donations and more donor driven projects.

The problem with this model is two-fold. First and foremost it simply not working, the long-term provision of basic services by a non-profit is not sustainable. Whether it is a lack of planning, a lack of funding, a desire to move on to the next project, mismanagement, derailment by natural phenomena, or some combination there of, for all of the players and money and resources being poured in Haiti continues to fail. Secondly, there are not unlimited funds and donors get fatigued. The world economic downturn, the rise of issues other places and the legacy of continued development failure all contribute and at the end of the day funding slows or dries up completely.

That something different is needed is growing increasingly clear. Success cannot simply be measured by the completion of a project. Yes a school needs to be built or a hospital or a road or a meal provided, but then what? How does it fit in with the reality on the ground? What happens tomorrow? And how does an NGO remove itself from the big picture, while ensuring the longevity and success of the project?

A potentially new model for development is beginning to emerge, driven in part by the fact that donations are

harder and harder to come by, but also from a desire to do development differently. Rather than relying exclusively on donations, the goal is to begin to generate some of their own revenue. If projects can be profitable, or at the very least operate with minimal intervention then maybe they can be sustainable. And maybe in this sustainability something else can emerge- the foundations of institutions that exist outside the world of NGOs. Maybe someone could do this for a living and maybe this could provide a small step towards economic stability. It's a lot of maybes, yes- but it is also a real possibility.

SOIL (Sustainable Integrated Livelihoods) is a grassroots, ecological sanitation organization that is piloting a project with these goals. SOIL takes human waste and turns it in to compost. It is literally taking waste and making it into a resource. In a country with very little sanitation coverage and with rampant erosion SOIL provides an essential service. Additionally with very few exceptions all of their work can be done with resources already in Haiti. It is a low-tech solution that is practical and makes sense in the Haitian context. Operating initially in public spaces, such as parks and markets, SOIL was thrust into quick growth after the 2010 earthquake and opened shared toilets in several IDP camps.

They have been piloting a household toilet project in conjunction with Stanford University and funded primarily by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. Essentially clients would have a composting toilet placed in their household and pay a fee to have a weekly service come by and collect the waste and take it to a compost site to complete the process. There is a potential revenue stream in the waste collection as well as in the sale of the compost. In addition to developing the service model, the goal is to develop the business model in order to transition this from a SOIL facilitated project to a private sector service. In effect micro-businesses could be developed around the servicing of these toilets. SOIL is also actively engaging the Haitian state in hopes of helping develop the proper state mechanism for government oversight.

SOIL has been selected as the organization that will be examined in depth in this case study of Haiti. This is based on the pilot project they are currently undertaking and on their accessibility to me. I had access to the necessary information to complete this study and was able to participate with SOIL both in Haiti and in the United States.

## Contributions

This study will contribute to the literature in several ways. First, there has been a call for more in-depth and critical work on non-profits that steps outside the NGO, Civil Society, Democratization dynamic. A key element of this research is to understand the internal workings and external context in effect "unpacking" the NGO. Second there is an emerging trend that the literature does not fully address in part because of its newness. Much of the driving force behind the shift has been the success of microfinance, which was left critically untouched until only recently. The literature that does exist is fragmented, divided between the social sciences and business; clearly if NGOs are going to reach across to the business side, social science must do the same in order to have a clearer picture of development. I aim to bridge that gap with this study, using a structural approach put forth by NGO scholar William DeMars.<sup>5</sup> Taking into account both the political and the institutional his theoretical approach provides a framework to address the scholarly gaps and facilitate this study.

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<sup>5</sup> See DeMars 2005 pg. 60

This research took place between August of 2009 and November of 2012. It included three trips to Haiti, one before the earthquake and two following. I also attended meetings in the United States, conducted interviews and participated in SOIL board meetings and events.



## Chapter 2 Political Economy and History

### How Did We Get Here?

Haiti is not a floating island detached from geography. It lies in the Caribbean, a mere 700 miles from the United States and shares its space with the Dominican Republic. As some scholars have suggested Haiti needs to be understood in its geographic, economic, and political location. Haiti's proximity to the United States has played a major role since its independence. Although not often considered part of Latin America its history has been decidedly Latin American in its relationship with the U.S. It is also a Caribbean nation and its physical geography has also proved crucial in its development.<sup>6</sup> The legacy of colonialism is also firmly entrenched, as the only former colony to have ousted its colonizer via slave revolt it has paid a heavy toll both financially and in terms of its relations with other countries. The racial component here cannot be over emphasized a nation founded by slaves in the United States' backyard during slavery was a grave concern to the southern United States.

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<sup>6</sup> See Portes, Dore-Cabral, and Landolt 1997 and Farmer 2003

Haiti has been historically fragmented politically, socially, and economically. That legacy has created a firmly entrenched path dependence that has brought us to the virtually stateless, economically stagnant, bitterly poor nation that it is today. There has never been a truly functional Haitian State. Civil society has been continually suppressed. There is a long-standing history of being subjected to foreign domination. The end result of this trajectory is a disjointed state populated with NGOs and IGOs who provide everything from basic services to education and fill the gaps left by the state.

#### In the Beginning

When Christopher Columbus landed in what was to become Hispaniola in 1492 he found the island inhabited by indigenous people. Columbus did not stay long and left a group of Spaniards in charge. Like in much of the Americas disease (especially small pox), work conditions, and guns made short work of the population.<sup>7</sup> France was the second European nation to "discover" what would eventually become Haiti in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. Saint-Domingue was the name of the colony, which roughly encompassed today's Haiti.

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<sup>7</sup> Estimates range from 300,000-4,000,000 Taino at the time of Columbus's arrival. As there was no census the true population is unknown

Indigenous labor was replaced by slave labor. It is important to note the slaves in Haiti were brought from all over Africa and although West Africa had a greater representation there was a mix of languages, religions and cultures amongst the slaves. This diversity would play a role in the development of post-revolution Haiti.

Saint-Domingue was the richest colony in all of the West Indies. The dynamic between France and its colony was akin to the relationship between Britain and the North American Colonies. The colony was required to import and export exclusively from France, with prices that were most favorable to the colonizer. This did not sit well with the elites in Saint-Domingue and black market trade emerged with neighboring Islands and most notably with the British North American Colonies, which continued on after the American Revolution.<sup>8</sup> These initial economic linkages served as the foundation for ongoing relations.

At the same time within Saint-Domingue diverse groups shared common goals. The population consisted of two groups of whites, predominately of a French background and four groups of African Decent:

- White Planters: owned plantations and had slaves.

Their wealth was directly tied to the slave based

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<sup>8</sup> See Corbett

economy. The terms of their relationship with France were an issue for this group and they tended to be more in favor of independence.

- **Petit Blancs:** this group held less power and wealth. They were the shopkeepers and artisans of the community. Many held slaves, but on a much smaller scale. They tended to be more loyal to France.
- **Free People of Color:** consisting of either former slaves who had purchased their own freedom or children of White planters or slave women this group was often times wealthier than the Petit Blancs. Like the white planters, they were pro-Independence and pro-slavery.
- **Slaves:**
  - **Domestic Slaves:** were typically treated better than their counterparts. They were more loyal to their owners and slower to join in anti-slavery movements.
  - **Field Slaves:** The majority of the slaves in Saint-Domingue worked on the plantations under very harsh conditions.
- **The Maroons:** Escaped slaves who lived off subsistence farming deep in the mountains. Staunchly anti-slavery they re-established many traditions from their native cultures.

Alliances were being formed around anti-French sentiment. An interesting dynamic existed in Saint-Domingue, Free People of Color were an elite group often times wealthier than the white planters. Typically they were pro-slavery and with a vision of an independent, slave holding nation. They most often scorned the local language of Creole in favor of French. Both free Black and White planters felt repressed by trade relations and formed an economic and political coalition.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile the slaves, who were not part of the coalition were increasingly revolting. Both the black and the white planters owned slaves and were fearful of such rebellions; they were outnumbered by a ratio of 10:1. The response was severe repression. This early dynamic is the first of several that help set Haiti on a path towards a fragmented civil society and a deep divide between elites and the populations at large.

And then came the French Revolution. The implications of the French Revolution were far reaching and Saint-Domingue strongly felt its effects. It marked a departure from a traditional monarchy to the enlightenment concepts of inalienable rights and citizenship. Very shortly after

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<sup>9</sup> The White planters remained staunchly anti-black in all other aspects- especially social.

the revolution began the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was passed. This declaration brought the issue of race and slavery to the forefront, especially in Saint-Domingue. Slaves were considered property and as such it was quite simple to subjugate their human rights, the free people of color however were another story. Not only were they not classified as property, they often times owned property and paid taxes. This was the angle worked by anti-slave groups in France and it resulted in another key piece of legislation which stated that "all the proprietors... ought to be active citizens." This slightly vague law served the unique role of potentially granting citizenship to Free People of Color and excluding some of the Petit Blancs, many of whom did not own property. This again made for some strange alliances on Saint Domingue. The White Planters, although interested in the liberal economics proposed by the Revolution were certainly not fully in tune with its goals. Although previously aligned, they were not looking to have the Black Planters as their equals or even the Petit Blancs for that matter. Alliances, cut along color and class lines shifted repeatedly. It is important to note that none of these groups were anti-slavery, in

fact quite the opposite. Their fighting though was the first "mini-war" leading to the slave revolt.<sup>10</sup>

August 21<sup>st</sup> 1791 marked the day of the Haitian Revolution. Slaves across Saint Domingue rose up violently against the White Planters. Once again race was a factor and although Black Planters were slave owners and practiced the same cruel forms of ownerships, the revolt was only against the White Planters. The White Planters, desperate to secure their position fully embraced the citizenship of all free people-including the Black Planters. This made the division clear free people on white side, slaves and maroons on the other. At the same time, France's role in the uprising further flamed the desires of the White Planters for Independence, strengthen the Black Planter's resolve for full rights and citizenship, and furthered the Slave's arguments for freedom. Again class and race proved distinct lines. Trade with the US and lessons from the US Revolution were inspiring outspoken white planters to push harder for freedom from France. The Black Planters on the other hand, still strongly pro-slavery, wanted to maintain ties with France as it was the only country that afforded them the protections of citizenship.

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<sup>10</sup> See Corbett

France, thinking that supporting the Black Planters would bring the colony back into the fold sent a delegation in the fall of 1792. Working in coalition with the Black Planters the French were quickly successful in squelching slave uprisings, defeating the White Independence movement, and holding on to the Colony. In a span of four months it looked as though issues on Saint Domingue were settled. Then February came. France declared war on Britain, who in turn blockaded the supply line to the colony and then they invaded it. The other side of Hispanola was held by the Spanish, also at war with France began arming the revolting slaves and created an alliance with revolt leader Toussaint Louverture. With the recent execution of the king of France the French commission on the island was rapidly losing options. No supplies, no leader, and outside forces placed the commission in a tough spot.

Once again, alliances shifted. Originally the French Commission had made it clear that they had no intention of abolishing slavery. However, some of the White Planters had aligned themselves with the British in hopes of returning to the old system, where the Free Blacks had no citizenship and taken up arms. In order to defeat those forces, the French Commission Freed 15,000 slaves in exchange for their services during the battle. This precipitated an



emancipation proclamation. Much to the anger of the Black and White Planters and the Petit Blancs, the French commission issued the proclamation as British troops were advancing on the Island. When the British arrived, many of the White Planters welcomed them. Once again, the Black Slaves, under the leadership of Toussaint Louverture switched allegiances, this time joining the French. This change made all the difference for the French and in the end the Spanish ceded Santo Domingo. The British, struggling with their own internal issues were less of the threat they had once been and in 1798 they departed the Island. The constant shifting of alliances, race, colonial legacy, provided the shaky foundations for the Haitian state that would eventually emerge.

Although still a French Colony, France's hold on Saint Domingue was lessening. Once again fearing an independence movement the French intervened, hoping to stir up tension between Toussaint and the Mulatto General Rigaud hoping to use the two to keep the other from obtaining too much power. In effect, France fostered the civil war called the "War of Knives." It was bloody and in the end, Toussaint ruled all of Saint Domingue and there were not foreign

occupiers in 1800. In 1801 Toussaint installed a new constitution, "the document that tweaked napoleon."<sup>11</sup> In it:

- Slavery was abolished
- Toussaint was made governor for life
- All men between 14-55 were to serve in militias
- Saint Domingue remained loyal and subservient to France

The constitution, however, was not approved or even shared with France prior to its installation, much to the chagrin of Napoleon. Again still a colony, Toussaint was seen by both the US and France as the leader of an independent nation. Even though legally bound to import and export from France, under terms set by France trade between the US and Saint Domingue boomed. On paper Toussaint was loyal to France, but most perceived his proclivity towards Independence. This was really the deciding factor behind Napoleon's invasion of Saint Domingue, he needed the colony, still the richest in the West Indies.

In 1802, Napoleon's forces landed on the Island. Outwardly offering blacks a prominent role in the French led government, the real goals of the invasion were a return to a white dominated slavery based economy under

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<sup>11</sup> See Corbett

France. Though their motives were transparent, the French were successful and captured Toussaint who was sent to France to die in prison. The treatment of Toussaint though was the final straw for the Island of Saint Domingue and combined with the attempt by Napoleon's forces to disarm the blacks helped push the revolutionary agenda. Again it seemed that France had the upper hand. Napoleon, inspired by the successful return of slavery to the Island of Guadeloupe sent more troops. It was once again the British who unknowingly turned the tide for the revolution by declaring war on France in the spring of 1803.

January 1 1804 Haiti was born. It was only the second republic in the Americas and was met skeptically by the US, France, Britain, and Spain as the first black republic. While it was independent, the economic ties it would forge with these nations were crippling. They were all still slave holders and the threat of a black republic was great, especially for the neighboring United States. As Paul Farmer notes:

Haiti became the outcast of the international community. Though some have confused this status with economic and political isolation, a pariah nation may have many uses. It may be a source of raw materials and tropical produce, much as a colony: it may serve as a market for goods, it may serve as a cautionary tale...Despite is nominal

independence; Haiti could not escape the shackles of foreign domination.<sup>12</sup>

So while the United States felt the threat of a black republic so close by France enacted another form of punishment on its former colony. Haiti paid reparations to France for the losses suffered by the plantation owners and they reduced customs collected on incoming French goods. This arrangement seen initially by Haiti as a means to ensure long-term trade relations with France served to once again subjugate the Haitian economy to France. "The situation was profoundly ironical and humiliating. A nation of former slaves and their descendants was forced to buy its independence and security from the slave owners who have exploited it and tortured it with impunity for more than an century"<sup>13</sup> Britain also forged relations with the fledging nation deals that once again saw Haiti as the far weaker partner. Trade was booming, but the arrangements came far short of being equal arrangements. The United States, still refusing to acknowledge Haiti's independence quickly became its primary partner in trade.

While international relations flourished, albeit on far less than ideal terms, the internal picture was far

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<sup>12</sup> See Farmer 2003

<sup>13</sup> See Ferguson 1987 pg 17

less dynamic. Often referred to as a "century of isolation" the 1800s saw an odd mix of Haitian policies, for example, although there were many foreigners living in and passing through the country. They were only allowed in specific areas in and around the ports. Most of the producers "were linked to the world market by intermediaries."<sup>14</sup>

Effectively creating a semi-feudal structure where the peasantry was isolated and the classes as a whole kept separate. This structure was re-enforced geographically and made it possible to extract the greatest amount from the lower classes and never hear from them, the legacy of which persists even today.

Much like Latin America, Haiti became increasingly tied to and influenced by the United States. This extended beyond the sizable trade relations to social and geopolitical spheres. Like its Latin American counterparts, Haiti lay within the U.S.'s area of influence and quickly became one of the first nations to denounce its imperialism. The practice of gunboat diplomacy to enforce US interests served as a visible assertion of the dominance that marked relations between the two countries throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even after the Civil War in the United States, when it finally recognized Haiti, the power dynamic

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<sup>14</sup> See Farmer 2003

remained firmly ensconced. This culminated in the 1915 invasion by US forces under President Wilson. The pretext was to quell instability; the subtext was the implementation of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.<sup>15</sup>

Haiti was, in fact, unstable at the time of the US invasion political and civil unrest combine with the economic legacy created turmoil. Once again, Haiti found itself in Latin

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<sup>15</sup> Roosevelt 1904. Originally intended to keep European Nations for venturing back into the Americas for the purpose of debit collection, it also provided a justification for U.S. intervention and a times Occupation of Latin America and the Caribbean.

American company as Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras were also subjects to US interventions. The rural, peasant rebellion that ensued was fueled in no small part by the legacy of slavery. Still armed from the revolutionary war, the isolated lower class clashed with the incoming Marines. The true cost in terms of lives is not known. The middle class, who had filled the role of intermediaries with foreigners, did not share the sentiments of the peasantry. Once again the social cleavages within Haiti played a role. The mostly urban upper and middle classes stayed out of the rebellion. Once it was crushed, the US took steps to consolidate its power. The Marines essentially paved the way for US businesses who took full advantage. Prime land and resources were allocated or conceded. "Haiti offers a marvelous opportunity for American Investment. The run-of-the-mill-Haitian is handy, easily directed, and gives a hard day's work for 20 cents, while in Panama the same day's work cost \$3."<sup>16</sup>

The U.S.'s paternalistic view of its actions in Haiti were made clear by President Roosevelt:

In Haiti a worse situation faced us.  
That Republic was in chronic trouble,  
and it as it is close to Cuba the bad

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<sup>16</sup> Financial America November 28<sup>th</sup>, 1926

influence was felt across the water. Presidents were murdered, governments fled, several time a year. We landed our marines and sailors only when the unfortunate Chief Magistrate of the moment was dragged out of the French Legation, cut into six pieces and thrown to the mob. Here again we cleaned house, restored order, built public works and put governmental operation on a sound and honest basis. We are still there. It is true, however, that in Santo Domingo and especially in Haiti we seem to have paid too little attention to making the citizens of these states more capable of reassuming the control of their own governments. But we have done a fine piece of material work, and the world ought to thank us.<sup>17</sup>

The elites, used to being just that, were shocked to find themselves in a new social system where class AND race played a role. Although it was an old refrain for the country, it was a new experience for the generation. The overt racism of their occupiers prompted protests (and subsequent often violent responses) for the duration of the occupation which ended in 1934. The U.S. press, during this time ever the U.S. cheerleader and a times mouth piece, celebrated the successes in Haiti declaring that it had been made all the better. However on the ground in Haiti the legacy of racism fostered by the U.S. occupation helped

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<sup>17</sup> Foreign Affairs, Vol VI 1928. Pp 573-586



pave the way for the Duvalier Regime and that the redrawing of the border with the Dominican Republic set the stage for the 1937 of tens of thousands of Haitians-in Haiti- by Rafael Trujillo.<sup>18</sup> The headway that had been made by the Americans during the occupation was short lived. Roads, ports, and infrastructure soon fell out of repair. Most of the population living in remotely rural locations continued on much as they had before and during the occupation, in isolation. The occupation did succeed in downplaying the role that Europe had in Haitian affairs (and helped keep Europe out of the U.S.'s arena) and created 19 years of relative stability. It did however; tie the Haitian economy that much more tightly to that of the U.S.<sup>19</sup>

Once again Haiti's experience mirrors that of Latin America, the U.S. withdrew, but only after placing a military backed government that met its approval. These governments allowed for no dissent. The 1957 election saw the victory of Francois Duvalier, also known as "Papa Doc," while some hailed it as the first free elections. Had there been election monitors though, some inconsistencies might have been brought to light. For example, the most popular

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<sup>18</sup> See Farmer 2003, Ferguson 1987

<sup>19</sup> See Ferguson 1987 pg. 28

candidate was not on the ballot and in one district with only 900 registered voters 7500 ballots were cast for Duvalier.<sup>20</sup> One of his first acts was to create a personal security force, which came to be known as "tonton macoutes" or bogeymen with sacks into which sleeping children can be stuffed. This group was instrumental in disappearing voices of dissent. It is estimated that tens of thousands of people died at their hands. Duvalier's vision of himself is reflected quietly clearly in his revisionist version of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Doc, who art in the National Palace for life, hallowed by Thy name by present and future generations. They will be done in Port-au-Prince as it is in the provinces. Give us this day our new Haiti and forgive not the trespasses of those anti-patriots who daily spit upon our country..." Papa Doc played to the racial lines that had long dominated Haiti, the blacks vs. the mulattos. These color lines also were socio-economic with the elite mulattos ruling. Papa Doc came to power and positioned himself as one of the blacks. He had been a founding member of a movement to promote Haiti's African roots and its majority black population over the few of European and mixed decent.

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<sup>20</sup> See Farmer 2003

The international community was relatively undisturbed by Duvalier's crimes. In the context of the Cold War, the primary focus of the United States was stopping the spread of communisms. U.S. friendly governments within Latin America and the Caribbean received little push back on human rights abuses. Duvalier was well aware that the success of his government relied on its acceptance and relations with the U.S and he sought to cultivate strong ties. U.S. troops even returned to Haiti, this time at the request of Duvalier, they helped keep him in power and in turn he offered a U.S. friendly government. It also offered the U.S. a chance to protect U.S. interest in Haiti. In 1963 the first wave of Haitians attempting to escape Duvalier arrived in the United States, they were promptly denied asylum. The role of cold war politics cannot be overstated here. It led the U.S. to not only tolerate, but support regimes with atrocious human rights records in the name of anti-communism. Given Haiti's location and given the Cuban experience, the U.S. would stop at nothing to keep Haiti from the communists. As his presidency progressed Duvalier made it increasingly more challenging for the U.S. to support him. In 1961 it became increasingly obvious that he was not even pretending to embrace democracy anymore. He became the only presidential

candidate, in which only his supporters were allowed to vote, and won the election unanimously.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of his presidency what had changed for Haiti? The scars of the violent regime were deep. Tens of thousands of lives had been lost. The constitution had been largely ignored. Haiti was right back where it had started, "the rich were getting richer, the poor poorer and more numerous; the old elite (oligarchy) was more secure in its privileged position...and on Duvalier's death bed, the American Embassy regained the political dominance it had lost during his 'reign'."<sup>22</sup> What he had created though, was a practical, albeit rooted strongly in terror that functioned under a system of patronage and allegiance.

Duvalier set the stages for his son's presidency as well. First he had himself named "President for Life" by what had become his puppet parliament. Then he had the age for presidency lowered to 18. Then still in 1971 he created a referendum asking that his son Jean-Claude, "Baby Doc," succeed him as president for life which passed with over two million votes in favor and not a single one opposing. When he died later that year many were sure that the

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<sup>21</sup> See Ferguson 1987

<sup>22</sup> See Dietrich and Burt 2005 pg.384

Duvalier era was over, Baby Doc was only 19 and it seemed unlikely he would hold on to power. But hold on to power he did, Baby Doc would serve as president until his ousting 15 years later. Continuing with the human rights abuses and using the poor nation as his own piggy bank, "The United States had decided that the perpetuation of the tyranny would not in any manner effect American interest."<sup>23</sup> The U.S. supported this transition and once again negotiated to keep its interests on top. Increased market liberalization offered both continued assurance of Haiti's anti-communist politics and special deals promoted U.S. business interests.

Baby Doc deviated from the traditional Duvalierism practiced by his father. His focus on economic reforms in the name of liberalism helped win him some fans within the Haitian Business Community. On the flip side, his politics left him more exposed to international pressures than his father had been. The attempts to balance his increasingly internationally influenced government chipped away at the foundation his father had put in place and he was unable to build support from other sectors to replace those losses.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See Diederich and Brut 2005 pg. 403

<sup>24</sup> See Ferguson 1987 and Farmer 2003

When the Duvalier era ended in 1986 there was surprisingly little protest from the United States, mainly because there was no ideological motivation behind it.

The revolt against Duvalier found few critics; there could be little moral or ideological controversy in a movement which promised to liberate Haiti from a regime which had become more or less an international pariah. Even the U.S. administration, which like others before it had tolerated Duvalier in preference to any radical alternative, was obliged to describe the rebellion as 'inspiring', having first ensured the safe departure of its erstwhile client and his embezzled fortune. For, unlike Cuba, Grenada or Nicaragua, Haiti did not undergo a revolution in any proper sense. There was no leading political party or organization, Marxist or otherwise, to mobilize the people against the regime; there was no guerilla war or armed uprising...There was the massive majority of the Haitian People who simply demanded their right to justice and freedom. In these terms and within these limits, the movement against Duvalier was tolerable to Washington and was admired around the world.<sup>25</sup>

Once again International support, or at least the lack of direct intervention, impacted Haiti. The fact that the U.S. did not intervene allowed for the successful ousting of Baby Doc.

Once again, Haiti had been robbed. The true amount of funds stolen under Papa and Baby Doc isn't known. It is

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<sup>25</sup> See Ferguson 1987 pg. viii

estimated that the younger Duvalier took in excess of \$120 million dollars.<sup>26</sup> Both Duvaliers systemized their financial crimes, just as they did with the human rights violations perpetuated under them. "In terms of institutional criminality, there was little qualitative difference between the two."<sup>27</sup>

#### The Rise of Jean-Bertrand Aristide

Born in 1952 Jean-Bertrand Aristide was a catholic priest whose politics were deeply rooted in Liberation Theology. He first garnered attention while Baby Doc was still in power as a staunch advocate of democracy. Expelled from his order, Aristide's popularity in Haiti only grew, "having lost his parish (he) seemed to have become the pastor to all of Haiti's Poor."<sup>28</sup> Many sectors of society encouraged him to run for president. He became Haiti's first democratically elected President and assumed the role in February of 1991. His first goals were to reform the state apparatus focusing specifically on crime and insecurity. The full scope of international attempts to derail his administration were as of yet to be revealed, but the U.S. especially took issues with his agenda. His attempt to raise the minimum wage to U.S. \$3 per day for

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<sup>26</sup> Miami Herald February 1, 1987

<sup>27</sup> See Ferguson 1987 pg. 150

<sup>28</sup> See Farmer 2003 pg.128

example did not go over well with USAID who wanted to keep Haiti's investment climate more friendly to its interests. They helped frame him as anti-business and gave funds specifically to programs that challenged him. The U.S. press also ran with the mantra of an Anti-business Aristide. While the poor clearly came first for him, he made no attempts to nationalize industry, control the market, or limit trade.

His first term as president was short lived. He was overthrown by a coup at the end of September of the same year. Unlike previous coups where the violence died down after a few days, the post coup period violence brutally persisted. The Administrations of the first President Bush did not know fully how to respond to ousting of Aristide, who it viewed as radical, and said little. This silence was understood by the de facto government as approval. During his short tenure, many things in Haiti changed, most notably in the curbing of human rights violations.

In Aristide's seven months in office, Amnesty International documented 26 human rights violations-the majority of those committed by the Anti-Aristide Army. In Contrast, Boston Media Action, citing the Haitian Platform form human rights...reported '1867 executions, 5096 illegal and arbitrary arrests, and 2171 beatings and shootings under the coup government.'



Many Haitians were convinced that the U.S. had known of the coup in advance, how could it not? With CIA informants in the military and much of the Haitian Military's leadership having been trained in the U.S. it seemed unlikely the U.S. was unaware. The Clinton Administration took a more firm stance with the Coup leaders. The increasing violence and the drugs flowing through Haiti caused him to step up the embargo. In 1994 Aristide returned to Haiti to and served as president until 1996. He was then elected again and served as president from 2001-2004 when he was once again ousted. This time much deeper international involvement is suspected with fingers pointing at both the U.S. and France.

The instability of Haitian politics is highlight by the regins of the Duvaliers and Astride. While the former held power for decades, the insecurity, human rights violations and rampant corruption served to further divide civil society. The latter, by almost all accounts legitimately elected, overthrown twice with at the very least some strong interference by the United States.

Since Aristide's departure Haiti has been occupied, initially by U.S., French, and Canadian Troops and the by the United Nations. The UN troops, officially called MINUSTAH which stands for the U.N. Stabilization Mission in

Haiti has been controversial from the beginning. Predominately Latin American in its staffing MINUSTAH is overseen by the Brazilians. The troops officially on a peacekeeping mission are there to create and maintain stability.

But UN concerns about political stability in Haiti are only a justification for the ongoing presence of a 9,000-strong "peacekeeping" military force that keeps the popular movement in check by targeting left-wing activists and criminalizing the poor. In fact, Brazilian military forces are carrying out counterinsurgency operations in Haiti similar to those used in Brazil to repress the poor in the favelas and activists from the Landless Peasants Movement.<sup>29</sup>

Accused of acts of violence including rape Minustah has been the subject of countless demonstrations in Haiti. The occupation has only contributed to Haiti's poor world image.

There is no McDonalds in Port-au-Prince

The beginning of the 2000s saw an impoverished Haiti, having left behind its political violence, continuing to struggle with its reputation; the gap between rich and poor

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<sup>29</sup> See Haitian Analysis December 18<sup>th</sup> 2008

still painfully wide. As the Caribbean nation that produces the most intellectuals, its extreme poverty stands in dark juxtaposition. Brain drain continued to pull much-needed Political and Social capital from Haiti. A constitution that prohibits dual citizenship structurally re-enforced the exclusion of many intellectuals from participation. Convoluted laws about land ownership further complicated progress. While U.S. interests in Haiti were still ever-present, the traditional markers were not so visible. The U.S based fast-food chains that dot cities all over Latin America and the Caribbean are nowhere to be seen. No municipal buses ran, instead there are make shift transports called "tap taps." It is impossible to separate the lack of infrastructure with the lack of economic development. Haiti made progress in quelling the political violence, but continued to fall behind in economic integration.

### The Earthquake

There are no words that fully capture the devastation of the January 12, 2010 earthquake. There are also no metrics

that fully measure its impact. Some 300,000 people lost their lives and a similar number were injured. The precariously built city of Port-au-Prince was so ill suited for such seismic activity, buildings that did not crumble, "pancaked" into stacks. Streets buckled, and houses slid down the side of mountains. The pre-quake city had lacked fundamentals; electricity if it was present was inconsistent clean water and sanitation was not widely accessible. And many traditionally state functions were performed by IGOs and NGOs-if they were performed at all. Outside of the capital city access to resources was even more limited. There was no place less prepared in the western hemisphere for a major earthquake.

We already knew the statistics of a disaster worsened by the inertia (or heedlessness) of a pretend state that lacked form, means or political legitimacy. It's the urban chaos, the absence of any infrastructure worthy of the name, as much as plate tectonics that explain 300,000 dead, the same number injured or maimed, with more than a million people displaced, most of them now in the hundreds of camps around the capital.<sup>30</sup>

The earthquake served as an intervening force that worsened an ongoing humanitarian crisis that has no

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<sup>30</sup> Wragny 2011

parallels in the western hemisphere. It deepened the suffering, weakened the fragile state, and more firmly entrenched the role of the IGOs (especially the UN) and NGOs.

The media coverage of the quake brought focused, international attention and donations came pouring in. It also highlighted the lack of understanding as new reporters cited the "lack of electricity" in post-quake Haiti, not realizing that this had often been the case in pre-quake Haiti as well. Standing in front of mangled roads, the media referenced the earthquakes destructive powers unaware that the road had looked that way long before the earthquake. The fact that it was hard to tell which areas of Port-au-Prince the earthquake had affected speaks volumes. It was a city on the edge before the quake.

IDP Camps sprung up all over Port-au-Prince, some were well resourced and had well-made tents, clean water, and sanitation. Other camps where decidedly more makeshift and its residents created shelters from blankets and tarps. The rise of over 150 camps in and around Port-au-Prince spoke to the tragedy, the fact that for many of the IDPs it was the first time they had ever had access to basic services such as doctors spoke to just how engrained the crisis is. Some camps consisted of a small grouping of families,

others numbered in the 100,000s. The IDP camp at the former Petionville Golf Course made headlines for the 200,000 plus people who called it home. Those camps that received services did so through a coordinated effort of various IGOs and NGOs. So while Oxfam would provide water and sanitation in one camp, Doctors Without Borders would provide medical care. Each camp typically would elect a governing board of residents who would then interface with the relief agencies. While the level of coordination and cooperation is highly debatable what was and continues to be glaringly apparent was the lack of state involvement in the distribution of aid.

The state did emerge in the debates over where and for how long camps could exist. Some camps had sprung up on private land, for a while the Haitian government protected the rights of the IDP population to remain on privately held land but then as time progressed shifted that position. Permanent camps were set up, well outside the city limits with the hopes of building long-term communities. Corail was populated in stages for example. It had well ordered tents, on an open expanse of land. It is dusty, hot, and completely devoid of vegetation. Aside from a road, there is no infrastructure. Aside from rocks,

there is no landscape. If it is not the middle of nowhere, it is pretty close.

### The Rise of NGOs in Haiti

The true number of NGO's in Haiti is only a guess, pre-earthquake estimates put the number around 10,000. While their precise tracking is not possible, the fact that NGOs are a major presence in Haiti is without question. From providing water and sanitation to health care and basic education the role of non-profits in Haiti has been highly visible. Stepping in for the state, or lack thereof in many instances, these operations have been primary donor driven. The non-profit sector in Haiti began to grow in the 1950s and has been steadily expanding since the 1970s. Especially in the rural areas where there is little semblance of a state, NGOs provide roads, education, health care, food, and many other services to the population. For example between 1992-94 they provided 60% of all rural health care services granted this was a time of crisis in

Haiti, but even still by 1997 reports estimate that 50% of the same services were still being provided by NGOs.<sup>31</sup>

The importance of NGOs in Haiti is strongly tied with the state not only in terms of filling in gaps left by the Haitian Government, but also has historically corresponded with the governments foreign relations. During times when U.S. and Haitian relations were at a low, USAID's bilateral funds to the Haitian Government diminished greatly. NGOs in turn, played a greater role in Haiti. The Haitian State historically has had some capacity in medicine; however that capacity has been concentrated in urban areas. The area of water and sanitation is one almost completely dominated by NGOs, many of which are large and work with smaller partner NGOs for implementation. "For education, the proportion of services provided by the GOH (Government of Haiti) has been even lower. Traditionally, the GOH has never attempted to meet the demand for universal primary or secondary education."<sup>32</sup> In 1997 some 80% of all schools are funded by NGOs, churches, or for profit groups. In terms of agriculture there is more government support. The environment and its protection and human rights are almost the exclusive territory of NGOs.

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<sup>31</sup> Morton 1997

<sup>32</sup> Morton 1997 pg. iii



Determining the impact of NGOs is also challenging. That NGOs have a significant impact is clear, measuring that impact less clear. Just as there is no accurate count of their number, assessing NGOs in Haiti is difficult. The reasons behind this are twofold; one there is no overarching entity to which the NGOs themselves are responsible. Two, the NGOs themselves are not always clear in their reporting. According to Haitian Resource Development Report, many non-profits in Haiti have a clear mission to serve the poor, yet have no definition of what "poor" means.

While providing clear metrics on how many NGOs there are, or how they register is not possible, it is possible to highlight the reason for the information gap. Many NGOs in Haiti are not registered with the Haitian government. For those who are, there are two methods of registering the first is as a not-for-profit, the second is merely as an organization. While in theory the benefits of registering as a non-profit outweigh those of merely registering as an organization the process for gaining legitimacy is unclear at best. And since many organizations can exist without registering at all there is often times little incentive to pay lawyers to chase down a process that may or may not lead to registration. Ironically the

motivation for many smaller NGOs in pursuing registration at all is a prerequisite to receive funding from larger NGOs or to partner with the Haitian Government. Larger NGOs partner with smaller ones to implement projects. For larger NGOs, registration with the countries where they operate is often part of their own charter. So in effect, there is a partial registration of some NGOs under one of two registration types the methods of which are not clear.

The fractured nature of the Haitian State has both facilitated the rise of NGOs and ensured that they remain uncounted. Only faintly resembling a government, Haiti's failure to provide basics like water, roads and schools makes the prospects of corralling and counting NGOs highly unlikely.

The fractured nature of the state is further visible when it comes to the coordination of IGO and NGO efforts. Haiti is both in a perpetual state of humanitarian crisis and disaster prone. Both ongoing humanitarian efforts and disaster response are coordinated, sort of. The difference between ongoing projects and disaster response is not always clear. Many times the players are the same. The results of coordination efforts speak to the limited state capacity.

## Cluster Coordination

The implementation of the Cluster System by the UN has served as one attempt to coordinate efforts. Focused on disaster recover the system is used almost exclusively in States with limited capacity, its purpose is to facilitate humanitarian responses. This still evolving system has been implemented after various crises including the earthquake in Pakistan and the South East Asian Tsunami. It has been used in Haiti after hurricanes and most recently after the 2010 earthquake.

The cluster approach was first set out in a Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) paper commissioned by the UN. The basic premise was that accountability, predictability and reliability could be improved by identifying organisational leaders for areas in which there was an identified gap in humanitarian response. These organisations would then be responsible for specific areas, or clusters.<sup>33</sup>

The goal is to coordinate similarly focused, IGOs, NGOs, and government agencies to provide a cohesive response. Themed meetings, such as the Water and Sanitation (WASH) cluster, are held. Studies on the effectiveness of this system have found issues with its implementation worldwide. In the Haitian context the biggest challenge to the success of the cluster meetings has actually been over-

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<sup>33</sup> Action Aide International

coordination. "Haiti is a country where the main coordination challenge is not necessarily a lack of coordination, but an abundance of parallel and sometimes dysfunctional coordination mechanisms."<sup>34</sup> Additionally no one is required to participate in the cluster system so many NGOs simply do not. And, in the Haitian context, language barriers further hinder efforts as many meetings are held in French, English and Creole.

The UN effectively implemented a system that paralleled systems already in place. Nationally disaster response was coordinated through the système National de Gestion des Risques et des Désastres (SNGRD). Comprised of 26 governmental and non-governmental organizations. On paper, the coalition helps to unify disaster response efforts. The highly politicized nature of aid combined with conflicts at the municipal level has severely limited the effectiveness of this coalition. An international arm of SNGRD coordinates international partners, including the UN.

Further convoluting both disaster response and the UN role is the fact that MINUSTAH, the UN mission in Haiti operates within the context of SNGRD and uses a different

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<sup>34</sup> Global Public Policy Institute April 2010

approach from the cluster approach at times. In 2004 it began implementing a "table system"

In the aftermath of the devastating Hurricane Jeanne in 2004, MINUSTAH proposed strengthening this national coordination mechanism of humanitarian and development actors at the provincial and communal levels by establishing so-called tables de concertation (TDC). The TDCs are complemented by tables sectorielles (TS) dealing with technical issues in different sectors (e.g. Agriculture, Water and Sanitation, Infrastructure, Education). By July 2009, the TDCs and TSs were implemented in three out of Haiti's ten provinces. The aim of the "table approach" is to "create a forum for dialogue, discussion and exchange of information [in order to] satisfy and better channel the needs for humanitarian aid, the identification of problems, the filling of gaps and activities for early recovery and regional development. "In other words, the aim of the "table approach" closely resembles that of the cluster approach.<sup>35</sup>

The difference between the cluster and table approaches is not clearly delineated by the UN. According to policy the cluster approach focuses on national coordination while the table system deals more with local and municipal interactions. However there are local clusters as well.

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<sup>35</sup> Global Public Policy Institute April 2010

There are also international coordination efforts. Again the players, or at least parts of them are similar, the UN, MINUSTAH, NGOs, IGOs etc.. Clearly a lack of coordination is not the issue, but rather the over-coordination, duplication, and political realities have created a nebulous, ineffective system. For example MINUSTAH is always part of the UN, but the UN is not always MINUSTAH. OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) is also part of the UN, but not part of MINUSTAH. The two however, work together on some occasions. There are table and cluster approaches set in the context of the intergrated mission that uses feet to indicate how they are operating.<sup>36</sup> Confusing, yes, and this is the context in which efforts are being coordinated.

Again this highlights the huge gap left by the state. It may also serve to widen it. Haiti is a country run by IGOs and NGOs in many ways. Neither of which are democratically elected institutions. While IGOs and NGOs fill critical spaces, they do little to help build the capacity of the state.

#### Economic Impact of NGOs

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<sup>36</sup> OCHA relies on an integrated approach. In situations of relative calm they are “two feet in.” In situations of conflict OCHA will have no presence (except for when they do!) and be considered “two feet out.” There is of course a “one foot in, one foot out model as well. How and when the models are applied is relative to political and security situations on the ground. OCHA on Message, 2010

That NGOs have a direct impact on the political capacity in Haiti is clear and established. That NGOs also have an economic impact is also clear, but less so and emerging in two distinct directions. First NGOs many times undermine the economic capacity of Haiti. You can pay to see a Haitian doctor or you can see a volunteer foreign doctor for free for example. International groups, especially larger NGOs have helped to hyper-inflate the cost of real estate in Port of Prince as well. On the flip side, some NGOs are actively engaged in economic capacity building this can be seen in the push to "Hire Haitian" whenever possible for example.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions as the saying goes. The costs of volunteering in Haiti are hard to measure. From church groups building orphanages to doctors and other highly skilled professionals giving their time in a variety of settings, the role of NGOs in the Haitian economy.

The majority of non-profits in Haiti have an international component to them and as such organizations are often times registered in their own home country. The US, Canada, and France top the list of countries with a large number of not-for-profits operating in Haiti.

Registering in the home country is very common and facilitates the fund raising process. But there is no overarching entity that brings these records together.

In a place like Haiti, where the majority of the population lives well below the poverty line, the informal economy reigns, the state is fractured at best; it is easy to see why precision is not possible. But the inquiries are still invaluable.

Haiti's current fragmented civil society, centralized government, weak state, and economic crisis are a direct result of its history. A path dependence towards ever-increasing instability has created the space for the rise of NGOs. This is the context in which they operate.



## Chapter 3 Literature Review

There are several bodies of literature relevant to this study of NGOs transitioning from purely donor driven to seeking some level of self-generating profits in a country such as Haiti.

At the macro level are works focusing on a branch of economically rooted studies in (under)development and seeks to identify themes across countries that fail to thrive. Economist Jeffrey Sachs highlights several trends starting at the household level and moving up to the state level. Citing what he refers to as the Poverty Trap, he argues that the poor stay poor in many cases, because they are poor. The cumulative lack of resources, infrastructure, public health, food, and education are both a cause and a result of "economic stagnation."<sup>37</sup> He further cites another factor significant to the Haitian case, that of geography. Haiti, hurricane prone, deforested, tropical disease-infested location have played a significant role in its underdevelopment. This body of literature also identifies

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<sup>37</sup> See Sachs 2005. At the household level, he cites a lack of savings, absences of trade, technological reversal, natural resource decline, adverse productivity shock, and population growth as key metric. At the national level, "the poverty trap-Poverty itself as a cause if Economic Stagnation, geography, fiscal Trap, governance failures, cultural barriers, geopolitics, lack of innovation, and demographic traps.

eo-politics and governance as key metrics, two other strong themes in Haitian history.

The role of history in in development also takes center stage. In Andre Gunder Frank's seminal work "The Development of Underdevelopment" he cites both a policy and theoretical failure on the part of the global north.

Most historians study only the developed metropolitan countries and pay scant attention to the colonial and underdeveloped lands. For this reason most of our theoretical categories and guides to development policy have been distilled exclusively from the historical experience of the European and North American advanced capitalist nations. Since the historical experience of the colonial and underdeveloped countries has demonstrably been quite different, available theory therefore fails to reflect the past of the underdeveloped part of the world entirely, and reflects the past of the world as a whole only in part. More important, our ignorance of the underdeveloped countries' history leads us to assume that their past and indeed their present resembles earlier stages of the history of the now developed countries.<sup>38</sup>

This anti-modernization theory stance provides both real insight into the Haitian experience and calls for more targeted and historically accurate policy and theory.

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<sup>38</sup> See Andre Gunder Frank 1966

Similarly focused works with a base in Environmental Geography arrive at similar conclusions; citing physically rooted issues such as climate change, hostile neighbors, collapse of essential trading partners, environmental problems, and failure to adapt to environmental issues. The culmination of these factors is "collapse" in most cases and in the Haitian case specifically. None of these factors exist in a vacuum and there are, of course, exceptions but the major contribution of the literature is the identification of the recipes for failure.<sup>39</sup>

A grouping of literature looking at the state provides some additional insight. Since "bring the state back in" scholars have placed varying importance on the state's role in a variety of capacities from revolutions to democratization.<sup>40</sup> Most relevant to this study is the literature surrounding the debates around the state role in development. Tackling the issue from political economy vantage point authors have explored the validity of theoretical frame works used to understand that state's role in development while others have looked at state

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<sup>39</sup> See Diamond 1997, 2005. Other key metrics include, Deforestation and habitat destruction, Soil problems (erosion, salinization, and soil fertility losses), Water management problems, Overhunting, Overfishing, Effects of introduced species on native species, Overpopulation, Increased per-capita impact of people.

<sup>40</sup> See Evans et al 1973

structure and examined it as an economic actor.<sup>41</sup> From a more cultural-historical perspective the state has been seen as a myopic organizer churning towards a neo-modernist development trajectory.<sup>42</sup> While these debates provide a multitude of lenses to view state and development, Haiti is a country with little to no state capacity. In the rural areas especially, Haiti is a patchwork of IGO and NGO projects. The aspect of State focused literature most relevant to this dissertation is that which focuses on the role of NGOs on state capacity.

Arguing that in societies with weakened states NGOs are part of a viscous cycle that while meeting the needs of a given population undermine the development of the state thus contributing to the long-range problem.<sup>43</sup> The more current literature focuses on Haiti specifically cites the 2010 earthquake as destroying the "very thin layer of state administrative capacity."<sup>44</sup> Non-governmental organizations, already very present stepped in to fill those gaps. For those that were not engaged at the community level, the results have been a further erosion of the state.

A more historical and structural approach also arrives at a similar conclusion. Suggesting that in the context of its

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<sup>41</sup> See Evans 1994; Kohli 2004

<sup>42</sup> See Scott 1998

<sup>44</sup> See Zanotti 2010

weak position internationally and domestic political strife, NGOs have served to diminish the state.

That the historical boycott of Haiti's government in the 19th and 20th centuries by the international community, the constant internal struggle among the members of the elite for the control of state power, and the weakening of state structures through the creation of nongovernmental organizations have weakened the government's capacity to deal with major catastrophe and meet the needs of its citizens.<sup>45</sup>

Non-state actors are a key theme in both development and foreign policy debates. As deep as it is wide the aspects of this body of literature most relevant to this study focuses on the roles, positions and networks that NGO's occupy in the international system. The dynamics between civil society, NGO's, and democratization is a constant theme. The close association with democracy is rather ironic given that NGO's themselves are not democratic institutions. Instead the image of an apolitical do-gooder is glossed over. More recent works have looked at their relationships with donors and how that dynamic effects the "political context" of NGOs.<sup>46</sup> However the bulk of works here assumes a viable state and envisions the NGOs

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<sup>45</sup> Francois Pierre-Louis *March 2011; vol. 42, 2: pp. 186-202.*

<sup>46</sup> See Ghosh 2009; Mercer 2002

as the filler in gaps in the state. Such a state would have been hard to find before the January 12, 2010 earthquake and in post quake Haiti the level of "stateness" is even lower. Haiti is a place where IGOs and NGOs play a significantly more important role than the state, especially outside of Port-au-Prince.

From fragile to failed, the Haitian State is always conceived of in the literature in varying stages of broken. Set in this context a body of development focused literature looks at the failure of aid. Citing the tremendous resources that have been pledged and delivered to Haiti that are in great contrast with the "startling poverty" found there.<sup>47</sup> Coming from the standpoint that Haiti is in a fragile state "in spite" of its proximity to the United States (as opposed to other literature which argues in part that Haiti is in its current situation, at least in part, "because of" the United States).

While these "failure" focused works vary in their approach and focus, there are some clear trends identified. First, Haiti is a fractured state at best. What "stateness" it does have is centralized in Port-au-Prince and has been greatly diminished by the 2010 quake. Secondly, the gap in the state has been filled by NGOs of varying size,

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<sup>47</sup> See Picard, Groelsema, and Buss 2008.

organizations, and focus. Many traditional state functions are filled by these NGOs including health, water, sanitation, infrastructure, and education. Lastly, Haiti is devastatingly poor.

While all of these things are immediately observable, they are not so readily measured. The statistical ranges provided in the literature are broad- unemployment is somewhere between 50-70% for example. The percentage of the population with HIV/AIDS is between 3-5%. Is the literacy rate 50% Or 70%? The lack of precise metrics doesn't mean that the poverty is any less biting, but speaks to the realities of a fractured state without the capacity to provide for its people. The fragile or failed nature of Haiti's "Stateness" renders much of the state-centric development literature inapplicable.

Foreign aid literature contributes to these debates as well. Looking at the aid flowing from the global north to the global south a fundamental question that arises is "Does aid work?" The answers vary. Yes, some projects are wildly successful, especially those that target very specific, one time issues such as vaccines. Maybe, some projects are successful in addressing the exact issue they focus on, but often times that vision is myopic and fails to take into account the bigger picture. No, money is

wasted and problems are made worse by the presence of foreign aid. One very relevant trend that does emerge is the challenge of working with (or working around) failing states.

The failure of aid in Haiti is well documented. Paul Farmer, serving both as practitioner and policy advisor made the failure a central theme in his 2011 book focusing on Haiti after the earthquake. Depicting aid as both well intentioned and undermining recovery efforts he argues that in order to move forward we must first understand what has gone wrong over the last few decades. Using "personal and place-specific narratives"<sup>48</sup> his anthropological account highlights the failure and challenges of reconstruction. And notably he advocates for this first person, story telling arguing it is best suited for describing, explaining and ultimately "bearing witness" to what transpires in Haiti.<sup>49</sup>

The sheer variety of issue areas covered by NGO's and their simultaneously "prominent and obscure" role internationally highlights their impressive strength at

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<sup>48</sup> See Paul Farmer 2011

<sup>49</sup> See Paul Farmer 2011



times and their invisibility at others. Reaching from bottom up to top down in terms of their engagement with the community, they are a fundamental player in world politics.<sup>50</sup> The study of NGOs has often times been approached from a normative rather than critical vantage point. Focusing on how things should be as opposed to how they are and the full context of their role in development has begun to be addressed more recently.<sup>51</sup> This includes looking at the political role NGOs have, the paradoxes in their goals, the tenuous relationship between NGOs and their donors, and relationships between large corporations and NGOs.<sup>52</sup>

NGO specific, Development literature also looks at the relationship with the state but rather than conceiving of NGOs as stopgaps, depicts them as engaging with the state politically and economically. It notes a distinction between larger IGO's, which typically depict themselves as apolitical and local grass roots organizations that are directly involved in the political sphere.<sup>53</sup> This has been a trend in Caribbean Development and provides an important lens both because it conceives of NGOs as partners of the

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<sup>50</sup> See DeMars 2005

<sup>51</sup> See Mercer 2002; Ghosh 2009

<sup>52</sup> See Devine 2003; Dicklitch, S. and D. Lwanga 2003; Cosgrove 2002

<sup>53</sup> See Lewis 1994

state and because it highlights the political nature of NGOs.

Central to all of these debates is the importance of funding, the lifeline of NGOs. Haiti had moved more into focus internationally as of late. Bill Clinton's role with the UN, Paul Farmer's<sup>54</sup> work with Hilary Clinton, and the Millennium Development Villages overseen by Jeffery Sachs were recent, high profile headline grabbers. With that attention came increased donations. The earthquake brought immediate and far reaching attention and the world opened its wallet, but there is now great concern about donor fatigue amongst the NGOs. This threatens the sustainability of both their original pre-quake missions and projects put in place in response to the disaster.

The main source of funding for most NGOs is not small individual donations, but from larger grants. These grants are very specific about how funds must be used and therefore serve to promote the agendas of the grantors. Broadly speaking, NGO's in the Global South are dependent the funds they need to function from the surpluses created in Northern Economies. "NGOs will increasingly function as a component of an international system of social welfare

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<sup>54</sup> Paul Farmer is a medical Doctor who founded Partners in Health a well established Non-profit working in the Central Plateau of Haiti

because this role serves the international reproduction of capital.”<sup>55</sup> This not only impacts the understanding of the economics of NGOs but also how they function both vis-à-vis the state and the populations they engage. It challenges the notion of the non-profit as having popular support. Arguing that NGOs will have to radically reassess how they obtain funding if they wish to find greater operational autonomy.

Similarly themed studies have gone even further in their indictment of NGOs depicting them as active participants in the Neoliberal agenda pushed upon the Global South. By filling the state gaps—they undermine it, and by adhering to their donor’s agenda—they promote them. NGOs traditionally employ middle class workers and by doing so may enforce a buffer between the upper and lower classes. Essentially this anthropologically based literature conceives of NGOs as active agents of the Neoliberal agenda that serve to undermine and deter the voice of the poor.<sup>56</sup>

Microfinance literature provides another lens with which to view non-profit organizations seeking profitability. With the iconic Grameen Bank and its Founder

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<sup>55</sup> See Flower 1992

<sup>56</sup> See Schuller 2009

Muhammad Yunis at its center, the trends in microfinance have, at the extreme, seen the transitions of some NGO's which "undergo upscaling" and become regulated financial institutions or into for profit organizations. More common however, is the stated goal of becoming self-sustaining thus freeing the NGO from the constant need to seek donations and ensuring the continuation of its programs.<sup>57</sup> Even within the field of microfinance this profitability model is new and thus relatively unexplored critically, especially from a political science vantage point.

Critical works from theory driven business schools on Social Entrepreneurship, which is also a newly emerging field of study, offer additional vantage points. As both a nascent and contested concept, social entrepreneurship as understood by some scholars does include non-profit organizations seeking some level of profitability. Interestingly this literature is taking some cursory steps towards the social sciences and adding yet a new player to the development dynamic. Framing social entrepreneurship in the context of institution building the claim is for the potential to fill "institutional voids" by providing the

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<sup>57</sup> See Accion

necessary infrastructure to facilitate social and economic growth.<sup>58</sup>

The role of institutions is central to the traditional social sciences literature as well. The argument that institutions both shape and influence norms, beliefs and actions is a corner stone of the literature. However, there are debates about how much is truly understood about how they influence outcomes and how to understand their impact. The institutional dialogue also focuses on the importance of the context in which institutions exist. This element of context is essential to more fully understanding the role of institutions.<sup>59</sup> More specific literature focusing on the capacity building roll of NGO's provides a link between the broader institutional works and non-profit literature seeing non-profits as both entities that must fit into the cultural and political context in which they operate and institutions capable of influencing and building capacity.<sup>60</sup>

While the role of institutions has long been embraced by sociologist, economists are newer to the table.<sup>61</sup>

"Development is no longer seen as a process of capital accumulation but as a process of organizational change."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See Mair, Robinson, Hocket 2006

<sup>59</sup> See Przeworski 2004; Hall and Taylor 1996; Weyland 2002

<sup>60</sup> See Fisher 1997

<sup>61</sup> See Portes and Smith 2012

<sup>62</sup> See Hoff and Stiglitz 2001

As Portes highlights this neoinstitutionalism has given great weight to the role of context and has manifested itself via economists with a refining of the rational actor to a constrained rational actor. The challenge with this has been a lack of a real framework. What part of society binds actors? How do you operationalize it? He argues that initial attempts at "thin" institutionalism have not addressed the gaps and argues for "thick" studies drawing from collaborative efforts with sociologists.

Portes importantly notes that this institutionally, not merely capital, driven model of development needs support to be successful. Support from the stakeholders, which much shift to accommodate the newly emerging structure.

Management of Non-profits is a topic that has been studied from both practical and critical vantage points. Nuts and bolts explorations of the size, scope and financing of non-profits have much in common with traditional management literature. The specific challenges of managing a non-profit focused on development or relief, however, are different and focus on the dynamic with the

state, donor relations, and accountability.<sup>63</sup> With regards to the shift towards profitability the literature becomes fuzzy at best.

Literature drawing from economics and focusing on Administrative Behavior does offer some insight. Drawing from a rational choice background it argues that the "choice" aspect is unexamined in much of the literature. Seeking to balance, choice with action it explains the interplay between the two and the constraints that exist.<sup>64</sup> Where it offers to most value to this study is the argument working that with imperfect information makes it rational to accept less than optimal solutions. This rationale offers insight into how non-profits seeking to go into business may choose to simply satisfy the goal of profitability and not try to maximize profits.

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<sup>63</sup> See Lindenberg and Bryant 2001; Brown 2008; Salamon, Sokoloswski, and associates 2004; Edwards and Hume 1996

<sup>64</sup> See Simon 1965

## Chapter 4 Theoretical Framework

William DeMars' argues that NGO scholars need to move beyond promoting non-profits via scholarship but rather to engage them more critically. To mitigate the NGO mission statement reinforcement he finds in much of the literature he provides a theoretical framework focusing on the effects of NGOs. Using a "new structural approach" DeMars theorizes NGOs as "sites of institutionalized political conflict" which plays out at three distinct levels- internally, within its networks, and on a regional/global level. Drawing heavily from institutional scholarship he blends realist, pluralist, globalist, and sociological studies to answer three key questions.

1. What are NGOs?
- 2 What do NGOs do?
3. What difference do NGOs make in world politics?<sup>65</sup>

This framework provides the vehicle to address the gaps left in the literature and specifically by my study.

Taking insight from each he creates an approach that addresses the inherent conflict in politics (realism), the importance of society and networks (pluralism), the role of global norms (globalism) and the importance of culture and

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<sup>65</sup> See Demars 2005 pg. 41



local norms (sociology). With the institutions and structure firmly at the center his perspective addresses both the historical and political. There is an essential element that will need to be added to DeMars' approach, the economic. The incorporation of the economic is critical at all three levels of analysis rounds what is otherwise a very robust approach.

Focusing on DeMars' three questions facilitates the analysis of non-profits in transition. Looking first internally, then locally and then globally the framework offers insight into how non-profits function, the dynamic between donors, non-profits, and communities, and the larger global context.

#### Propositions

This dissertation first posits the shift in models from a strictly donor based to goals of profitability has increasingly greater appeal. The combined perceived success of microfinance along with the current economic downturn provides greater impetus to search for alternative funding options. Secondly, more non-profits are moving in this direction as a means to finance new endeavors or sustainable base. The economic motivation runs deeper than simply having the capital to sustain projects but also

affords greater autonomy and latitude for how funds are used since they will no longer be tied to donor requirements.

The dependent variable is the success or failure of achieving profitability. Ultimately, the time frame to fully understand success is measured in years and falls outside the time frame of this dissertation, which instead identifies interim independent variables that may contribute to a solid start. This study hypothesizes that there are several key independent variables that will determine a good start towards self-generated profits. First is staffing, both in terms of training and hiring. Internally having the right people who understand the realities on the ground and the transition at hand will prove a vital piece of the puzzle. This will include drawing on a broader scope of professionals who may not traditionally be affiliated with the non-profit sector. Business plan development, bottom line accounting, pricing, supply chain, are all areas that transitioning non-profits will need to understand. That may mean hiring professionals and/or training existing team members. Doing business" requires skill sets that fall outside of traditional development work. The challenges of management, daily operations, and the pace of business may serve to dilute

the autonomy the NGO seeks by taking up time and resources. Approaching a profitability driven project in the same manner as a donor driven one will also prove difficult, grant writing is not the same as writing a business plan and the logic of implementation also varies. Whereas a donor driven project may be built in stages based on who is willing to pay for what, the profitably model must find a way to maximize just that- profit.

The second independent variable is donor relationships. How the donor base reacts to the non-profits new endeavor is vital. Operational changes will affect the outward operations of NGO's pursuing profitability as they attempt to run a business. Successfully balancing and ultimately garnering support, both financial and operational, from donors will be vital.

Third, doing business will encourage greater and broader collaborations with other sectors in new ways. For example operating a profitable business will bring with it new resources namely in the form of vendors. Initially vendors may donate their goods and services with the goal of eventually becoming paid vendors. This can open up a whole new range of resources that were previously out of reach. These goods and services may have applicability across the NGO and provide benefits beyond the profit

seeking project. This in turn may help to reinforce the core mission and provide data, services, and resources for the benefit of the entire organization.

Lastly, in some cases, especially for those non-profits operating in places lacking "stateness," this shift toward profitability may prove to deepen the non-profits role in institution building. NGOs in the developing world fill gaps in the state with services ranging from health care to sanitation. Traditionally focusing on public good related institutions this goal of profitability will lead NGOs into new territory such as the creation of markets and supply chains. For some NGOs the goal is to create sustainable businesses and then turn them over to the community leaders, if they are successful non-profits may in fact help build state capacity.

#### Studying NGOs in Haiti

NGO's come in all shapes and sizes and address a variety of issues. Operating from both a top down and bottom up approach, non-profits are central to the development dialogue. The prototypical NGO model is one of donor based funding providing the necessary capital, goods, or services to support the core mission of the non-profit. Donors range from large organizations such as the UN, the

EU, the CDC and smaller private contributors. These donations serve as the lifeblood of non-profits but also carry with them the agendas and interests of their givers. Grant writing is a full time activity as NGOs search for new sources of funding. Many grants and donations carry with them stipulations about how money is to be used and the type of data that is to be tracked in order to prove the usefulness of the donation. While a private donor maybe content to simply have a building named in their honor, grants from International Organizations often carry detailed specifics on the use and administration of funds as well as reporting requirements. Any given NGO may have a range of benefactors and juggling the specific requirements of each, and ensuring that there is not conflict of interest is a constant balancing act.

A new model for non-profits has begun to emerge drawing from the success of the ever-increasing area of microfinance: The creation of a profit generating components of NGOs. In the case of microfinance this has manifested itself in the creation of programs that generate varying amounts of profits on the loans they make. Outside of microfinance, it has driven development-oriented non-profits to explore business like ventures that financially support their core missions. The articulated goal is

sustainability, but beneath that lays the hope greater autonomy for both the populations they serve and the organizations themselves. In some cases the profit generation maybe directly tied to the core activity of the NGO, such is the case with microfinance, in others there is a greater stretch and the addition of something related, but decidedly new and different such as offering goods or services for sale. In effect, they begin "doing business."

TABLE 1

| Orientation                | Funding Source | Funding Source                                | Funding Source                |
|----------------------------|----------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Bottom Up<br>(Grass Roots) | Donations      | Donations and<br>Self<br>Generated<br>Profits | Self<br>Generating<br>Profits |
| Top Down                   | Donations      | Donations and<br>Self<br>Generated<br>Profits | Self<br>Generated<br>Profits  |
|                            |                |   |                               |

## Case Selection Haiti and SOIL

This dissertation will focus on Haiti for three key reasons. First it is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Secondly it has a large diverse NGO population.<sup>66</sup> Lastly until recently the majority of Haiti's NGO have been donor driven in the past.

Haiti is a virtual potpourri of international aid projects especially outside of the major cities. The level of "stateness" in rural areas is almost impossible to measure. Power, water, roads, police, public services, is often non-existent and where present in many cases are the works of international aid organizations. From roads paid for by the EU to orphanages run by church groups projects range broadly both in scope and size. UN Troops are stationed all over the country. The NGO's that operate in these spaces are often times self-sufficient little islands providing everything from their own electricity to water.

SOIL (Sustainable Integrated Livelihoods) is an ecological sanitation health non-profit that provides an ideal case study for this dissertation. Originally founded

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<sup>66</sup> Estimates put the number of NGOs working in Haiti at about 10,000 pre-quake. There are most likely more now, but there are no real numbers. See Addendum for the UN's most recent list of NGOs in Haiti.

in Cap-Haitien, SOIL has also operated in Port-au-Prince since the earthquake . With a core mission of grassroots development they focus on transforming waste into resources. Effectively they run a variety of programs that provides sanitation (ie toilets) and then collects the waste to be composted into soil that can then be used to grow crops. It is a fundamental service in a country that lacks basic sanitation. Currently only 10% of rural Haitians and 25% of the urban population have access to adequate sanitation. <sup>67</sup>

People are forced to find other ways to dispose of their wastes, often in the ocean, rivers, ravines, plastic bags, or abandoned houses. At the same time, agricultural output is low due to poor soil fertility, soil erosion and lack of fertilizers.

Ecological sanitation (EcoSan) is a low-cost approach to sanitation where human wastes are collected, composted and recycled for use in agriculture and reforestation. It simultaneously addresses many of Haiti's most pressing issues: improving public health, increasing agricultural productivity, mitigating environmental degradation, and providing low-cost sanitation.<sup>68</sup>

Founded in 2006, SOILs guiding principles comes from "Liberation Ecology,"<sup>69</sup> which looks at the connection

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<sup>67</sup> See UNICEF 2010

<sup>68</sup> See OURSOIL.ORG

<sup>69</sup> Based on the philosophy of Liberation Theology which originated in the Catholic Church in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the social, political, and economic injustices in Latin America. It was controversial and seen by the Vatican as having Marxists roots.



between marginalized populations and their access to and interactions with ecological resources.

In nature soil transforms organic matter, sustaining ecological systems by converting one organism's wastes into another's resources. It is from the soil that our organization has borrowed both our name and our philosophy. We too, believe that the path to sustainability is through transformation, of both marginalized people and discarded materials, turning disempowerment and pollution into participatory production.<sup>70</sup>

Haiti's lack of sanitation, extreme erosion, and deep poverty make the service that SOIL provides vital and make SOIL an ideal case study.

SOIL's scope and capacity have vastly expanded in post-quake Haiti. Originally operating on a much smaller scale in Cap-Haitien the earthquake brought SOIL to Port-Au-Prince on post-disaster response projects. As for many smaller Haitian based NGOs disasters were nothing new, but the magnitude of the quake and its after effects became a baptism by fire into the world of disaster response. Working with larger sanitation based NGO's such as OxFam Great Britain, they began to install toilets in IDP camps all over Port-Au-Prince. With a staff of about 50, predominately Haitian employees their end goal is to be

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<sup>70</sup> See OURSOIL.org

part of a broad sweeping sanitation solution in the country. The result of which is 100% sanitation coverage that is both ecologically and economically sound. SOIL then would transition from being actively involved in the day-to-day and services would be provided by small, local Haitian businesses. The role of SOIL would become that of consultant, working with education and out reach. A central focus at SOIL now is making ecological sanitation profitable. As founder Dr. Sasha Kramer notes:

That's what we're really working on now. It's taken years to get to the place where now we have a lot of compost, and we've tested it and we know it's good. There's no doubt that there's a huge need for fertile soil in Haiti, but people are not very accustomed to using compost, so it's not like there's a readily available market for us to tap into. It has been a real learning curve for me as an ecologist to try and figure out how to do this marketing end of things. The key to making this whole system sustainable in the long run is being able to sell that final product.<sup>71</sup>

In Haiti there is a quantifiable need for both sanitation and soil. It is severely lacking in both. A key question is whether or not SOIL can create a market to sell solutions for both problems. The lack of state and markets present both challenges and opportunities for SOIL. The development

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<sup>71</sup> See Laredo in *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development*, October 17, 2012.

of small sanitation businesses is their first foray into profitability.

It is SOIL's cultivation of these small, sanitation businesses that make it an ideal case study. In the developed world, people pay for sanitation and in order for solutions in Haiti to be long terms and sustainable people there too must pay for such services. The household toilet project is being developed with this in mind. The concept is that individual households would have an ecologically friendly toilet installed in their homes. The toilets have a collection drum that would need to be emptied on a weekly basis. There would be a cost associated with this weekly pick up. The waste would then be transported to a site where it would be composted and turned into soil. That compost could then be sold to local farmers to augment Haiti's infamous poor soil for growing crops. It is full cycle, low tech, and transforms the waste into something useful while potentially providing economic opportunities as well. As a non-profit, SOIL has the advantage of being able to pilot this program through grants and donations.

Working in conjunction with a team from Stanford University and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation the household toilets project is currently beta

testing new toilets that more solid, more readily serviced and simpler to clean. The demand and response has been overwhelmingly positive. Why household toilets?

Everyone wants to fit a clean, fresh-smelling toilet in their house. A toilet in your house- it's convenient, it's safe. You can have friends and family over and they have a toilet to use. A toilet is also a status symbol. What does every rich person in every country in the world have in their house? A toilet.

Getting sanitation to people's houses is also the best way to deliver the health and environmental benefits we strive for. Public or community toilets are often dirty or broken down. They may have long lines, or be closed at night. Even if they're open at night, it's usually unsafe to walk there at night, especially for women. That means that people don't always use public toilets, and that means lots of waste still ends up where it shouldn't- in the alley, on the roof, in the drains and rivers - where it can cause disease and contamination. People need effective sanitation at home, so they can use it whenever they want or need to.

Of course, putting a toilet in someone's home is only a good idea if it's clean, if it blocks flies and odors, and if there's a reliable, hygienic way to remove the waste from the home. And people have to love their toilet, or they won't use it. <sup>72</sup>

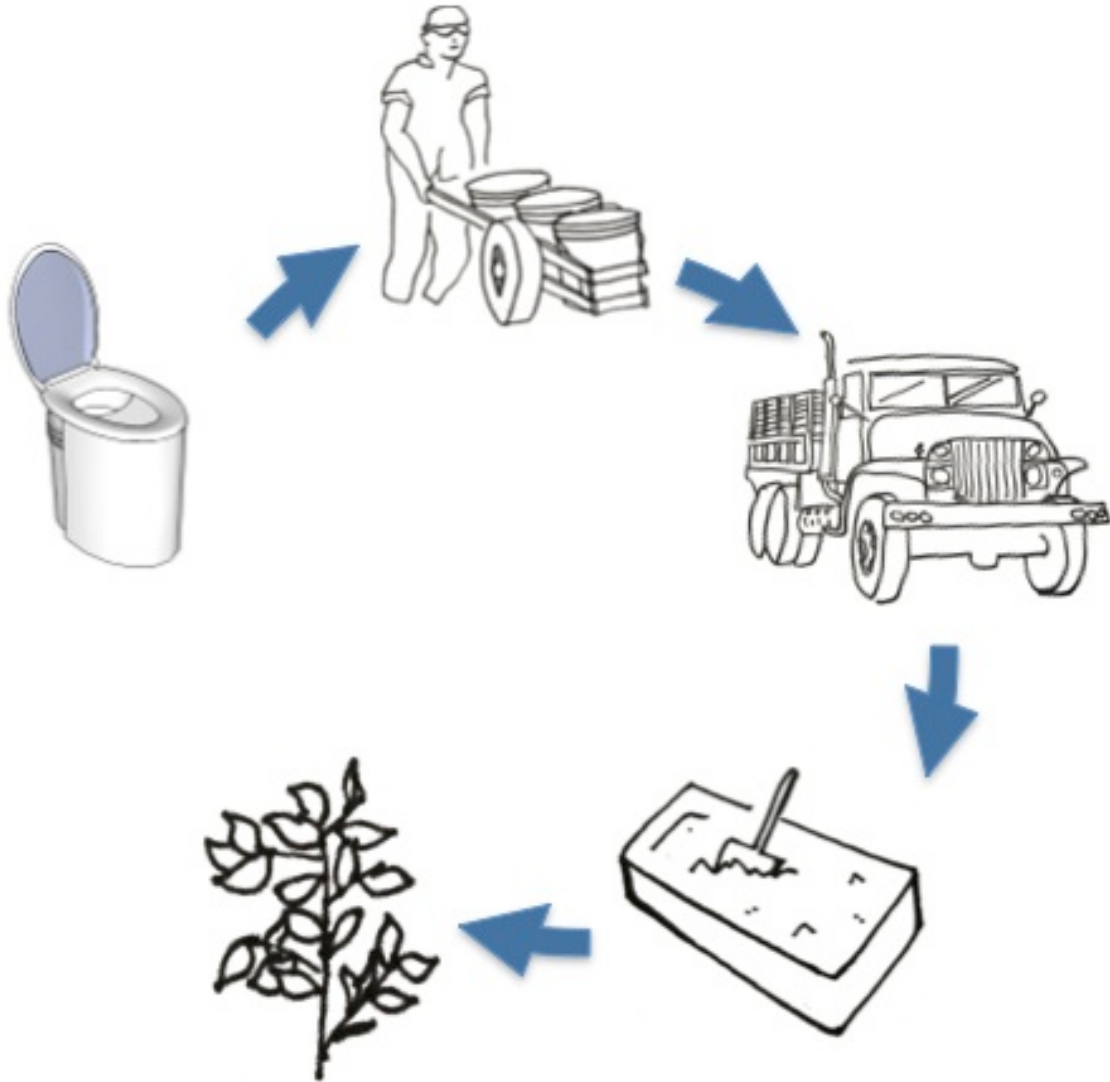
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<sup>72</sup> Re.Source- <http://resourcesanitation.com>

The household toilet project aims to address a lack of sanitation in urban slums. With a goal of bring ecological sanitation to an area of Haiti lacking any running water or sewers the pilot project aims to integrate engineering, social engagement, economic development, and business to create a long-term replicable solution.

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Figure 1



The viability of the project lies not only in the development of toilets and composting methods, but also in the development of a business plan.

We spend most of our time writing about toilets and sanitation services, but that's certainly not all we think about. We think about a lot of the things that many other businesses think about: what's our inventory? How many resources are we consuming? How much material are we producing, where, and when? Never mind that we work with poop and compost, we deal with the same questions as anyone else who manages a supply chain. We care about our supply chain because it has a huge impact on our costs, and once we reach large scale, the supply chain can get pretty complex. We're prototyping management systems now to know what will grow with us.<sup>73</sup>

There are 2.6 million people in the world who do not have access to a toilet and access to sanitation is a vital and primary concern developing and underdeveloped communities.<sup>74</sup> These new hybrid arrangements, whereby non-profits seek to develop profitable programs

#### Methodology

This dissertation adopts a case study methodology. The goal of this work is to establish a baseline understanding of the requirements that NGOs confront in moving from a strictly donor based to include profitable elements. It is a thick description of a single case. Using nested case

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<sup>73</sup> Re-Source- <http://resourcesanitation.com>

<sup>74</sup> Re-Source- <http://resourcesanitation.com>

study of a single sanitation sector NGO in Haiti provides the opportunity to explore the details and the potential for wider applicability of the findings. There are limitations to this approach, most notably in the ability to generalize beyond the single case. Haiti is a very interesting case and in future studies would make a relevant point of comparison, this study however focuses exclusively on Haiti.

#### Methodological Techniques and Sources

My primary technique is participant observation. I was an active participant working with SOIL. SOIL and their partners are hopeful they will develop a replicable model. I volunteer my time with SOIL and serve on its board. This not only gave me firsthand experience but also provided me with the subjects for my interviews and gives me privileged access to information. The team is comprised of members from the public and the private sector many of who have extensive backgrounds in launching sanitation projects. In addition to SOIL staff, the Stanford run trial project is funded through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Participant observation allows for the development of a deep understanding of the processes and individuals



involved. Clearly this is a subjective approach, but the aim is to trend lightly and balance my participation with unobtrusive observation. Within this technique there are two distinct, but related activities. While fairly the difference is fairly self-evident, broadly speaking observation focuses on things such as appearance, interactions, verbal exchanges, movement of people, and individuals who may stand out.

Table 2

Observation<sup>75</sup>:

| Category                         | Examples  | To Note  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Appearance                       | Clothing, age, gender, etc..  | Anything that might indicate membership in groups or in sub-populations of interest to the study, such as profession, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity |
| Verbal behavior and interactions | Who speaks to whom and for how long; who initiates interaction; languages or dialects spoken; tone of voice | Gender, age, ethnicity, and profession of speakers; dynamics of interaction  |

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<sup>75</sup> Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide Module 2

|                                |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
|                                |  |  |
| Physical behavior and gestures | What people do, who does what, who interacts with whom, who is not interacting | How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions; what individuals' behaviors indicate about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession |
| Personal space                 | How close people stand to one another  | What individuals' preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships  |
| Human traffic                  | People who enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site                | Where people enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); whether they are alone or accompanied; number of people  |
| People who stand out           | Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others            | The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | consult them or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others present |
|--|--|---|

The observation helped in the identification of stakeholders and key issues.

Speaking with knowledgeable informants- public health experts, NGO workers, Sanitation experts, International Aid workers, vendors, project managers, and area experts provided more depth to my study. I spoke with approximately 25 experts while in Haiti. Questions were varied based on individual expertise and often took place as a part of my participant observation. I conducted 3 follow up interviews using via SKYPE upon my return to the United States.

I attended many meetings and events while in Haiti. From WASH Clusters meetings hosted by the UN to meetings held by the governing committees of IDP camps I had access to a wide range of gatherings with a board swath of people. Language barrier issues were limited, for example UN WASH cluster meetings are held in French, Creole and English

making them quite long indeed. Events including multiple NGOs were all in English. Many of the meetings I attended involved leadership from OxFam Great Britain for example so again limited language issues.

Key locations and events I visited included:

1. Project Medishare- Thomonde, Central Plateau
2. Project Medishare temporary field hospital- Port-au-Prince
3. SOIL's Port-au-Prince office. It was a large house that hosted several NGO's post-quake and served as both living and working space.
4. OxFam Great Britain's Office- Port-au-Prince
5. UN WASH Cluster Meeting- Port-au-Prince
6. UN Camp Charlie (ground for the workers)-Port-au-Prince
7. UN Log Base
8. IDP camps including Golf Course, Corril, Park Izmery, and several "illegal" and therefor unnamed camps.
9. The Port-au-Prince dump at Trutier

Statistical data provided a larger context for my study; this came largely from secondary sources. Information on poverty levels, public health, infant mortality rates, nutrition, unemployment, and access to basic services was

widely available from a variety of sources. The European Union, United Nations, Center for Disease Control, USAID, the Haitian Ministry of Health, and Save the Children, are but a few of the large entities that provide data. The quality, depth, and accessibility of this information will vary. There is for example, no record of the number of non-profits operating in Haiti.

## Chapter 5 Findings

The participant observation has taken part in two distinct, but interwoven ways. The first has been through fieldwork conducted in Haiti on three different trips. The second has been participating in meetings, emails, conference calls and other communications over the course of 3.5 years. It is impossible to over-state the impact of the earthquake on all things in Haiti. It affected everything. The legacy of the quake is still very much a reality in Haiti some three years later.

### The Case Study That Wasn't

My first visit to Haiti was in August of 2009, I was traveling on a Center for Disease Control (CDC) grant to the Central Plateau as part of a team selected to work on the business plan for a food production factory. The poverty hits you before you land, you can see the lush green Dominican side of the Island in contrast to the brown, scarred Haitian side. It is impossible to write about Haiti without discussing the depth of the poverty there and effectively describing that poverty is challenging. You can read the statistics, extreme poverty,

malnutrition, diseases, etc... but that dehumanizes a very vibrant, thriving culture. And I can write of that cultural, passion and warmth but then it almost romanticizes the poverty.

The poverty hits you hard, it is in your face everywhere, it is the underlying current on which Haiti sits right now. It is brutally hot, there are no trees for shade, just an odd combination of thick mud and dust. As we make the drive from Port-au-Prince to the Central Plateau the lack of state presences becomes apparent as we drive down a road installed by the EU and past varying infrastructure projects put in places by other IGOs and NGOs. This is not to say there is a lot of development, quite the opposite, but what does exist is funded and built by non-Haitian entities. The further we drive, the more remote it becomes, and surprisingly green-but there are no trees.

Project Medishare is a public health non-profit that located in most malnourished region of Haiti their main office is in Thomonde. With a core mission of grassroots development programs they focus on health and nutrition. They operate clinics, teach nutrition, provide immunizations, trainings, and countless other projects related to their core goals. There have been a variety of

donors for their projects. All of these projects are made possible by the traditional donor model.

Project Medishare is embarking on one project that falls outside the traditional model. They are in the process of building a factory to produce a local food called akamil (a cereal type food common in Haiti) for local consumption. The akamil will be fortified to address common health issues caused by malnutrition and this has brought the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in on the project. Although initial start up for the program has come from donations, the goal is to develop a profit making entity once the factory is open. The akamil will be used for Project Medishare's own feeding programs and be sold in bulk to larger international organizations, small vendors who may offer it prepared at a market, and eventually package it for sale in supermarkets in Port-au-Prince. The goal is not only sustainability for the factory itself, but to create a model that can be replicated in other locations in Haiti. The grass a root focus has not shifted, the factory has been built by Haitians, will be staffed by Haitians and eventually the grains used to make akamil will be bought from Haitians. In an area with almost no industry this factory has the potential to create a local market for local goods. Ironically the region is not only the most



malnourished but also the most fertile in Haiti. With no real market though, most farmers produce for their own consumption only. Project Medishare employs an agronomist who currently works with the locals to improve their growing techniques and improve nutrition. But the factory is clearly a new endeavor for Project Medishare and the profitability goal adds a new element to the organization.

The factory thus far has been built using the donor model, meaning pieces have been built order and installed based on the types of donations they have received which currently total over \$500,000. While the larger infrastructure has been put in place, there is a physical location and the necessary machinery is on order, the business basics have thus far been missed. Cost of goods, how to get supplies to the factory, packaging, storage have not been at the forefront of the plan. In a town with almost no infrastructure even the most basic services must be planned for, electricity and water to name but two this factory is a tremendous undertaking. In spite of this, significant progress has been made towards opening the factory. Still once it is ready to produce akamil it is the business side that will become that much more significant. As a grass roots organization they aim to employ only

locals, but as there is no other factory of any sort remotely nearby finding staff will prove challenging.

In addition to the internal challenges that Project Medishare will face there are other factors that may impact, change, or derail Akamil Inc. One goal of the project is to use locally produced agricultural products, currently there are not sufficient crops to meet the factory needs so initial supplies will be imported. Since the cultivation on a larger scale is new, the costs of local production have not been pin pointed this means that even though Medishare is willing to pay more for the local crops when they are ready there is a chance that US subsidized crops will make buying local a non-option by pushing the costs for the final product too high. One of the key facets in the current plan is eventually selling bulk quantities of akamil to large feeding programs run by organizations such as USAID, however there is neither grantee that Medishare can produce the quantities they require nor that any of the larger organizations will actually buy the akamil if they can produce the quantities. Medishare is also remotely located and almost completely self-sufficient due to the almost complete lack of basic infrastructure.

This project was moving ahead full steam until the January 12, 2010 earthquake. While Thomonde and the factory were unscathed, the country ground to a halt, as did the project. The difference was that as the country slowly emerged and began to function, Medishare's factory did not. In the days immediately following the quake Medishare opened a field hospital near the International Airport in Port-au-Prince. Resources, predominately human capital and funds, were diverted there. While the conversations about the factory have continued and small progresses made; the focus of maintaining public health operations on the central plateau and operating what is now a full fledged hospital in Port-au-Prince have eclipsed the factory project.

While my involvement in the akamil factory project was short lived, consisting of one week long visit to the site and 5 months of subsequent emails, meetings and conference calls, I did gain insight. First and foremost it was my initial opportunity to observe Haiti and an NGO operating within its confines.

The remoteness of the location hammers home two things. First the complete lack of state presence outside

of Port-au-Prince.<sup>76</sup> And second, the potpourri of sometimes-interrelated aid projects that have filled gaps left by the state. The town of Thomonde is home to some 10,000 people yet the word town seems only fitting in some esoteric understanding of the word "town." It is a community, yes and there are people who live there, so in that sense it is a town. But it is unlike any other concept of town I have experienced in my travels. The physical structures like roads and buildings aren't present. There is little movement. There are no buses that pass through, no running water, no electricity, and the weekly market is held in a dirt lot. In this town of 10,000 there are four brick and mortar structures- A church, an abandoned restaurant, Project Medishare, and the partially completed factory. It is beautiful, green, and desperately poor. It is the stillness in this town of 10,000 that is the most shocking.

Evidence of an International presence is everywhere. The so-called "Kennedy Clothing" worn by almost everyone. One of the first major donations of used clothing to Haiti happened during the Kennedy administration, hence the name. A prime example of the road to hell paved with good intentions, the donated clothing flooded the market and

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<sup>76</sup> Some of the other urban centers do have some vestiges of the state, but Haiti is a highly centralized government located almost exclusively in its capital.

effectively wiped out the domestic clothing industry. To this day, the only locally produced clothing are school uniforms for children. It is a story I will hear over and over again with different players. In the name of progress something was given but the ill-suit gifts ended up costing in the long run. From the donated clothing to the introduction of U.S. bred pigs (which turned out not be as strong as Haitian pigs, needed way more water and were prone to sun burns) the goods sent to Haiti in the name of charity often caused more harm than good. So while the "worlds greatest dad T-shirt" invariably worn by a woman or a 5 year old always makes me smile a little, the consequences of that shirt are truly staggering.

Project Medishare has power thanks to generators. When night comes the town is completely black. They have installed a light outside their gate so children can sit beneath it in order to do their schoolwork. There is a low fence that runs the perimeter of Project Medishare and a gate that is locked at night, but security is not tight. Children could easily scale the fence. This is in sharp contrast to locations in Port-au-Prince, but also is in sharp contrast to the warnings about security concerns in Haiti. It is a building that hosts a variety of international guests at any given time and all of the

trappings they bring (computers, cell phones, etc...) yet during the day the gate is wide open. The meeting primary meeting space is an outdoor patio with a roof- clearly visible to all who walk by. This transparency is effective and intentional. As a grassroots NGO Project Medishare strives to hire Haitian and in fact the majority of their staff comes from the Central Plateau. Doctors, nurses, and public health experts from the local community, that knows the local community and its members. Security then is accomplished by being a transparent, open member of the community, not by building high fences and hiring guards.

There is a tremendous amount of support and interest in this factory both internationally and domestically. The concept of a non-profit building a business is very well received. Donors have made financial commitments. The CDC endorses it and the private sector is also willing to participate. Local officials including agronomists and economists are also engaged and on board. In spite of the remote location and challenging logistics there are a lot of people on board. Raising funds for the factory seems to be one of the smaller challenges facing Medishare.

The biggest challenge is that this factory falls completely outside the scope of what Medishare does. There is not one person on staff that knows anything about

factories or their operation. In a town with no industry there is no local knowledge to draw from. In spite of that the project moved forward. The factory equipment slowly cleared customs and made the precarious trip up the mountains. The business plan and the financials were prepared.

An inauguration date of January 20<sup>th</sup> 2010 was set. It was to be my second trip to Haiti. The earthquake on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 brought the factory to a halt. Project Medishare, with its long-standing local connections, staff of doctors and public health experts, immediately shifted its focus to establishing a field Hospital in Port-au-Prince. Resources, both financial and human were shifted to disaster response. The factory was no longer a focus and although at varying times conversations have resumed, the project remains stalled.

#### The Case Study That Was

SOIL is a newer NGO to Haiti. Established in 2006 it also has a grassroots mission, but focuses on ecological sanitation. Essentially, they collect human waste, which can then be made into compost, which in turn is used to replenish the soil in Haiti. Like Medishare, my initial

contact with them with was to assist in their development of a business plan that would allow them to both charge for sanitation services and sell the compost they produced. The primary end goal initially, was two fold. First it was to generate some of their own revenue and second it was to develop small sanitation businesses that could then be taken over by locals within the communities where they worked. Our conversations started in the fall of 2009 and I planned to visit SOIL after my January trip to Medishare.

Their world changed on January 12, 2010. Founder Dr. Sasha Kramer and members of her team loaded up a pick up truck with supplies and made their way to Port-au-Prince to be a part of the relief effort. At first they slept in tents along side an IDP camp that had been opened on a soccer field in Delmas 33. The soccer field was next to a guesthouse, Matthew 25, which served as a de facto clearing house and organizational center for post-quake relief efforts. The campus next door had some 1500 residents and became one of the first recipients of a SOIL installed toilet. The next step was partnering with larger NGOs such as Oxfam Great Britain to provide emergency sanitation services in IDP camps. Then moving into a house across the street from Mathew 25. Sharing a house that served as both office space and living quarters SOIL with several other



NGOs , they had abruptly and official began full operations in both Cap-Hatien and Port-au-Prince.

My first visit to SOIL was in April of 2010. Parts of the city looked as they always had and it was easy to tell why media that came to Haiti post quake had a difficult time telling exactly where the damage had occurred. What was new were the tents. Hundreds of thousands of tents that had sprung up everywhere. Officially sanctioned camps with matching tents, and illegal squatters camps with make shift tents fastened from anything really. They were all over the place. In front of the airport, in parks, abandoned lots, there were tents. And the white trucks<sup>77</sup> driven by the sheer mass of IGO and NGO workers that were on the ground.

While the context and location of my visit to SOIL were different, my objective was the same. SOIL still has a goal of creating micro-businesses where people pay for sanitation services and the compost generated as a result are also sold. To be clear, SOIL has no intention of charging for services in IDP camps, but as people return home and life resumes more normally for them the idea of having a toilet in their own home has appeal. Sustainability is a cornerstone of SOILs work and in every

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<sup>77</sup> I have yet to figure out why so many IGOs and NGOs have white trucks.

country in the world with a developed sanitation system people pay for sanitation services.

Like Project Medishare, SOILs staff is primary Haitian and those few who are not speak flawless Creole or are required to take lessons. It's a busy, vibrant organization. Days start when the sun comes up and end well after dark. Part of this is in fact to the critical nature of providing services to the internally displaced. It is also in part due to the challenging nature of working in Haiti. And then there is SOILs learning curve. SOIL was a small non-profit that had never before worked in Port-au-Prince or in emergency response. This was baptism by fire.

Oxfam Great Britain has been a primary funder of SOILs works in Port-au-Prince. While they have worked together previously, the emergency response work has put the two agencies in closer contact. They are very interested in the development of SOILs micro-businesses. Oxfam Great Britain focuses exclusively on water and sanitation. They operate all over the world and had a strong presence in Haiti before the earthquake. The balance of trying to address immediate needs and trying to plan for the long term seems even more acute for Oxfam Great Britain. They are a large non-profit and have taken over the management of several camps. While the need to support daily operations with an

eye towards larger end goals is a general challenge, the quake and the subsequent rise of IDP camps has compounded that challenge. It is a theme that emerges from conversations with IGOs and NGOs repeatedly.

### The Camps

IDP camps are like neighborhoods. Some are nicer than others. Some have nice tents, clean paths, enough water and proper sanitation. Others are huge and have no resources at all. I have seen makeshift tents made from blankets (not so effective against the rain) in camps with no water source and restrooms. And I have visited camp with orderly tents, full water bladders, and makeshift schools. At the end of the day, they are all still IDP camps.

With a few exceptions, SOIL operates within relatively small geographical area within the city. There is plenty of work to be done there and it allows for a more effective use of time. It also helps integrate SOIL into the community. They live where they work. They hire staff from the camps. They work closely with camp committees and request feedback and suggestions from the community. SOIL and its staff are constantly in the field. They are recognizable and friendly. Those who work in the camps are

either Haitian or speak Creole. This is different from the way that many organizations working in the same camps operate and fosters community relations. The international staff also engages in the same physical labor that the Haitian staff does. Anyone who is on the truck helps empty drums full of human waste.

On my first full day visiting SOIL I attended a meeting with Oxfam Great Britain. I stood in the shade of a SOIL built toilet on a day where temperatures easily exceeded 95 degrees. It was one of 4 toilets used by 1500 people and it didn't smell. The frequency with which the drums are emptied and the sugarcane byproduct used in the toilets to start the composting process ensure a much more pleasant experience. Many of the other sanitation solutions provides in camps smell exactly as one would think-indescribably bad. This is no small thing and does a lot to forward the image of SOIL in the community.

While the goal is not to ever charge for services in IDP camps, SOILs presence in the camps have served as an introduction to the organization. People in the camps know them. They have seen them, used their toilets, and seen the partnerships developed with camp leadership. So while rolling out household toilets in Port-au-Prince was not

part of the pre-quake plan, it has become a natural extension of SOILs work there.

Work in the camps also gives SOIL further understanding into the logistics side of operations, the collection and transportation of the waste from one location to another. The challenge of locating compost sites that is both central enough to meet its needs, but not too close to people. In effect they are able to pilot aspects of their program.

#### The Process

Ecological Sanitation is fundamentally low tech. It does not require the traditional physical infrastructure that would support a sewer system. Concrete, wood, plastic drums, and locally manufactured toilet seats are basically all the materials required to construction the toilets. This means they can be built almost anywhere, but ideally in a location that is relatively accessible to the trucks used for collection. While their care is labor intensive, especially in terms of collection, their construction is very simple. The designs are well-thought out and tested, but the end result is fairly easy to install and does not require much infrastructure to function. The fact that it

is so simple is significant. The materials needed to build it are readily available locally; a local manufacturer makes the special toilet seats fairly cheaply. While a skilled mason or contractor is needed to build the toilets properly, those are not hard skill sets to find in Haiti.

After each use, the toilets have organic material added over the human waste. Sugarcane bagasse, which is the leftovers from sugarcane juice extraction used to make rum, is most commonly used. There is tons of the stuff, which goes unused. It is fibrous and smells mildly green. The addition of bagasse to the toilet keeps flies at bay, keeps it from smelling, and begins the composting process. SOIL picks up bagasse by the truckload from a local rum producer who is currently just happy to be rid of the stuff.

The process requires no water, no plumbing and no electricity. Aside from the truck, there is nothing mechanized about this process. Its effectiveness lies in its simplicity and makes it well suited for Haiti. It uses things that are already in place and have no other function, in fact without SOILs work to convert them into compost; they would be waste and significant public health and ecological threats.

The creation of compost is the next step. It is equally low tech. Human waste is poured into large vats and

allowed to essentially bake in the sun. It is mixed from time to time and checked to ensure that the appropriate temperature to kill any pathogens is reached, but effectively it is time and heat that convert the waste into compost.<sup>78</sup> Nutrient rich soil is essential to food production anywhere, but in Haiti where there has been so much erosion and soil loss it is all the more so.

### Building Capacity and Infrastructure

While this low-tech solution is well suited to Haiti's current context, it also means that SOIL is not building much in the way of structure. They are not installing roads or electricity. In that respect they are not building the desperately needed infrastructure that Haiti is lacking. They do, however, foster state capacity. SOIL has a clear vision of the long-term solution for sanitation being a partnership between the public and the private sectors. DINEPA, the government entity that oversees water and sanitation is recognized as one of the more responsive and organized departments in Haiti. SOIL partners with them and has a policy of not hiring workers away from the state. I

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<sup>78</sup> The Center for Disease Control has taken samples of SOILs compost and found it to be pathogen free.

attended one meeting where a higher level DINEPA employee made it clear that she was very interested in working for SOIL, Ecological Sanitation was a big draw for her. She was well educated, spoke French, English and Creole and had the type of professional experience that would have supported the organization well. SOILS founder, Dr. Sasha Kramer, made it clear that supporting state capacity prevented her from hiring away from the government. That she was looking to work with, not hire from the state. Working with Oxfam Great Britain SOIL sought to increase funding for positions within DINEPA in order help the state hire and retain qualified workers.

In terms of staffing SOIL is headed by an Ecologist and supported by a team of Public Health, Sanitation, and Development specialists. As Sebastien Tilmans, an engineers from Stanford University pointed out that for the household toilet project what they needed to develop a viable business model was support from the private sector. Not financial support, management and planning support. He noted that traditionally NGOs do not partner with the private sector in this fashion. It's almost taboo.<sup>79</sup> Tilmans cited strategic management as critical both in setting up

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<sup>79</sup> Interview conducted 11/12/2012



the pilot phase of the project and in transitioning to a fee based service.

Where SOIL most contrasts with Project Medishare is that their plans to develop sanitation businesses falls within the scope of what they do already. It is a natural extension and can be built upon systems that have to be put in place anyway.

While SOIL has continued its work in IDP camps, it has also moved forward with a household toilet project in conjunction with a team from Stanford. The goal of which is to charge for sanitation services. It is testing both the model of implementation and people's willingness to pay. Interestingly during both my observations and during interviews the ability to pay for such a service does not seem to be a central concern. No one even mentioned it until I brought it up. First and foremost, the people who know SOIL are used to getting their services for free. So although the household toilets themselves are new, the community knows SOIL from their development of public toilets. And secondly, people are used to being disappointed. They are accustomed to NGOs that show up and don't finish what they start. I saw evidence of this all over Port-au-Prince.

In one IDP camp an IGO had come in and dug a large pit, presumably for a pit latrine. It was wide and at least 10 feet deep. It had clearly been dug by some sort of heavy equipment, no small feat given the location and accessibility of the camp. The hole was at the bottom of a steeply sloping hill. And then they left. The camp had a huge hole, in the middle. It was a complete waste of time and money used to dig that hole. Moreover that hole was dangerous. There are failed projects like these all over Haiti and they undermine (often times rightfully) the faith communities have in IGOs and NGOs. Ironically many of the projects that I saw half done were water and sanitation related.

#### Poor People aren't Stupid

All of my interviewees highlighted this issue. Tilmans mentioned latrines becoming storage sheds once the first NGO is no longer around to service it. Water projects that are put in place by one group and then instead of maintaining what is already in place, the next NGO comes in and build a new water project and the cycle starts again. As Dr. Jennifer Mandel highlights this not only creates a situation where people are used to being disappointed, but

it also creates a cycle of impermanence. Nothing in Haiti ever lasts. The geography and political climate also reinforce this. It's only a matter of time until the next earthquake or political upheaval.<sup>80</sup>

Dr. Mandel also highlights the history of NGOs "doing for as opposed to do with" in Haiti. It is a failure of the development community to engage the communities that they are working with that has contributed heavily to this. In Haiti, where the poverty is so biting and there is almost no state presence it can be hard to articulate the extent and reach of NGOs. They are everywhere. Communities have grown accustomed to working with them and as Dr. Kramer notes are used to being interviewed and know the kinds of things that they need to say to get things for free.<sup>81</sup> The challenge then becomes why pay for something that isn't going to last and that you are accustomed to getting for free?

#### Money Talks

Funders are excited about these projects. They like the idea of developing small business, primarily as means

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Dr. Jennifer Mandel 11/11/2012

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Dr. Sasha Kramer 11/5/2012

to create sustainable change. Big name donors have gotten behind SOIL, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Bush Clinton Haiti fund, OxFam Great Britain, The 11<sup>th</sup> hour project to list the more significant contributors. There is a great appreciation for having an end game or exit strategy. The consensus seems to be that a viable, long terms solution to sanitation needs in Haiti does not involves its provision by a Non-profit. It does involve a strengthened state capacity and a private sector capable of servicing and supporting it. While one of the original goals was that of generating some revenue to replace some of the reliance on donors, it seems to grow larger with the support of those very donors and be superseded by the possibility of creating an even more meaningful, longer-term solution.

## Chapter 6 Conclusions

The challenges of studying a non-profit in Haiti are many, the lack of statistical data, a fractured state, the sheer number of them to name but a few. That coupled with the trend by those who study non-profits to use normative as opposed to a critical lens has created a nebulous, vague understanding of NGOs in Haiti. Participant Observation fostered an in-depth study of one NGO and the identification of themes that could be further developed in future studies. It also allowed me to see and understand things that I could not have found by reading or metrics.

There are several key elements that emerge in studying SOIL's ability to generate some of its own revenue.

1. NGOs simultaneous re-enforce and undermine the role of the state.
2. Dependency fosters, well dependency not only because people become accustomed to receiving but because it undermines structures necessary for autonomy.
3. Institutions Matter (and they count)
4. Charging for a sanitation service does present a challenge, but not because people cannot afford to pay for it.

5. Generating revenue not only fills the immediate need for funding, but also promotes the long-term end goal of handing the provision of sanitation services over the public and private sector.
6. There is tremendous support, both internationally domestically for such endeavors.

### Interacting with the State

At the macro-level, SOIL functions in a context similar to all other NGOs in Haiti. They operate within the confines (and freedoms) of a fractured and failing Haitian state. It is truly a double-edged sword and it is hard to tease out exactly where freedom becomes restriction or where SOIL is undermining state capacity and where it is supporting it. While some decisions are quite clear, such as partnerships with DINEPA (The Haitian Government entity responsible for the provision of sanitation services) that highlights a desire to help develop the public sector. Others, like the fact that SOIL is not a legally recognized non-profit by the Haitian Government at face value seem to imply an undermining of the Haitian state. But digging deeper, SOILs legal current legal status is not for lack of trying. A diminished state means a diminished

administrative capacity, which means filing the paper work or even figuring out which paperwork to file is a significant undertaking that has taken the better part of two years.

This paradox, of the NGO as a primary supporter of the state and a principle destabilizer is a hybridization of what is seen in much of the literature. Yes SOIL supports state capacity and yes it also undermines it. State failure is fundamentally a failure of the state to respond to the needs of its people, but that is not all it is. It is also the failure to provide both the restrictions and support to the private sector and NGOs. It's a failure to appropriately engage the international community. In effect, a failed state creates an environment where any person or entity acting within its confines is destined to undermine it. It becomes structural. Clearly there are groups, people, businesses that exploit these gaps, but even the most well intended entities can't support what doesn't exist. Taking the value judgment out of it even when there are laws, without the capacity to support or enforce them states set themselves up for a pattern of being perpetually undermined, all the time.

## Dependency Breeds Dependency

The legacy of development in Haiti is yet another viscous cycle. It is not only that people become accustomed to receiving, but also that giving can-and often does- undermine efforts for self-sufficiency. At the individual level, non-profits have come into Haiti with specific goals, installing a water system or digging latrines, and then they leave. There are no provisions for the on going use or maintenance of what has been put in place. Then another arrives with a similar mission. You can see new toilets next to the old ones and so it continues.

Collectively non-profits don't always partner so well, or at all. So while there are efforts to coordinate, such as the UN cluster system, there is really no one formally in charge. On occasions when someone is in charge, there is no enforcement mechanism. Without a structure, or a state to support the provision of services development is delivered in a series of inter-related, uncoordinated, short-lived projects. This is not to say that non-profits don't talk or that their individual relationships aren't friendly, what it speaks to is a lack of structure capable of directing and supporting their activities.



The lack of structure doesn't make the NGOs less culpable, especially those with a top down approach. Much of the development-gone-bad fails at a very fundamental level, it is a failure to engage the community. It's development "for" Haiti not development "with" Haiti. While SOIL is very much a grassroots organization, it operates with in this larger development context the ongoing legacy of dependence.

#### Institutions Matter (and they count)

Haiti is an outlier of sorts, a failing state, a plethora of NGOs, biting poverty, it is essentially an institutional vacuum. Even the term failing state seems only to apply in urban centers, where at least there is a state presence that can fail. Rurally there is simply no state, failed or otherwise. NGOs have filled the gaps to a certain extent. From the provision of basic services to education the patchwork of non-profits weaves together and barely sustains much of the population. While eating is clearly better than not eating the ever-changing NGO network as whole has not found long-term sustainable ways to empower or even provide for the people. As one of my

interviewees said "It might be better if they (the NGO community) just leave."<sup>82</sup>

Without changing the underlying structure that supports this vacuum it is doubtful that meaningful, impactful change can happen. The culture of failure and of dependency is deeply rooted. NGOs are firmly entrenched in Haiti, but have a tenuous grasp on assisting the population. If the major players in Haiti do not shift to help foster and support a structure that can support development, there can be no change. The question then becomes, under what conditions might change be possible?

In this case, SOILs attempts to create a long-term sanitation solution that monetizes the process and bolsters the state might represent such a catalyst. It's a break from the traditional development paradigm. The fact that it is well supported by the power structure in place—especially larger NGOs funding the organization—may give SOIL the support it needs to successfully implement the program.

#### Why Pay?

Why pay to see a local doctor if you can see an international one for free? Why invest in a household

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<sup>82</sup> See Interview with Dr. Jennifer Mandel 11/9/2012

toilet if you might get sanitation at no charge? And why get involved in anything long term when development has been a fickle ally at best? This is the legacy that SOIL must confront as it begins charging for services. While clearly there will be some who, in fact cannot pay, for the most part it is not the ability to pay that is the concern, rather it is the willingness too. The NGO community at large propagates the myth that poor people cannot pay and might be the single biggest factor continuing the dependency cycle.

Free has undermined local and individual autonomy. Free has hurt infrastructure job creation, and capacity. The costs of free in Haiti have been astronomical. While I am not suggesting that there should ever be a charge for services in an IDP camp, projects outside of camps need to be assessed in terms of their long term sustainability. The long-term provision of basic services, like sanitation, by an NGO is not sustainable.

There are essentially two types of non-profits. Those that are about promotion and preservation-such as art galleries, libraries and museums, and those that in an ideal world would not be needed at all such as NGOs devoted to HIV/AIDS. SOIL falls into the latter category and has a

clear goal of transitioning the services that it provides to the public and private sectors where sanitation services in the developed world are housed. That being said, the desire to generate revenue stems not only from a need to bring in funding beyond grants and donations for self-sustainability, but as a key part of the larger end goal.

The staffing issue I posited as critical was less of an issue for SOIL. So much of what they are looking to building rests on what they are already doing. So although the creation of a business plan was new per se, many of its components were already in place. Partnerships have helped fill the gaps. The household toilet project has the assistance of the business school at Stanford University for example. The very low-tech nature of SOILs toilets and compost means they are working with local, small-scale vendors for wood or concrete.

#### Donor Supported

There is a lot of momentum and support for SOILs endeavor. Big names in development have both endorsed and funded SOILs projects. While the grassroots mandate and community engagement have no doubt played a role in garnering support. The driving forces behind the support

are two fold. Firstly the solution makes sense. It is low, tech, appropriate and translatable all over Haiti. It takes waste and makes it into something useful. Secondly, the focus on a transition to the public and private sector provide a realistic and potentially viable long-term solution to Haiti's sanitation needs.

The central questions of this dissertation is what has lead NGO's to attempt to generate some of their own revenue in one of the poorest countries in the world? In the case of SOIL the answer is quite simple. If SOIL can successfully create micro-businesses they can potentially provide a long-term solution to Haiti's sanitation needs and break the cycle of dependency.

#### So What Does it Mean?

While the findings of this study cannot be generalized beyond the scope of this case, it is possible to link them to the debates. This is a starting point for future scholarship, as I know of no other cases for comparison. There are three levels of analysis, conceptually, empirically, and policy implications.

## Conceptually

First a foremost it makes sense. The idea that a non-profit can provide services then set up a transition ensuring their continued provision by bolstering both the private and public sectors is logical. It breaks the dependency cycle, shifts the services to the sectors where they are found in the developed world, and fosters both private and public sector growth. The implications of a small non-profit being able to create a sustainable, relevant, for profit business are huge. That being said the path to making such a goal a reality is not easy.

Secondly there is support for the idea. A lot of support. Donors and big name grant agencies have both verbalized support and more importantly, funded SOIL's work. There is also both public and private sector support. SOILs work with DINEPA<sup>83</sup> has proved a strong partnership for both. Of equally importance is the grassroots relationship with the public. While the legacy of failed development will be no small feat to attempt to overcome, SOILs positive relationships with the community cannot be overstated. People want sanitation and they want jobs.

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<sup>83</sup> Government Agency under which sanitation falls.

Thirdly, the idea is relevant to Haiti. It is low tech, doesn't require much in terms of skilled labor, uses few resources and those that it does use are available locally, and addresses two critical needs. It is literally the transformation of waste into something useful-Soil.

In theory the idea makes a lot of sense, there is little downside. This in and of it's self is significant, much of development has no endgame and doesn't offer long term solutions, in many cases it doesn't even offer short terms solutions. As SOIL has begun to operationalize this plan is where the viability of its goals are being tested. While the ultimate success of the project will take years to measure and fall outside the timeline of this study, initial indicators show promise. Conceptually the idea is sound and early phases of the project seem to indicate the same for its operationalization.

#### Empirically

The most baseline question here is does it work? The answer to that questions lies 5-10 years down the road and therefor falls outside the range of this work. That being said there are positive indicators.

First off there is a need. Sanitation is a biting need in Haiti where the vast majority of the country doesn't have access to it. The recent introduction of Cholera to Haiti but UN troops improperly disposing on their own human waste is but one example highlighting the need for proper, safe sanitation. SOIL's composting process kills the pathogens found in human waste.

There is a demand. At the community level people are interested in having a toilet, they are interested in the jobs created by the servicing of the toilets, and they are interested in purchasing the compost created the end of the process. This interest has been expressed in quantifiable ways. There are people who have had these toilets put in their homes, there are people employed building and servicing the toilets and the first batch of compost made available for sale sold out quickly.

Granted there has been some push back on the idea of paying for the servicing of the toilets. Based mainly on the history of failed development projects and the legacy dependency and not the ability to pay. So while initial indicators show positively in favor of a market for the compost the question about people's willingness to pay for servicing of the toilets remains untested.



The project has garnered international attention from well-known donors. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is currently funding the household toilet project. The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour organization is covering all of SOILs operating costs for two years. It is clear that big name donors are not only interested in SOILs work, but are putting the funds to back them into the organization. Domestically there is also support for SOIL from within the Haitian government. DINEPA, widely regarded as one of the more functional branches of the state works closely with SOIL.

Empirically, initial signs are positive. There is a need, there is a demand, and there is support. At the community level, state level and internationally emerging evidence speaks to the potential of this undertaking. Will it be successful? It is still too soon to say. If successful can it be replicated elsewhere? It is also too soon to say, but this case may in fact prove a watershed for future projects.

## Policy Implications

In practical terms there are policy implications at two distinct, but related levels—the NGO level international level. At both levels engagement with the community that is being supported is vital. Without that piece of the puzzle, without community support development is destined to fail.

There are five key policy areas at the NGO level emerging here that can be linked to larger debates about development focused NGOs.

1. Develop an exit strategy. In the case of SOIL, the recognition that a long term, sustainable sanitation plan for Haiti does not include its provision by a non-profit.
2. Hire and partner with organizations that fall outside the scope of traditional development work. In SOILs case Stanford University trained MBAs have been working on the development of a business plan and strategic management.
3. Stick with what you know—mostly. While the very idea of building a business falls outside

the scope of traditional development work, in SOILs case the rest of what they are undertaking falls directly under their ecological sanitation umbrella.

4. Engage the community. Accept feedback, listen to requests, hire locally, and speak the language. It is SOILs hands on, local knowledge and community acceptance that serve as the building blocks for any potential successes.
5. Engage the State. SOIL could fairly easily work around the state, especially in the context of Haiti, but by working with DINEPA SOIL helps bolster state capacity an essential element to SOILs endgame.

For International Donors funds are limited and all projects cannot be supported. One of the most appealing aspects of SOILs work is that there is an exit strategy. The implications here are that donors need to look beyond traditional projects and look at programs and entities that are applying new methods to address development. In a place like Haiti, desperately poor and all but stateless development done badly is not simply a waste of money it

undermines the fragile systems that are in place. Donors are accountable and need to support responsible projects that will not only make the best use of available funds, but also help not harm the populations they are supposed to be serving.

There are hopeful signs for SOIL's plans to transition the provision of sanitation services to the private sector, with oversight by the state. There is a long road ahead and time will ultimately show if the venture is successful, but initial indicators are positive. The potential here is great and SOIL may prove a watershed case for new development practices.

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