Geographies of Displacement: The Evolution of the Champ de Mars Settlement in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

GEOGRAPHIES OF DISPLACEMENT: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHAMP DE MARS SETTLEMENT IN PORT- Au-PRINCE, HAITI

By

Austin Swift

A THESIS

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GEOGRAPHIES OF DISPLACEMENT: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHAMP DE MARS SETTLEMENT IN PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

Austin Swift

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On the 12th of January 2010, a massive earthquake struck the Caribbean nation of Haiti. One of the worst natural disasters to ever strike the Western Hemisphere, the capital of Port-au-Prince was severely damaged. In the aftermath of the earthquake, internally displaced people (IDPs) sought refuge by erecting hundreds of informal camps throughout the city. At the epicenter of this cataclysmic event was the burgeoning Champ de Mars tent city. Located in central Port-au-Prince, the Champ de Mars quickly transitioned from green space to slum. For two years, the eleven sites would emphasize patterns of insecurity and urban transition in a battered post-disaster zone. In 2012, the tent city was formally closed and thousands of people were relocated.

This thesis begins with an analysis of camp formation in post-quake Port-au-Prince. The evolution of the Champ de Mars settlement is explored from beginning to end using historical and current satellite imagery. By investigating the evolution of the study site, human security paradigms and issues of urban permanence are examined in a qualitative and quantitative framework. In 2015, fieldwork conducted in Port-au-Prince entailed semi-structured and open-ended interviews, observations, and photography. Data and interviews amassed from internally displaced Haitians and the players who participated in the establishment and dissolution of the camp stress the complications of relocating
disaster victims. This thesis concludes by examining some of the lessons learned post-closure. It is hoped that this case study will increase the understanding and applicability of disaster zone research by spotlighting an infamous tent city in a complicated urban environment.

KEYWORDS

Haiti, relocation, tent city, urban slums, internally displaced person, human security
DEDICATION

For the people of Haiti, whose kindness and fortitude inspired me to conduct this research. This thesis is dedicated to all those who lost their lives and to those who continue to suffer.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CHS Commission of Human Security
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs Internally Displaced Persons
IJDH Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti
IOM International Organization of Migration
J/P HRO J/P Haiti Relief Organization
MINUSTAH United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
PALAIS NATIONAL Haitian National Palace
PNH Haitian National Police
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNEP United Nations Environment Program
ULCBP Unit for Housing Construction and of Public Buildings
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USSOUTHCOM United States Southern Command
WHO World Health Organization
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“There is a point of no return, unremarked at the time, in most lives.”
Graham Greene, *The Comedians* (1976, 9)

Statement of Problem

At 16:53 EST on January 12, 2010, the country of Haiti suffered a catastrophic 7.3 magnitude earthquake. Occurring 50 km from the capital of Port-au-Prince, the subsequent tectonic shifts were a direct hit to the epicenter of Haiti’s social and economic life. An unprecedented natural disaster, this concentrated cataclysm would change the urban landscape of a nation. (Lu, Bengtsson, et. Holme, 2012). Such a rapid upheaval has thus redefined the social, economic, and political fabric of the country (Bulley, 2014). When the dust settled, more than 230,000 people had been killed or were missing and 1.5 million residents had become internally displaced and homeless (Bilham, 2010, 879). As January 12, 2010 came to a close, survivors reported feelings of trepidation as an already inadequate infrastructure provided little respite for survivors. Fleeing for their lives, over 1.5 million urbanites sought shelter from the immediate dangers of the earthquake, collapsing infrastructure, and the potential for anarchy to arise. (Jobe, 2010). Within minutes of the initial strike, thousands of people began to migrate to the Champ de Mars in central Port-au-Prince, a famed gathering place during times of political upheaval and social festivities.

As the poorest and least developed country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti’s weak and fragmented government was ill equipped to organize adequate
disaster response services (Dubois, 2012). With infrastructure in complete ruin and public services at a standstill, hundreds of thousands of Haitians were forced to swiftly seek housing in tent cities. In 2010, the initial composition of these flash cities was well documented by the photographer Wyatt Gallery, in his book Tent life: Haiti. His photography documents the social living conditions for Haitians under the tent. (Gallery, 2010, 42). Photos help to frame the official definition of a tent city from the UNHCR: a collection of tents, forming temporary or makeshift accommodations for refugees or internally displaced persons. (UNHCR, 2010). One of these public zones turned tent city was the Champ de Mars in central Port-au-Prince. Image 1. depicts the Champ de Mars before its eventual transformation.

![Image 1. The Champ de Mars on August 25, 2009. Source: Google Earth](image)

Undamaged and undeveloped space became highly valued in the congested capital, as internally displaced persons began using public spaces such as street corners, vacant lots, and parks to build temporary shelters. Facilitated by the international humanitarian
response, tent cities composed of tarps, plywood, and corrugated metal shelters soon reached into the hundreds (Katz, 2013). The size of the settlements would range drastically from a few families on a street corner to mega camps swelling beyond 60,000 people (Sontag, 2010). The tent city would initially develop directly across from the collapsed Palais National. **Image 2.** depicts the Place Toussaint camp in 2011 just over a year after the initial formation of the Champ de Mars.


A conglomeration of eleven separately classified camps would start to encompass the former green space just days after the initial strike on the capital. The camps were classified and given locals names based upon their geographic location within the original Champ de Mars. Many of the camp names reference streets and monuments. The park
next to the Haitian National Palace had begun its transformation into a semi-permanent urban slum. Operating from January 2010 to March/April 2012, the settlement remains one of the most notable and infamous examples of Haiti’s post-quake tent cities. During its tenure and beyond, the camp has been cited for issues of poor disaster planning, human security incidents, and relocation assistance blunders.

In 2012, the Champ de Mars camps were systematically phased out and residents were forcibly relocated. In an attempt to redevelop the area post-closure, the Haitian government and international NGO’s began an ambitious public works project to transition the degraded land into governmental offices, civic buildings and refurbished monuments. Financed with millions of dollars of external economic assistance, the reclaiming and rebuilding of the Champ de Mars was named by the Haitian government and non-profits as a normalization priority. Stipulated by the current Martelly administration, the rapid closure of camps within 100 days of taking office was an early promise by an historically inept government. Any positive residual effects regarding the swift closure of the Champ de Mars remain obscure. Camp residents were promised various assistance packages and prebuilt permanent housing on the outskirts of the municipality. While the rhetoric connotes progress, the story on the ground from camp residents presents a darker truth. Glaring societal and security concerns now loom. Currently, Haiti is struggling to recover as aid coffers diminish and internal political pressures escalate.

Much of Haiti’s refugee plight remains untold. As of 2015, little has been done to follow up with the Champ de Mars residents post-closure, leaving a population vulnerable as Haiti’s economic and security situation remains precarious. Five years after
the devastation, while many of the tent cities in Port-au-Prince and the surrounding foothills have closed, some still operate, as residents literally have “nowhere else to go” (Baron, 2014). The mass migration of thousands of people occurred with little consideration for geographic suitability or urban planning (Ferris, E.; Ferro. S, 2012). The sheer scope of the earthquake and resulting humanitarian aid crisis have largely overshadowed the current conditions in transitional zones on the outer periphery. The remaining refugee camps present lasting challenges for the current administration and their allies, as migrants continue to flood the capital in search of jobs and housing. Receiving even less attention from the government and media are the growing slums on the outskirts of the capital. Consequently, the result is a stranded populace whose daily life is entrenched in poverty, disease, and danger (Dubois, 2012). In early 2012, residents were cleared from living in squalid tents downtown, but the majority of IDP’s have merely transitioned to similar circumstances in marginal peripheral sites. This challenging situation provides even further problems as the relocation zones often lack even the most basic services.

From 2012 to 2015, the population influx to zones such as Canaan, Jerusalem, and Onaville is a testament to the ongoing housing crisis in Port-au-Prince. Situated on the fringe of the capital, the location of these slums in the outer periphery prevents residents from actively participating in centralized commercial districts, engaging in quality education, and receiving basic healthcare. In the shadows of their former lives, entire communities have recreated and redefined new social and geographic boundaries (Sontag, 2010), but to date no study has mapped and documented these on-going social and urban changes.
Gaps in Research

This study intends to address the pending gap in current refugee and disaster science studies by focusing entirely on a specific zone in Port-au-Prince. No academic study of its kind has documented the formation of a tent city in Haiti from start to finish and undertaken a post-evaluation three years after its formalized cessation. While media reports discuss the existence and closure of Haiti’s tent cities, they fail to assess the formation of the site over time. In particular, this thesis is original in that it examines human security and urban suitability practices within a geospatial framework.

In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, Haiti was inundated with project hunters and journalists. At its peak, the recovery effort in Port-au-Prince attracted hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world. With the passage of time, public interest and funding for research has declined substantially. Researchers and media have moved elsewhere to the latest tragedy. As of 2015, a lingering aperture exists in current scholarship concerning updated and comprehensive geographic transitions in Port-au-Prince. As a case study, scrutinizing the emergence of the Champ de Mars camps can benefit policy-makers looking to apply lessons learned to future disaster situations. To better understand the fallout from the Haiti disaster, additional research is needed to bridge the gap between the creation of emergency tent cities and their propensity to transition into formalized urban slums. With current refugee populations exploding around the globe, continued investigation of the aftereffects is an emerging concentration in the field of refugee studies.
Research Motivations

The overall objective of this thesis is to understand how the formation and expansion of the Champ de Mars encampments has affected human security and issues of permanence related to refugee housing. This thesis aims to provide an analysis of the selected zone from 2010 to 2015 through a qualitative, quantitative, and geospatial framework. A detailed case study of the Champ de Mars tent cities, from their inception in 2010 to closure in 2012 with a follow up analysis conducted in February 2015.

Following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the development of eleven tent cities in the Champ de Mars evolved in a manner which would decrease human security and increase the probability of zoning conflicts in the future. In this thesis, I illustrate detrimental IDP policies by focusing on the composition, progression, and rapid closure of the tent city. This analysis is not meant to critique the overall humanitarian response in Haiti, but rather is an inquiry into the initial formation of a particular IDP encampment, tracking its development after much of the world lost interest.

This research is motivated by the following goals and questions:

(1) To classify and document the formation of the Champ de Mars tent cities in central Port-au-Prince. Relevant literature and news articles are examined from 2009 to 2015. Why were the Champ de Mars tent cities so contested? What factors contributed to the controversy of this settlement from 2010 to present?

(2) To determine how the growth of Champ de Mars camps evolved during the initial crisis. Was the selection of the settlement sites random or deliberate? What factors did the Haitian government and aid agencies play?
(3) To determine if the spatial layout of the Champ de Mars altered human security in a positive or negative way. Modern approaches to refugee management will be juxtaposed against reports of murder, rape and civil conflict within the target zones. What were Haitians perceptions of security systems? Was a politically volatile zone more dangerous?

(4) To document governmental and humanitarian policies which exacerbate disputes of protection and permanence among an affected populace. Forced migration reports will be compared to land suitability. Were residents forcibly evicted and why? Was the 2012 relocation justified? Where have residents gone? What relocation efforts and policies did international NGO’s and the Haitian government employ?

(5) To utilize geospatial technologies as a mechanism to enhance the spatial understanding of temporary settlements. A geospatial contribution will include important visual, cartographic, and quantitative components. Satellite imagery and GPS data are utilized to convey geographic displacement patterns.

Finally, my research goals do not focus on the damage wrought by the earthquake, nor the humanitarian response post-disaster, but rather upon close analysis of the formation and closure of a highly contested urban zone. A chronological investigation is complemented by queries on disaster displacement, human security, and forced migration.

**Chapter Breakdown**

In order to address and examine these research questions, this thesis is organized into six chapters. This thesis aims to showcase the evolution of the Champ de Mars settlements by framing their creation with disaster data and satellite imagery. This approach creates an overview of the city scale and assists in the tracking of urban growth.
As tent cities are ever changing, satellite imagery assists in their rapid classification. The lifespan of the camp is explored with contentious human security reports. Finally, the closure is juxtaposed with evidence of forced evictions and urban planning arguments.

Chapter 1 begins by summarizing the human crisis challenges. Significant gaps in prior research are briefly discussed to shed light on the originality of this work. Chapter 2 starts by creating a geographic outline for the study sites by progressively narrowing in scope. Haiti, Port-au-Prince and finally the Champ de Mars are broken down to clearly establish geographic locations. The narrative discusses research design, data sources and the structure of fieldwork conducted in Port-au-Prince. Methods used to analyze and process satellite imagery are discussed in this section as well as the data sources. Chapter 2 concludes by giving an overview of Haitian history. This brief history is especially pertinent, as it is imperative to frame the context of the Champ de Mars in relation to the earthquake and rise of tent cities. Chapter 3 recounts the rise of the Champ de Mars settlement by analyzing first-person accounts of survivors and media reports. Using a geospatial framework, the creation and dissolution of the settlement is depicted using high quality satellite imagery from GoogleEarth and DigitalGlobe. Datasets taken from the International Organization of Migration (IOM) are evaluated as the primary dataset. This analysis includes population changes within the camps from 2010 to 2012. Chapter 4 provides a critical analysis on the human security situation in Port-au-Prince proper and the outskirts of the capital. Special attention is devoted to the security conditions endured in the Champ de Mars. I argue here that the closure of the Champ de Mars exacerbated issues of insecurity for an already at-risk populace. Gender data and reports of crime are critiqued in the assessment along with surveys from the Institute for Justice and
Democracy. This data is a rare glimpse into camp conditions from the perspective of the inhabitants who lived there. As the camp was closed in 2012, this historical qualitative data is imperative for assessing the conditions of a now nonexistent encampment. Semi-structured interviews with security providers are discussed, along with relevant reports on the Haitian National Police, MINUSTAH, and international NGO’s.

Chapter 5 addresses the formal closure and informal consequences of closing the camps. From 2010 to 2012 the district held between 5,000 and 30,000 internally displaced people. In 2012, pressure for a solution to the tent city epidemic caused the government to close the Champ de Mars with the assistance of the Canadian government and International Organization of Migration (IOM). Many observers initially cited the closure a win for both the Haitian government and NGO’s. The reality on the ground is a darker truth. The situation is a double-edged sword, creating more questions. The data trail for the Camp de Mars ends there. No aid agency or government officially knows where all the Champ de Mars residents relocated. Many transitioned to other tent cities and slums on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. Some took a quick one-time cash handout.

My goal for this thesis and beyond is to find out what happened to them.

I argue in Chapter 5 that the Haitian government, along with the help of NGO’s, precipitously cleared the site. Depending on the source, the mandatory eviction would be touted as a success or failure in the media. By 2015, a dearth of contingency planning has increased population displacement and IDP vulnerability. I argue that the closure of the Champ de Mars and lack of post-closure support directly correlates to the rise of Canaan. Canaan is a rapidly growing slum on the outskirts of the capital where many earthquake survivors fled after their homes were destroyed. Many of the former Champ de Mars
residents have migrated to this vulnerable area. I also include semi-structured interviews in this chapter, taking my perspectives directly from former Champ de Mars residents living in Canaan. Chapter 6 concludes by connecting the different chapters and summarizing lessons learned from 2010 to present in Haiti. The need for policies of urban inclusion and reformation are dually noted. Chapter 6 also considers how refugee situations rapidly evolve and the situational impact on data accuracy and information gathering. This thesis ends by discussing aspirations for future studies and my personal motivations for conducting this research.
Chapter 2: Research Design and History

Geography of Selected Sites

Research Site: Haiti

Situated in the Caribbean (Greater Antilles) between the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, The Republic of Haiti comprises the western half of the island of Hispaniola. The Dominican Republic shares the island to the east. With a total area of 10,714 square miles, this tropical, semi-arid country is slightly smaller than Maryland (CIA World Fact Book, 2014). Terrain is extremely mountainous and rugged, with a sprawling and lengthy coastline. Geographically, the country profile consists of unique northern and southern peninsulas, forming a backwards-C shape. The climate is tropical with temperatures usually hovering between 70-80 degrees, varying with altitude and precipitation distinctions. Two distinctive rainy seasons exist from April to June and October to November, often leading to varied agricultural outputs and rainfall surpluses or shortages.

Topographically, the terrain ranges from rocky to dense tropical jungle. “Mountains beyond Mountains” is a classic Haitian proverb and well deserved, as Haiti combines fertile valleys and steep inclines. Extensive deforestation exacerbates susceptibility to landslides, flooding, and food insecurity. Much of Haiti’s forests have been cleared for agriculture and charcoal for fuel. Haiti has lost almost 98% of its tree cover (Clammer, 2012). From colonial times to present, rampant environmental mismanagement continues to intensify abject poverty. As of 2013, the total population of Haiti hovers around 10.3 million people (CIA World Fact Book, 2014).
Map 1: World Reference for Haiti. Source: Map by author.
Port-au-Prince

Located at 18°32'N 72°20'W, Port-au-Prince acts as both the political capital and economic heart of this island nation. The Gulf of Gonave serves as a natural harbor for this city by the sea. The topography of the city is reminiscent of a Roman amphitheater, with the main commercial districts abutting the Caribbean Sea.


Note: An interesting facet of Google Maps is the ingrained terminology. Five years post-quake, the transition of public space to tent city has become so entrenched that Google still labels the Champ de Mars as an internally displaced persons camp.

Flowing out from the economic center, residential neighborhoods begin to form in various waves of development. The population of Port-au-Prince varies and exact numbers are hard to attain due to the endemic poverty. These statistics are all the more
complicated by an earthquake, which displaced more than 1.5 million residents (UNHCR, 2010). In 2013, estimates place the population of Port-au-Prince at 945,000. This number is misleading, as it only quantifies the demographics of Port-au-Prince proper. If one includes the outer slums, a population around 3.7 million inhabitants is a more accurate estimate. A sphere of social stratification exists within the capital. The arrangement is reminiscent of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil with the commercial and business districts parallel to the beach and poverty relegated to the hillsides. Port-au-Prince suffers from the same geographical layout as Rio, as Haitians are forced to reside in unsafe shantytowns on a 30% incline. Ascending into the hills, the dire poverty intensifies with every meter. One exception, however, is the Petion-Ville neighborhood and the road continuing to Kenscoff. This dichotomy creates a stark social contrast as million dollar mansions collide with refugee camps. This contrast is clearly visible via satellite imagery.

Lacking a street grid system, urban planning is a challenge and traffic, often snarled. A dearth of roads and inadequate transportation systems aggravates congestion and commercial accessibility for rich and poor residents alike. Transportation from Centre Ville to Petion-Ville can easily take over an hour (a 3 mile journey).


Port-au-Prince sits below sea level. The geographic layout precludes easy evacuation of the city. The layering of elevation data clearly illustrates in Map 3 the rapid rise in
elevation, a condition that intensifies social stratification and increases the chances of severe flooding and mudslides. Described as an amphitheater, the natural caldera shape of the city seemed to only intensify the effects of the 7.3 magnitude earthquake. Flowing out from the economic core, residential neighborhoods in hills were minimally damaged while the central heart of city sustained severe destruction. Poor Haitians are forced to reside in unsafe shantytowns on a 30-60% slope, located primarily on the perimeter of the urban center (Xu et. al, 2012, 736). Jalousie, a shantytown parallel to the fashionable and elite neighborhood of Petionville, showcases the economic dichotomy. The most dangerous and arguably infamous slum is Cité Soleil, which is waterfront, north of the Champ de Mars. A pattern modeling their creation notes that many Haitians fled the flood zones for open zones of relative stability (Bramante; Durairaju, 2013).


The map above showcases Port-au-Prince in red. From this geographic standpoint, the elevated rise of the mountains behind the city is clearly depicted. During my time in Port-
au-Prince, many citizens remarked that the geographic layout of the city inhibited a proper evacuation and intensified the clustering of thousands of individuals post-strike. Residents also mentioned that many of the people who initially went to the Champ de Mars were inhabitants of the Cité Soleil slum, who after fleeing flooding made their way downtown.

**The Champ de Mars**

The Champ de Mars is traditionally characterized as a large public green space and is a quintessential urban design feature of French city planning. Modeled after the Campus Martius in Rome, the name translates to “Field of Mars”, which pays homage to the Roman God of war. The Champ de Mars in Paris, France forms the sprawling turf adjacent to the Eiffel Tower. As French colonial power expanded throughout the world in the 19th century, so too did the French affinity for vast boulevards. From Mauritius to Haiti, the design would be incorporated as the central theme of their metropolitan designs. In Port-au-Prince, the site was originally a racetrack until it underwent a cultural renaissance, as Haiti became an independent republic. Planning themes were borrowed form the United States, with a Parisian design theme still paramount. The addition of a new Presidential Palace in 1918 cemented the area as a political hub. The three-domed, white building was modeled after the White House in Washington D.C. The Champ de Mars however, as we know it today was not built until 1954. The zone was renovated to commemorate the 150th anniversary of freedom from colonial France.

During the 20th century, each Haitian dictator added statues and monuments as the city underwent varying waves of development. “The calm heart of the city is the Champ de Mars district, with its parks, museums and memorials to the country’s turbulent
history” (Lonely Planet-Haiti, 288). One of the most iconic statues is the Unknown Slave, which depicts a man blowing a conch shell, but would eventually be used as a bench and laundry drying rack during the years of the camp. As Port-au-Prince grew, so did the Champ de Mars. The site is the largest open area in the city. The vast parks and open spaces were the centralized point utilized for pageantry and military parades, a trend that continues today with the closure of tent cities. With a National Palace designed after the White House, the similarities of the Champ de Mars to 1930's Hooverville in Washington D.C are significant. Both the Champ de Mars and Hooverville in the District of Columbia were infamous shantytowns that presented a political and economic crisis for both countries.

Today, as the political centerpiece of this island capital, the Champ de Mars continues to experience frequent political demonstrations and violent protests against the ever-changing administrations and skyrocketing cost of living.
Research Methodology

To create a specialized case study on a grouping of tent cities that existed from 2010 to 2012, this research methodology uses theoretical underpinnings from disaster management, human security, and IDP resettlement issues. These three main focal points create a solid foundation to document events from 2010 to 2015. The creation of a cartographic and historical account of the Champ de Mars is explored through geospatial and investigative practices. The formation and dissolution of the settlement (January 2010 to March/April 2012) is acknowledged with a multi-faceted approach. My thesis frames a notorious refugee camp by documenting the lifespan of the Champ de Mars using these comprehensive methods of investigation:

1. Satellite and drone imagery, digital and historical maps, GPS coordinates
2. Compiled quantitative datasets and camp surveys
3. Semi-structured and open ended interviews

A literature review of journals, articles and books relevant to disaster management, human security, and IDP resettlement has been embedded separately into chapters 3 though 5. This review helps to distinguish scholarship, as the individualized literature in each chapter is used to help frame and analyze the lifespan of the Champ de Mars. For analysis and visualization purposes, the latest technologies in Geographic Information Systems (ESRI ArcGIS, ArcScene) and aerial imagery have been utilized to create maps. Qualitative and quantitative methods of investigation are employed to study the political and societal bi-products over a span of five years and six months, from December 2009 to June 2015. This timeframe includes the entire lifespan of settlement in the rapidly evolving urban capital. The timespan was selected to fill in voids in current research.
**Site Selection**

The study site was selected for four reasons. 1. Its centralized location and pre-determined geographic boundary within the capital. 2. A high population density composed of men, women, and children with a range from 5,000 to 30,000 inhabitants. 3. Reports of human security concerns and human rights abuses, including murder, rape, theft/robbery and forced migration. 4. Issues of urban permanence concerning the formation and closure of the camp in a politically symbolic zone.

**Networking**

Contact with Haitian community and key players who participated in post-quake Haiti began in January 2014. From January 2014 to June 2015, hundreds of emails were exchanged in order to formulate my project, explore research sites and plan my fieldwork. The following organizations were reached via email, phone or in face-to-face meetings. (See Appendix I).

From June 2014 to December 2014, I undertook an internship with United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) in Doral, Florida. USSOUTHCOM was one of the key humanitarian actors in post-quake Haiti. For seven months, I immersed myself in the J9 Partnering Directorate, conducting informal interviews with military and civil service personnel who actively participated in disaster and reconstruction operations. From September to December 2014, I actively assisted in the creation of an international humanitarian conference held at USSOUTHCOM headquarters. Through this experience, I was able to engage and network with a multitude of NGO’s working throughout the Caribbean. Haitians attending the conference put me in contact with many people in Port-au-Prince, who I would later have the opportunity to interview. Some of the interviews
were pertinent to the Champ de Mars, others more relevant to the rise of Canaan. These connections would later ensure a fruitful and productive trip to Port-au-Prince. By December 2014, I had purchased my flight from Miami to Port-au-Prince.

**Geospatial Methods**

Initial exploration of the Champ de Mars tent cities was accomplished via Google Earth Pro. I used the historical timeline feature to visualize their creation and dissolution, as well a crescendo from 2010-2011. The historical timeline feature on Google Earth allows for rapid visualization of historical satellite imagery. The footprint of this tent city near the Presidential Palace allowed for consistency when gathering geospatial data and imagery. The palace grounds can be easily identified in satellite imagery; mapping the informal camps is the research challenge. The spatial extent of the study area for this analysis was established by visualizing the maximum area covered by all eleven sites where (blue tarps) tent cities could be detected. Imagery in this thesis is compiled from USGS, Google Earth Pro, Digital Globe, and International Organization of Migration Drone Imagery.

**Geospatial Imagery Processing**

ArcGIS 10.2 assisted with the analysis of satellite and aerial imagery. Both vector and raster datasets were utilized for analysis and map creation. GPS data and various polygon features were also layered to create many of the maps in my thesis. With my sites spatially located, I began to process my imagery. Using Google Earth as an exploratory look, I was able to locate the spatial extent of my study site.

With coordinates in hand, I was able to reach out to commercial companies that sell geospatial imagery to the general public. Imagery attained was unreferenced with a
coordinate system. Image processing consisted of geo-referencing the Champ de Mars and with other GPS points on related imagery. Facilitated by Google Earth, I crosschecked geographic locations of tent cities on different dates with the dates available through DigitalGlobe. Other vector and raster data used to create my Digital Elevation Maps and ArcScene depiction of Port-au-Prince was accessed from ESRI ArcGIS Online databases. My analysis with Google Earth was focused on their historical data feature in Google Earth Pro. This tab allows a user to progress forwards and backwards in time, creating an accurate visual representation of my study site. This analysis utilized a time series approach from 2010 (immediately following the earthquake), 2012 (height of the camp population) and 2014 (the most recent image available). These images help to tell the story of the Champ de Mars.

Eventually, I downloaded elevation data provided by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The data set was in the form of a raster. The resolution was not optimal, but sufficient for my purposes. The dataset was attained in two separate file systems, a geo.tiff and geo.bil. The data provided by USGS was already geo-referenced, so the image did not require it. Initial processing was to check for sinks from the spatial analyst toolset. While sinks were present, I determined there was no need to fill sinks, as I would not be preforming a watershed analysis. My intended goal was to preform a slope analysis on my target area. As detailed before, I believe that geographic elevation hindered the evacuation of Port-au-Prince and created a vacuum where people instinctually fled to the Champ de Mars. The amphitheater shape and high elevations surrounding Port-au-Prince put neighborhoods located on the fringe at extreme risk. Following my conclusion with fill analysis, I began to further process the dataset by
running the geo.bil file in the slope analyst feature. My research looks at the geographic suitability of the Champ de Mars, as a space suitable to house over 30,000 people for a significant period of time.

In February 2015, I was made aware of IOM Drone Imagery during my meetings in Port-au-Prince with IOM officials. After multiple visits and meetings at their headquarters near the U.S. Embassy, I was granted access to IOM’s GIS lab and materials. The IOM is currently running a full-scale GIS operation in the capital. Their detailed work is by far the best cartographic documentation of tent cities in Port-au-Prince to date. Much of the statistical data and drone imagery used in my critique is due to the tireless efforts of IOM staff in Port-au-Prince.

Datasets and Camp Surveys

Data sets from the IOM and the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti have been employed to create graphs, survey opinions and document population changes. The IJDH surveys are crucial, as they documented the perspective of Haitians who lived in the Champ de Mars, (while still in the camps). Information was fresh in their minds and likely more accurate. This type of historical information was difficult ascertain during my field-research. Access to the datasets provided by the IOM was a multi-step process, which required varying levels of processing and approval. This initial step allowed me to collect unpublished imagery and gain approval for its usage. I was also allowed to analyze raw data collected from the Champ de Mars.

Fieldwork

In February 2015, I conducted research in Port-au-Prince for ten days. Through professional contacts, I built a team to assist with the development of my on-the ground
research. My team consisted of three Haitians: a fixer, a driver, and a secondary assistant who monitored the security situation. The goal of my field research was simple; I wanted to visit every area I intended to study and interview people who were present or acted as the decision makers. Once in Port-au-Prince, this often became 12-hour days of cultural immersion, as I bounced around the hectic capital collecting stories, GPS data and photos. The most important thing for me was to understand the mindset of the people who were in the Champ de Mars. My method for that was through open-ended and semi-structured interviews.

**Interviews**

To uphold ethical considerations, I made a point to gain consent from my interviewees. I made sure to obtain this verbally from the respondents themselves or the head of the household if children were involved. All of the people who were interviewed for this research consented willingly without compensation. Being from the University of Miami provided a strategic benefit, as many Haitians remember UMiami as one of the first responders post-crisis. While in Haiti, I interviewed over fifty IDP’s, politicians and NGO representatives. IDP’s were usually given a structured beginning (See Appendix II). The interviews usually ended with follow up questions in an open-ended framework. People from institutions were given open-ended interviews. These usually were framed with the Champ de Mars as the main subject. Human participant burnout is a problem in Haiti, as the populace has become frustrated with countless project hunters who make promises and return little. I tried my best to avoid this stigma.
Notes from the Field

Logistical and safety concerns during my fieldwork in Port-au-Prince were numerous. Political violence and protests were daily occurrences during my fieldwork period. These disruptions ranged from burning tires in the street to full-scale riots, which paralyzed the Champ de Mars and caused many delays in the undertaking of this research. During intermittent periods of calm, I was able to collect some of the testimonies and data presented in this thesis. With the Champ de Mars ground zero during my research, the political disruptions and economically motivated protests against the government often made an already difficult situation trying. The nature of this research called for me to seek out some of the worst areas of Port-au-Prince and the outer periphery.
**History of Haiti**

“Once considered by many observers as the pearl of the Caribbean for its natural beauty and French colonial architecture, Haiti now conjures up the images of filth, utter despair, and endemic political corruption.” (Fishel et. Sáenz, 2007,9). Marred by a history of sugar plantations and slavery, this former French colony is remembered for rebuffing Napoleon with a violent revolution. Haiti holds the title for the only successful slave revolution to lead to an independent republic (Clammer, 2012, 14). From the birth of the republic in the early 19th century to present, Haiti has stagnated under dictatorships and rampant corruption. With the lowest GDP in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti was ill equipped to self-manage the catastrophic events of January 2010. To understand the current issues looming in Haiti, it is key to note the diverse and troubling history of this island nation. The saga of Haiti continues to shape the country everyday, which is why I believe it’s important to understand the context surrounding the creation of the Champ de Mars from a historical perspective.

**Trouble Looms for Ayiti**

When Christopher Columbus “discovered” Haiti in 1492 the land we know today as Haiti was populated by Taino (Taino is synonymous with Arawak, an indigenous people who inhabited the Greater Antilles). The Taino called the second largest island in the Caribbean “Ayiti” (Land of High Mountains), but the Spanish soon renamed it Hispaniola. Inevitably Europeans transmitted disease to the Taino, who had little immunity to smallpox, measles, and other European afflictions. (Girard, 2010). Soon after European arrival, the indigenous population was decimated. By the early 1500s, Spanish interest had shifted away from Hispaniola. As a result of this lost interest, the
population on Hispaniola grew slowly as the Spanish focused on conquering and consolidating lands in Latin America. By the late 16\textsuperscript{th} century, pirates were raiding settlements on Hispaniola and treasure ships while colonists on Hispaniola violated Spanish economic monopolies by trading with the Dutch, English, and French. (Girard, 2010).

\textbf{French and African Influence}

The first half the 17\textsuperscript{th} century saw continued conflict in Hispaniola between Spain, England, and France. By the 1650s, the French had won control of numerous Caribbean islands with France claiming Hispaniola in 1660. Over the next two decades France consolidated control and in 1684 and 1697, Spain ceded the western third of Hispaniola to France. Throughout the 18\textsuperscript{th} century the French founded settlements in their new colony of Saint Domingue, while suffering periodic natural disasters. Port-au-Prince was founded in 1749, but soon was rocked by two earthquakes and tsunamis that killed thousands. Insatiable European demand for luxury items prompted French settlers to grow tobacco, indigo, cotton, cacao, and later sugar and coffee. Sugar consumption and its popularity in Europe fueled the violence in Haiti. As sugar became a hot commodity, so did the expansion of land degradation in Haiti. Plantations in the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} century relied heavily on slaves to supply affordable manpower. To fill a workforce vacuum, Saint Domingue planters imported African slaves. Working conditions were extremely brutal with short life expectancies. However, it was cheaper to work slaves to death and import a new batch, rather than invest in their longevity and survival. By the 1780s, thousands of slaves were imported annually (Girard, 2010). The majority of slaves were
born in Africa because the brutal conditions prevented normal population growth. Saint-Domingue also had a large and wealthy population of mulattos, children descended from a French slave owner and an African slave. Mulattos were usually middle class and included free Africans who had won freedom. (Smartt Bell, 1995). French economic policies were a direct effort to curb economic and political gains by Mulattos in the burgeoning city of Port-au-Prince. In the 18th century, Haiti had become the most profitable colony in the world (Dubois, 2012).

**Revolution**

In 1789, the French Revolution caused debate in Saint-Domingue as to whether revolutionary laws extended full citizen rights to mulattos. In 1790, mulattos took up arms, but were defeated by the colonialists, mainly because the mulattos refused to arm the slaves. In 1791, plantations were engulfed in flames as slaves revolted. Two years later the French authorities tried to smother the rebellion by emancipating slaves. Saint-Domingue was threatened by the British because France was in turmoil and unable to project power. Consequently, emancipated slaves were the only viable military option to defend the colony and they successfully repelled a British invasion. By 1798, former slaves controlled the colony. In 1802, Napoleon Bonaparte sent a force to reclaim Saint-Domingue. The French restored control, but alienated mulattos and slaves by signing a decree to rescind rights granted to mulattos and restore slavery. The former slaves took up arms, with the conflict devolving into a bloody struggle of atrocity and attrition with disease killing thousands of French soldiers. By 1803, the mulatto and slave army had defeated the French. The defeat of Napoleon is often cited as one of the contributing
factors for Bonaparte selling the Louisiana Territories to the United States. The cash strapped French government desperately needed the money to support the war in Haiti and the United States doubled its landmass.

**Independence**

On January 1, 1804 the mulatto leader Dessalines declared independence renaming Saint-Domingue to Haiti ("Land of Mountains"). France refused to recognize Haiti until 1825 after the country agreed to pay 90 million francs as reparation for French colonists’ lost property in return for an end to trade embargos. (Dubois, 2012). Throughout the 19th century Haiti suffered a series of coups, military takeovers, and assassinations under authoritarian and corrupt regimes. Haiti was often insolvent, with limited infrastructure and social services for its people. Most people practiced subsistence agriculture, often raising food on small parcels of land. By 1840, Haiti no longer exported sugar as a cash crop, but did export coffee, which required little cultivation and grew semi-wild.

In 1842, an earthquake in Cap-Haitien (Haiti’s original capital and 2nd largest city) killed 10,000 people and was the third major earthquake since the 1751 and 1770 Port-au-Prince earthquakes. (Smartt Bell, 1995). Haiti is at the convergence of a tangle of complex tectonic faults near the intersection of the Caribbean and North American crustal plates. Consequently, it is prone to earthquakes and tsunamis. In 1874, a new constitution outlined the peaceful transfer of power and monetary, improving political and economic stability.
Failed State and Occupation

From 1911 to 1915, there were six presidents of Haiti, each of whom killed or forced into exile rival factions. Political mercenaries were often enlisted to overthrow the government. In 1915, the United States deployed the Marines to occupy Haiti and administer security, social services, and customs to protect financial interests of the United States. Haitians resented the occupation and the violence returned. Rapid reforms would help to quell discontent. In the 1920s the Haitian economy expanded with road networks, port modernization, and public health improvements. Sugar and cotton exports rebounded, but advances in agriculture were limited because many laborers worked seasonally in other Caribbean nations. Haiti’s small economic gains were erased by the Great Depression when prices on world commodities collapsed. Unrest continued in Haiti and the United States withdraw their forces in 1934.

Dictators and Juntas

From 1935 to 1986 Haiti returned to a pattern of dictatorial or military junta leadership. Leaders won power to dissolve the legislature, reorganize the judiciary, and to rule by decree. Most of the leaders during this period were repressed opponents and censored the press. They governed largely for personal gain and to benefit a clique of merchants and corrupt military. Duvalier (known as "Papa Doc") was one of Haiti’s most infamous dictators and shares similarities with many of Haiti’s leaders during the last half of the 20th Century. His regime used his national police (Tonton Macoutes) to intimidate and control the population through murder, torture, and rape. The regime of Papa Doc and the Tonton Macoutes is well documented in a novel by Graham Greene, The
Comedians. Greene’s novel depicts life in Port-au-Prince under the reign of Papa Doc. 30,000 Haitians were estimated to be killed by his government and through fraud and kickbacks in the tobacco monopoly he stole hundreds of millions of dollars. During Duvalier's tenure a massive brain drain only deepened Haiti's economic and social problems.

Transition

From 1986 to early 1994 Haiti was ruled by series of the military leaders interspaced with populist elected leaders. Troops massacred thousands of civilians, unrest was pervasive, and refugees continued to flee. Repression of civil rights led to the United Nations to authorize peacekeepers to restore Haiti's constitutionally elected government. This mission would eventually become the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). In late 1994, elected leaders returned to power and even peacefully transitioned power to a democratically elected president. But, in 1999, the president was unable to organize local and parliamentary elections and resorted to rule by decree. Follow-on elections were marred by boycotts, diluted electoral base, and allegations of leaders turning Haiti into a corrupt conduit for illegal drugs. Lingering resentment led to open revolt in 2004 which spread to Haiti’s second largest city, Cap Haitian. With rebels marching on the capital of Port-au-Prince, the president was escorted by United States officials to Africa in an attempt to restore order and end alleged embezzlement, corruption, and money laundering. An international peacekeeping mission brought a semblance of stability and normalcy to Haiti although violence continued into 2006. Elections were held in 2006 with a former president regaining office but little changed.
Amid growing poverty, Haitians protested against rising food prices, with violent protests continuing into 2009.

**The Amphitheater Crumbles**

On 12 January 2010, a magnitude 7.3 earthquake leveled Port-au-Prince and killed more than 230,000 people. (Bilham, 2010). The epicenter of the massive 2010 earthquake struck at the most densely populated region of this Caribbean nation, with the fault line of destruction occurring in the destitute neighborhoods of central and greater Port-au-Prince. Many have estimated the actual number of deaths to be over 300,000 people. Even the presidential palace (one of Haiti’s better constructed and maintained buildings) was destroyed. The poorly constructed infrastructure of cement and steel caved in on itself, leaving over 1.5 million people homeless. Given Haiti’s poor infrastructure, fragile social services, and limited public health services, strife and disease were inevitable. The few hospitals were damaged and overwhelmed medical staff were unprepared for a disaster of this magnitude. Consequently, thousands of Haitians are estimated to have died from injuries, infection, and outbreaks of cholera.

Many of the displaced were unable to leave Port-au-Prince due to injury, damaged transportation networks, and inadequate financial means. Rudimentary housing in many areas surrounding the capital, including Carrefour, had sustained tremendous damage. Consequently, tens of thousands of people squatted in open areas. Street corners, athletic stadiums, and parks became home to many IDPs overnight as they erected make-shift shelters scavenged from debris. (Ferris, E.; Ferro. S, 2012). Haiti remains extremely vulnerable and on edge socially and politically. Bad luck with
unprecedented natural disasters and a painful history threaten to leave communities in permanent poverty. However, the people of Haiti are resilient and with proper management and some good luck, social conditions are improving to some degree.
Chapter 3: Camp Formation

The Earthquake Generation

Examining the social place of refugees in the international order has become a clarifying exercise (Malkki, 1992). Complicated labeling systems have created various definitions. Most scholars accept the general quantifiers provided by the United Nations. Due to the contested nature of terminology, my thesis follows the guidelines established by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted" has left his or her country of origin for fear of social, political, religious or racial persecution (UNHCR, 1951, 3). The title of refugee is ubiquitous with international migrants, forced from their homelands across an international border. In contrast, an internally displaced person or IDPs have not crossed a border and remain in their country of origin (UN-Habitat, 2010). This labeling of a human being’s status becomes inflammatory due to the political and social implications (Downey, 2009). The residents of post-quake Port-au-Prince, who inhabited the Champ de Mars, include both refugees and internally displaced persons (Katz, 2013).

Fleeing the destruction of the city, Haitian citizens fled both domestically and internationally. Refugees who left Port-au-Prince primarily immigrated to the Dominican Republic and the United States of America (Clammer, 2012). Within a month of the initial strike, it is also estimated that over 600,000 Haitians left the city of Port-au-Prince (Bengtsson et. al, 2011), as per the analysis of cellular network data. This astounding geospatial study paints one of the most accurate estimates of population movement one
month after January 12, 2010. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees calls the 2010 Haiti earthquake “one of the worst natural disasters of the 21st century, displacing over two million people” (UNHCR, 2012). Due to the debilitating poverty in Port-au-Prince, the vast majority of earthquake survivors were forced to remain near the epicenter of the cataclysm.

Mapping the spatial layout and creation of tent cities has been undertaken using several different methods. The International Organization of Migration is currently using drones to map and document tent cities. Drones are accurate in detecting tent cities due to the immense amount of variation in shelter size and location. Many of the tents in post-quake Haiti were positioned on street corners and hillsides, making them difficult to detect using satellite technologies alone. Often, sites require on-the-ground verification. Although the Champ de Mars was cleared when I visited Haiti in 2015, the notorious nature of its location allowed me to have an excellent reference point for both my geospatial data gathering and fieldwork. Another method for predicting and mapping tent cities was undertaken using a logistical regression model. The model was devised in an attempt to map and explain why tent cities in the Champ de Mars occurred where they did. Utilizing a statistical formula, camp locations were predicted with an accuracy rate of 70% (Bramante; Durairaju, 2013, 36). The largest condition of informal camp creation was distance from major roads and damage concentration (Lu, X., Bengtsson, L.; Holme, P., 2012). These studies of population displacement and camp creation following the earthquake provide extremely valuable data. The concentration of camps near major roads however can be disputed, as Port-au-Prince only has two major highways. These roads act as the main transportation arteries of the country (Clammer, 2012). Also,
elevation played an important role in the dispersion of IDPs in Port-au-Prince (Bramante; Durairaju, 2013). The caldera shape of Port-au-Prince thus inhibited an easy evacuation of the capital.

**IDP Identities**

The term, internally displaced person is defined here as a person who, for a multitude of reasons has been forced to flee their home in haste (Ramadan, 2012). Refugees who occupied the Champ de Mars tent cities can be classified as both environmental and political refugees. In Chapter 5, I demonstrate how the political choices imposed on the Champ de Mars warrant a change in classification. In essence, the Champ de Mars residents are environmental refugees who transitioned to something more closely resembling political and economic refugees. The term environmental refugees is defined by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) as those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat temporarily or permanently, due to an environmental disturbance that threatens their existence or affects the quality of their life. The causation can be a natural or human trigger. (Westra, 2010). With a direct impact on Haiti’s urban core, the 7.3 magnitude earthquake instantly caused over 1.5 million to become internally displaced overnight. This rapid change amongst an extremely vulnerable population left thousands wandering the city, searching for loved ones and aid.
Champ de Mars: Day 1

A single catastrophic event changed the landscape of a capital city, affecting every layer of Haitian society. Unlike most conflict zones, the Haiti earthquake instantly changed the urban environment, leaving the local population little time to adjust. The shock was so quick that some people continued about their normal routine.

“I was living near Delmas when the earthquake hit. I wasn’t home at the time and my family lives in Port Salut. I didn’t know what to do. I wandered the streets for over an hour but my main concern was my goods I kept at my stand near the airport. I made my way to my stall and opened for business. I think people were happy to have fried plantains that night. Business was good”. – Woman trader, Port-au-Prince, February 2015 (Interview with Author)

Located in central Port-au-Prince, the Champ de Mars was rapidly transformed from a serene green space into a haze of blue tarps and rickety shelters in less than one week. Under the initial circumstances, the park was an intelligent selection for a place to flee, as it provided a relatively safe space free of collapsed structures. The famed and busy, Marché en Fer (The Iron Market), and other buildings in downtown Port-au-Prince had collapsed, causing thousands to migrate towards the Champ de Mars. The open space, void of ramshackle buildings was an ideal place to seek refuge in the immediate aftermath. On January 13, 2010 the situation on the ground was evolving rapidly. The ebb and flow of thousands of internally displaced people, all of whom were seeking the basic fundamental needs of water, food and shelter. In the immediate hours following the earthquake, the spontaneous development of the Champ de Mars had begun. Jonathan Katz, the only American journalist permanently stationed in Haiti pre-January 2010 paints a stirring portrait of the scene.

“Eventually we found ourselves in the center of the city, and the country, on the national mall of the Champ de Mars. Across the lawn, where plazas, parks, statues, and stone
monuments surround government buildings, stretched a crowd without end. People had come from every part of the city-walking, driving, carried- to the great plaza at the foot of the National Palace. The Presidential mansion, with its three white, tapered domes, had been a symbol of power and sovereignty in the nation for nearly a century. Some had come in the hope that the president would emerge with advice, a prayer, or word of when organized help would arrive. Many had nowhere else to go. There were hundreds of thousands of them, perhaps half a million, but they barely made a sound”. (Katz, 2013, 28-29)

I interviewed many people in Port-au-Prince who corroborated this narrative. A reoccurring theme was “Yes, I went to the Champ de Mars after the earthquake, I was looking for my family and it seemed like a good place to start” (Anonymous, Petionville. 2015). The transformation from a green space to a semi-permanent slum was underway. Unlike any living organism, this flash community evolved at a breakneck pace. From the first survivors to over 500,000 people, residents of Port-au-Prince were trying to establish a sense of normalcy. Another man in Petionville commented to me, “The collapsed Presidential Palace was the center of initial humanitarian relief, so people went for bottled water and money.” In less than two months, a new community within a former private space had evolved from the ashes. Complete with merchants, barbers and, pastors; the new encampment would begin to operate like an independent city-state. The refugee camp was evolving in a manner that would decrease human security and increase the probability of unsafe zoning practices. The ongoing transformation of tent cities into permanent urban fixtures affected the security landscape, forcing people to dwell in highly contested zones, some which face flooding and landslides (Xu et. al). Achieving security amongst the chaos, along with medical treatment was problematic in the following weeks.
Imagery Analysis

In attempting to showcase the evolution of a grouping of tent cities, one of the best methods of analysis is geospatial technology. Using historical satellite imagery from 2010 to 2015, it is possible to visually showcase and map how the initial camps formed. Only 12 days after the earthquake, on January 24, 2010. Image 4, depicts the collapsed National Palace on the Rue de La Republique. Directly across the street, the first visible signs of camp development are noticeable. Blue tarps are easily identifiable. Place Pigeon, Place Negre Marron and Place Toussaint are three out of the eleven camps that can be classified here. These three camps were among the first tents in the Champ de Mars to appear.
Satellite imagery taken on September 24, 2010 highlights the vastness the Champ de Mars encampments. The National Palace is the central white complex. Using it as a reference, the camps can be identified. **Image 5.** Above: Place Pigeon, Place Negre Marron and Place Toussaint. Left: Place Mausolee. Right Counterclockwise: Place Catherine Flon, Place Henry Christophe, Place Constitution, Place Petion, Place des Artistes, Place Dessalines. Place Dessalines is the largest camp in 2010, with 2283 households.
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<th>Mar' 11</th>
<th>Jan' 12</th>
<th>Apr’ 12</th>
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<td>17</td>
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Table 1. Champ de Mars Households: November 2010 to April 2012. Data Source: IOM

This data source from the IOM depicts the progression and rapid shutting of household units. A census by the IOM every few months established this data. IOM officials canvassed each individual encampment to allow individualized classification. By November 2010, ten of the eleven Champ de Mars camps were present. The Ministere de la Culture camp would be the last camp to form in the history of the settlement. With 14 households, the site is small because the shelters were formed around unfinished Bicentennial Monument in central Port-au-Prince.
These images clearly note the rapid growth of the tent cities. Shelters and blue tarps have completely enveloped the Champ de Mars in less than one year.
By March 26, 2012 the plan to close the Champ de Mars camps had formally begun. Nearing completion, this image in late March clearly showcases the emptied camps in front of the National Palace. The establishment of thousands of shelters and massive amounts of waste has clearly denuded the former green space and park.
By July 11, 2014, the Champ de Mars was in the midst of a full-scale construction boom. Facilitated by the Canadian government, the park is currently under various levels of redevelopment. The Haitian National Palace is missing in this image, cleared by Sean Penn’s organization: J/P Haiti Relief Organization. The Canadian government has been given the rights to completely overhaul and revamp the area.
Population and IDP Data

Table 2. Displaced Individuals by Camp. Data Source: IOM

Displaced individuals by camp from November 2010 to April 2012. Place Dessalines is clearly the largest camp with nearly 11,500 individuals in late 2010.

Table 3. Champ de Mars Households 2010-2012. Data Source: IOM
In December 2011, the population of the Champ de Mars was rapidly declining. The population was down from a peak of 30,000 individuals at the end of 2010. This chart shows the steady decline from December 2011 to May 2012. This chart is important due to the significant dates present. December 2011: the Haitian government announces forced closure. March-April 2012: the population declines from 16,978 to 9,517 individuals. Although IOM data in May 2012 shows 5,259 individuals still present in the camps, satellite imagery does not reflect this. A data discrepancy exists due to the difficulty in tracking IDP populations. As the Champ de Mars closed, over 5,259 individuals were left in a more vulnerable state.
Camp Formation Notes

As discussed in Chapter 2, the geographic layout of the capital played a key role in the development of the Champ de Mars as a flocking zone for IDP’s desperate for assistance. Obviously, the Haitian government had no emergency plan. Common in the Global South, a contingency plan in the face of an unlikely disaster or conflict does not usually reach the top of the priority list. However, Haiti should have preplanned better evacuation policies. A consequence of poverty and corruption is that often, basic public services and human rights go neglected. Haiti, with its abysmal monetary contributions to health and education, left little in the war chest for public safety planning and urban management strategies. The scene was set for a cataclysmic event to strike a population least prepared for it (Katz, 2013, 155).
Chapter 4: Human Insecurity
Security amid Chaos in Central Port-au-Prince

Camp Spaces

The IDP camp in the Champ de Mars was a place of transitions. These vestiges of asylum are political, social, and cultural spaces, often arbitrarily created in haste by armed conflict, social upheaval or natural disasters (Donnermyer, 1975). Spawned by chaos, these spaces often become zones of hostility (Ramadan, 2008). The situation before the earthquake was dire, but with little medical infrastructure left intact, disease and corruption became rampant. Journalists reported atrocious living conditions in the capital, exacerbated by corruption and international mismanagement (Katz, 2013). Common following a large-scale natural disaster project hunters, journalists, humanitarians and criminals flocked to the scene in hope of benefiting from the situation (Clammer, 2012). Many reporters and project hunters have begun to call Port-au-Prince home. While an influx of aid workers has benefited the Haitian people in some respects, the aid money has caused an influx of migrants to Port-au-Prince. These issues have all contributed to the instability of Port-au-Prince. As with many disaster and conflict situations, the state of affairs evolves in a rapid manner. Reporting from journalists following the Haiti earthquake reached a crescendo between 2010 and 2011. Many of the localized reports on conditions in the tent cities are not well documented by the actual inhabitants who lived there, which would present valuable insight.

Lured by promises of quick cash, prostitution is rampant in the underworld of Port-au-Prince, most notably in wealthy neighborhoods of Petion-Ville (UNHCR, 2011). In an epidemic linked to United Nations Peacekeepers (MINUSTAH), many zones have
tested positive for cholera (Piarroux et. al, 2011), another issue related to relative insecurity of this nation. “The urban poor have to solve a complex equation as they try to optimize housing cost, tenure security, quality of shelter, journey to work, and sometimes, personal safety.”(Davis, 27). In aftermath of a catastrophic earthquake, all of these issues have been further aggravated.

**Components of Human Security**

The United Nations Development Report of 1994 defined the concept of human security. It combines multiple threats to individuals and communities associated with war, genocide and the displacement of populations. Human security is best described as the ultimate freedom from violence. The Commission on Human Security (CHS), in its final report, “*Human Security Now*”, defines human security as:

“To protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.” (CHS, 2003, 4)

The definition proposed by the CHS re-conceptualizes security in a fundamental way by: moving away from traditional, state-centric conceptions of security that focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression, to one that concentrates on the security of individuals, their protection and empowerment. Human security fights multiple threats. Human security concerns in Port-au-Prince focus on people’s needs. It
 pertains to many sectors of life, including basic survival and economic resources. In the best scenario, it is comprehensive and preventive.

Let us examine the types of human security threats at the Champ de Mars settlements. Many of the threats outlined below were already daily problems.

1. Persistent poverty and unemployment were already prevalent as an economic threat.
2. Widespread hunger and malnutrition were present as a daily food security problem.
3. Infectious diseases, insufficient health care and unsafe food already plagued the population as a health security issue.
4. A lack of resources and the historic natural disasters were fundamental environmental security threats.
5. Personal security issues included physical violence, crime and domestic violence.
6. Community security involved inter-ethnic and religious tensions.
7. Political repression and human rights abuses are part of the political security equation.

Security Strategy

The CHS believes there are two primary ways to achieve human security. There is protection, where by states, international agencies, NGOs and charitable organizations protect people from the most critical threats. Protection is considered a “top-down” approach. There are threats that are beyond people’s control (i.e. natural disasters) and state governments have the responsibility to protect their citizens. There is also empowerment, whereby people are allowed to develop their resistance to calamity. This is a “bottom-up” strategy. But of course, all threats and their respective solutions are interconnected. Mapping and identifying the human security needs and vulnerabilities of
a displaced population is the key to success. Communities must establish priorities and develop multi-action plans in response to natural disasters and future emergencies.

Since 2004, peacekeepers from the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti have assisted in maintaining civil order in Haiti; the mission currently includes 6,685 military, 2,607 police, and 443 civilian personnel (CIA World Fact book, 2014). The effects of MINUSTAH on the Champ de Mars and the Haitian population have been well documented by everyone from Amnesty International and the Haitian Press. While the crime rate has steadily fallen in Port-au-Prince, security is still a huge issue. The underreporting of crime is due to a lack of sufficient police presence and the ability of the police to adequately respond. With a general population over 10 million, the Haitian National Police has about 10,000 officers, roughly two-thirds of whom are assigned in the greater Port-au-Prince metropolitan area (OSAC 2015).

The relationship between insecurity and displacement is often a double-edged sword. After the earthquake, Haitians instantly became internally displaced, forced to leave their homes and communities due to a natural disaster. Sometimes IDPs are forced to leave their communities because of lack of security, unable to return to their home due to ongoing security problems. While security was poor in Port-au-Prince, the earthquake was the primer that lit the powder keg. For years, the security situation in Haiti had been slowly improving. The early 2000’s saw the rise of drug cartels and kidnapping rings through the slums of Port-au-Prince and beyond. The authority of United Nations Peace Keepers “Blue Helmets” in Haiti is a much-debated topic. Their presence has been touted as a security victory and also as an ongoing instability driver. To those living in the slums and impoverished areas after the earthquake, including the Champ de Mars, instability
was on the rise and those most affected where often societies most vulnerable. The vulnerability of women and girls to sexual violence in the Champ de Mars is well established. Shelters consisting of plastic tarps offered little security from attempted sexual assault and rape. Below is a graph depicting the gender breakdown of ten of the eleven camps that were present in November 2010.

**Gender Demographics of the Champ de Mars: November 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30578</td>
<td>14471</td>
<td>16107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Gender Demographics of the Champ de Mars. Data Source: IOM

With a total female population of 16,107 and a male population of 14,471, the camps remained fairly balanced in terms of gender dispersion. The part to concentrate on is the large percentage of the female population between ages 10 to 24. Many of these young women were at an elevated risk of sexual assault during their tenure in the Champ de Mars.
Surveys of Champ de Mars Residents

The following are surveys conducted in the Champ de Mars in 2011. The Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti and their team of researchers in Port-au-Prince surveyed multiple camps in different zones throughout the capital. The charts below are the questions asked to 9 interviewees regarding security and displacement issues. This excellent data is a rare glimpse into the personal observations of residents within the Champ de Mars settlement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type of security is in place where you're staying?</th>
<th>Champ de Mars: 9 Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbed wire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local police/ HNP</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign military</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community foot patrols</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Security Type Questionnaire. Data Source: IJDH

Residents were asked in Haitian Creole whether or not their shelter or tent had the above-mentioned forms of security. Residents were allowed to pick more than one answer, which is one we have, 16 responses in total for 9 interviewees. Due to the highly urban nature of the site, no fences or barbed wire was present. HNP/Local Police refers to regular Haitian police forces that patrol the city in combat ready vehicles. Foreign military in this survey is referring to MINUSTAH peacekeepers. Community foot patrols are groups that residents formed without government or NGO influence. They are self-regulated entities, which patrol the grounds of the tent cities, trying to dissuade
opportunists and thieves from stealing merchandise. The concept of lighting and improved security is significant with 2 out of the 9 interviewees (22%) noting that lighting increased their personal safety. 6 people responded that “Other” security measures were in place. Examples of these variables include; guard dogs, family members and weapons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How far is your home from where you're living now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 5 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Displacement Questionnaire. Data Source: IJDH

Residents were also asked the physical distance in which they migrated to arrive in the Champ de Mars camps. All 9 interviews answered less than 10 kilometers. The vast majority, 7 out of 9 respondents listed having migrated less than 5 km. This question is fascinating because it corroborates the testimony I repeatedly heard in Haiti. Many people mentioned to that the majority of residents have fled their destroyed homes in downtown Port-au-Prince, near the Marche en Fer (Iron Market). Other theories of origin include the notorious Cité Soleil slum, a zone depicted in Chapter 2. The most dangerous and arguably worst slum is, which is waterfront, north of the Champ de Mars. None of the respondents reported having traveled more than 10 km. This leads me to believe that the vast majority of residents only travelled a few kilometers to reach the Champ de Mars, where they intended to stay indefinitely as aid was passed out. A limitation to note is that people often misrepresent how far they have traveled or the distance to their home of record. A mental map is often spatially difficult to calculate unless one is very familiar with projected distances.
Table 8. Adequate Security Questionnaire. Data Source: IJDH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think security is adequate?</th>
<th>Champ de Mars: 9 Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question posed in Table 8. Is very direct and assesses camp members feelings of human security. Over 55% (5 interviewees) responded that they felt their present security was inadequate. Due to the political location of the Champ de Mars, security personnel are ever apparent in the zone. This however, did not increase feelings of security amongst a vulnerable IDP population.
Chapter 5: Relocation

The Closure of the Champ de Mars

The Final Months

On January 11, 2012, a day before the second anniversary of the monstrous quake that rocked the capital, President Michel Martelly addressed a crowd of hopeful onlookers in Port-au-Prince. “You’ve been here for two years, suffering without talking, with the kids, we are going to remove everyone from under the tents.” He was speaking directly to the eleven camps that had enveloped the perimeter of the emblematic and destroyed National Palace. An eyesore to the elite and painful reminder of stalled progress, the clearing of the camps was announced as plan “16/6”. In 2012, the name of the project would reflect its development goals. The lofty plan dictated: repair sixteen damaged neighborhoods and clear six active camps. One of those active camps was the Champ de Mars. Seventy-eight million dollars was earmarked for plan 16/6, with roughly $20 million dollars designated to remove over 16,978 people still residing in the Champ de Mars. As of 2012, over 707 separately classified refugee camps exist (IOM 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Camp Name</th>
<th>Date Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Place Catherine Flon</td>
<td>Dec-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Place Negre Marron</td>
<td>Dec-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Place Pigeon</td>
<td>Dec-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Place Toussaint</td>
<td>Dec-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ministere de la Culture</td>
<td>Jan-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Place Henry Christophe</td>
<td>Mar-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Place Dessalines</td>
<td>Mar-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Place Constitution</td>
<td>Mar-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Place Mausolee</td>
<td>Mar-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Place Petion</td>
<td>Mar-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Place des Artistes</td>
<td>Mar-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Champ de Mars Camp Closure. Data Source: IOM

Note: Two main waves of clearing occurred: December 2011 and March 2012.
As early as December 2011, the Champ de Mars was in transition with four camps across the street from the dilapidated National Palace were being classified as formally closed. Camps Catherine Flon, Negre Marron, Pigeon and Toussaint were already shrinking, with residents beginning to leave in mass. Some left by their own accord, but the vast majority had nowhere to go. Many were holding out for promised subsidies from plan 16/6. The closure of the Champ de Mars was very quick by international development standards and applauded as it progressed. While the clearing has some pros, the unknown effects of a premature closure loom like a cloud over the capital. In this chapter, I put the closure of the Champ de Mars under a microscope. My analysis focuses on the migration of residents and urban transitions rather than a pure analysis of policy. Place Pigeon is noted below in February 2015. While the landscape has seemingly returned to a serene green space, this picture does not reflect the civil discord in 2015 Port-au-Prince.

Clearing over 15,000 internally displaced people embedded in a highly symbolic and metropolitan zone proved to be a challenging and expensive endeavor. The hefty bill
would be co-supported by the Canadian government as part of their post-quake development aid. The IOM would also contribute with logistical and financial support. In a span of four months, the conglomeration of eleven sites would be systematically cleared under the questionable and unsustainable plan. A former Champ de Mars resident interviewed near Place Pigeon in 2015 painted this picture for me:

“My family and I lived across from the Palais National for two years after our house was destroyed in the earthquake. One day a NGO worker came and told us the government was going to give us money. Then buses started showing up and taking us around the capital to find housing. They told me they would pay rent, so I found a place and moved my family in early 2012. The money ran out though, and I had to move my family to edge of the city” – Anonymous, Port-au-Prince, February 2015

(Interview with Author)

At first his testimony seemed to be unsubstantiated banter, but as one begins to piece together the events, you realize his story is not uncommon. Eventually his tragic testimony would send me on a trail to Canaan and other boomtowns on the burgeoning outskirts. From the beginning the plan to close the camps was destined to cause controversy. On December 6, 2011, hundreds of NGO officials entered the Champ de Mars. Going shack to shack, they began to identify households with a plastic ID tag. In December 2011, households hovered around 4100 with an estimated population of 17,000 men, women and children. The plan was to quietly identify families most at-risk (women, children, elderly) and from there begin to assess need and distribute out information of the upcoming relocation project. In Chapter 3, it was noted that the Champ de Mars acted as a humanitarian aid distribution point after January 10, 2010, causing thousands to flock to the centralized location to receive incoming aid, most of which arrived from the Unites States military. NGO leaders were concerned that the promises of assistance would again attract thousands and cause the zone to balloon out of control. As
December 2011 progressed, the financial resources of the clearing were released to a weary populace. The goal was to shut one of the most notorious tent cities in less than eight months, a tall order for such public slum in a highly congested and complicated capital city. Almost 90 percent of the Champ de Mars residents had been renters prequake and the plan was to offer rent subsistence for one-year post relocation. Under plan 16/6, residents were given the option to receive a $500 rental subsidy, a rate estimated to cover one-year of renting a space for a family. Families are also promised a small sum ($25) to help relocate their few items from the shelters. The one-time payment of $500 was contingent upon successfully securing a place. To discourage people from taking the money and transitioning to another IDP camp with the city, “check ups” were promised and people would be held accountable if they were found to have squandered the money. More money, in the amount of $125 was promised to families who stayed put in their newly located abodes. If cheaper rent could be located, families would be allowed to keep the difference from their allotted $500.

The relocation monitoring has not been well documented. Complicating this payment for relocation scheme was the classification of shelter types. For the people who owned damaged homes, a one-time allocation of $1500 was allotted for repairs. Finally, to those in the camps whose homes were destroyed beyond all repair, $3500 was promised for both demolition and replacement costs. The money could also be spent to secure temporary shelter provided the zoning was pre-approved. The story told by the semi-delirious man in 2015 was beginning to make sense. To assist with the location, a lottery system was employed to help camp residents. Buses would arrive the central Port-au-Prince and chauffeur people around. From there, the responsibility of securing a place
rested with each family. With the authorities not eager to become real-estate agents, plan 16/6 ends with a monetary handout from the Government of Canada and a good luck prayer. No plan for relocation is perfect and the goal of this thesis is not to critique every aspect of plan 16/6 and the response the Champ de Mars. The main goal of this section is to document the closure and follow up to see the culminating effect of camp closure on peri-urban zones on the perimeter of Port-au-Prince.

In 2012 and in 2015, the main issue with the closure of the Champ de Mars remains the historical and ongoing housing crisis in an endemically poor nation. As the country has continually stagnated, the rural population has become increasingly marginalized and unable to support themselves. This in turn has exacerbated environmental degradation, political instability and economic woes within the highly fragile boundary of Port-au-Prince proper. The earthquake lit the match for a housing crisis, causing an overwhelming need in a short period of time. Thousands of migrants have continued to pour into the capital on an annual basis, causing a massive housing shortage. A lack of urban planning and dearth of housing options meant the Champ de Mars residents faced an ever-mounting uphill battle in 2011-2012 to locate housing. The situation in 2012 has reached a crescendo. “Throughout the earthquake zone, there are at least 250,000 households (one million people) in dire need of housing. This includes those in IDP camps, approximately 125,000 households, and those who have moved back into damaged or destroyed homes.” (Annis, 2012). Many observers around the world applauded the announcement of the impending closure of the Champ de Mars as a step in the right direction. From the outside looking in, removing people out from under the tarps as soon as possible seemed like the best idea. Careful examination of conditions in 2012
and again in 2015 point to a double-edged sword for camp residents, NGO affiliates and the Haitian government. Scenario 1: Leave people in the camps and continually be criticized for not clearing the tents. Scenario 2: Prematurely clear the Champ de Mars without contemplating the effect on an already over-burdened housing market. In December 2011, scenario 2 was selected at a cost of $19.8 million dollars to clear eleven camps. (Booth, 2012). This generous gift from the Canadian government however provided only a fraction of the need. With over 700 camps still in operation in 2012, reporters and international consultants begin to add up the math from this seemingly insurmountable task. The daunting task of clearing hundreds of camps will easily reach into the billions as donor fatigue is already well established in early 2012. Booth in his article: *Clearing earthquake camps in Haiti is not pretty* does an excellent job of framing the ongoing IDP resettlement and housing crisis by outlining the closure of the Champ de Mars.

The following is an excerpt from a Washington Post article on February 19, 2012:

“The displaced will mostly have to fend for themselves. Why not allow the residents to remain in the Champ de Mars? Because the tarp shelters are overcrowded fire hazards that will blow down in the first hurricane, the Haitian government says. There is no running water or electricity. There is another reason, too: The Champ de Mars is an embarrassment”. (William Booth, 2012)

Critics of Booth’s assessment of situation call his analysis overly pessimistic. That said, I agree with his assessment. As previously discussed in Scenario 1: what was the other option for the Champ de Mars encampments? While many of the tent cities in Port-au-Prince have been consigned to transition into formalized, permanent slums, the Champ de Mars location was always different. The centralized location, strategically and symbolically adjacent to the Presidential Palace would not have been allowed to turn into
a permanent slum by any administration, whether a dictatorship or democracy. Booth’s prediction in 2012 merely corroborates what my fieldwork in 2015 began to point to. The Champ de Mars was prematurely closed without proper support mechanisms for the again displaced residents. A subsidy of U.S. $500, while generous, was only a short-term solution. Subsidies in this fragmented environment were an unsustainable practice to bestow on a highly urban populace with no ability to continually pay rent. If families were lucky enough to even find housing in the congested capital, many lacked employment opportunities to afford this newly secured shelter. Compounding the problem was the geographic location of many of these zones. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the topography and elevation of Port-au-Prince forms a caldera where destitute families cling together in hillside shacks. This geography has contributed to the urbanization of the northern outskirts of Port-au-Prince, as thousands of people squat in rapidly growing slums.

By March 2012, only four months after the initial announcement of the Champ de Mars impending closure, the IOM reported all eleven camps as “closed”. This rapid transition was impressive for a projected that was originally projected to take over eight months. In Table 9, the IOM dates the closure of all eleven camps to March 2012. Interestingly, the very organization that reported the closure also tallied over 2214 households still present in the Champ de Mars in April 2012. This intriguing discrepancy leaves one to question the exact closure of the encampments. In March 2012, satellite imagery shows only a few tents left in Place Dessalines, which was by far always the largest encampment by total population. By the end of 2012, the Champs de Mars was fully cleared of the battered tents and tarps, where thousands lived in unsafe, unsanitary
conditions. While the contrast between the before and after photos looks impressive, the reality is that Haiti’s housing problem has not been solved, it has merely been swept outside of the immediate city core. The Champ de Mars was viewed as a sore in the side of the Martelly administration and an obstacle to growing plans to increase tourism in Haiti. To summarize, the site was an embarrassment to an administration, that potentially threatened to impede economic assistance and increase political instability and the potential for protests near the temporary political offices (tents set up within the compound walls of the collapsed National Palace). Satellite imagery discussed in Chapter 3 notes the barren land seen via aerial imagery on July 11, 2014. Almost immediately following its closure, the area was reclaimed by the political and economic titans of Haitian society, eager to use the open space for large-scale development projects.


Note: When I visited the Champ de Mars in February 2015, this vacant lot is all that remains of the famed National Palace, which was modeled after the U.S White House.
Rounding out the story of the Champ de Mars was the fate of the storied Haitian National Palace. For more than 90 years, the opulent Haitian National endured protests and regime changes but the afternoon of January 12, 2010 would topple its majestic white domes. From January 2010 to September 2012, the once grandiose structure would sit in complete disrepair, reminding Haitians of their plight and the long road to recovery. The clearing the structure was deemed a non-priority, with most aid money going to humanitarian assistance and public works projects. The fate of the famed Haitian National Palace would follow suit with the Champ de Mars camps. The unusable palace had become a tragic symbol and in September 2012, the J/P Haiti Relief Organization offered to remove the massive structure.

The sentiment amongst the populace seemed to be of jubilance, as the collapsed palace had become a symbol of their tragic story. Others noted the removal was further testimony to the long road to recovery. The Haitian government has not decided whether when and how to build another presidential palace. For now, a green tarp blocks one’s view of the vacant lot. The space however is still utilized, with tent and some office buildings being utilized for administrative purposes.
What’s Next for the Champ de Mars?

Map 5: Downtown Urban Renewal Plans. Source: ULCBP

The rehabilitation of the Champ de Mars was officially commenced in January 2013; roughly nine months after the final tents were removed in March/April 2012. The project was slated for completion by June 2014. As of June 2015, it still had not been completed. The renovations include: a remodeled amphitheater, open green spaces and zones for marching during Carnival season in February. Plans to restore statues and build more government buildings are paramount to the urban design features of the largest public space in Port-au-Prince. With the Champ de Mars closing, the race was on for residents to find alternative housing and shelter.
The Rise of Canaan

The rapid urbanization of Canaan should have been a predictable phenomenon in post-quake Port-au-Prince. Nobody foresaw the community expanding as quickly as it did. An independent journalist who working for in Port-au-Prince summarizes the rise of Canaan in a simple statement:

“Five years ago, the area known as Canaan was an empty, dry scrubland. Shortly after the earthquake, then-President René Préval declared it would be set aside for relocation. Thousands moved in, lured by a promise that the state would invest. Since then, the population has exploded to more than 300,000 people, making it one of Haiti’s largest cities, and its growth is not expected to slow”.

(Benedict Moran, Al-Jazeera. 2015)

Canaan was on my radar even before corresponding with Mr. Moran. From the onset of my research and inquires into the Champ de Mars, the trail always led me to the outskirts of the capital. It wasn’t until I visited the site in February 2015 did I fully grasp the rapid growth of Canaan. The topography and urban congestion of downtown Port-au-Prince often hides the disastrous effect of urban mismanagement, as thousands of people are crammed together in pocks of immense poverty. Canaan is different in that is much more flat than the capital, which allows for easy detection of the endless array of shelters built into a vast swath of dusty scrubland. In 2013, Haiti's government estimates there may be upwards of 300,000 people living in Canaan. (IOM, 2014). The exact population figures are unknown, as a detailed census has never been conducted. The area has gone from a desolate outcropping on the edge of the capital to a boomtown slum complete with makeshift school, boutiques and churches. Image 12. and 13. depict the horrid conditions and rapid urban sprawl of Canaan.

Canaan Interviews and Observations

While in Canaan, I interviewed over 20 displaced people who had moved to area between 2012-2014. Most were going about their daily activities. I attempted to garner a wide range of opinions from the camp. My interviewees included brick masons, a schoolteacher, boutique owners, and children. Most participants were usually given a structured beginning (See Appendix II). The interviews usually ended with follow up questions in an open-ended framework.
The General Consensus

Located not far from international airport of Port-au-Prince, the road leading to Canaan has turned into a small highway, with thousands etching out a meager living on the side of the road. With the initial approval from the Préval administration to allow the public land to be used by earthquake victims, the race was on for residents. The land was very cheap by Port-au-Prince standards and allowed the poorest of capital to try for a better life. The infrastructure of Canaan is actually fairly impressive considering its location. Some residents have built small houses with mud bricks, cement and corrugated metal. The biggest problem in Canaan does not seem to be infrastructure, but a dearth of resources. Water is scarce in this semi-arid area and must be purchased from delivery tankers. Some rudimentary wells exist, allowing people the ability to pump jugs of water for personal use. The wells are often only operational a few times a week. Healthcare services are abysmal and education doesn’t fare much better. The residents of Canaan administer educational services privately, often without any governmental oversight. Funding for the schools is partially provided by contributions from religious non-profits.

A female schoolteacher expressed her opinions to me during a semi-structured interview that transitioned into a friendly open-ended inquiry:

“We try to live the best we can here in Canaan. I came here in 2012. I couldn’t afford housing near Petion-ville and was forced to come out here to live with my sister. I try to help the kids here by assisting with the school. We have over 100 to 110 kids here. This is just one schoolhouse. We have two more over there with the same number.”

Schoolteacher, Canaan, February 2015 (Interview with the Author)
A man working on a cement dwelling agreed to answer my questions. He said he was from Cité Soleil, but came to Canaan to find more work. He told me he was in the process of building a multiple room structure for someone. The two other men working with him echoed his statements.

‘Like Cité Soleil, Canaan is a very dangerous place to live. We never know if the government is going to approve our land rights or come evict us. People are always trying to steal our tools and claim for land.’

Mason, Canaan, February 2015 (Interview with the Author)

The biggest qualm among all residents was the disdain for the geographic location of Canaan. Not every resident in Canaan is from the Champ de Mars. People from countless tent cities have come to settle in Canaan, but all seem to echo the same sentiment. Their former life under the tent was hard, but the more centralized location allowed residents to engage in the commerce of the capital. Now, stuck in Canaan, the journey is too far and expensive. The journey from Canaan to downtown Port-au-Prince is not a viable solution for work. This leaves many residents more vulnerable with the same ongoing issues of human security and urban permanence. The situation is déjà vu for many who lived in the Champ de Mars. A woman selling beignets shared her thoughts:

“I lived in the Champ de Mars (Place Dessalines) I wanted to stay in the Champ de Mars, because I could at least make money. I have nothing here”.

Boutique Owner, Canaan, February 2015 (Interview with the Author)

For now, the people of Canaan wait patiently. As situation economic strife in the capital intensifies, more and more people continue to move to the outer periphery of the capital. One can only hope that Haiti remains stable enough to see Canaan transition from an outer-periphery slum into a mainstream suburb of the capital.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

Instability on the Horizon

The world always seems bewildered by Haiti, a tiny country by geographic and population standards, but one that has shaped world history. Such a tumultuous and painful saga has severely limited its ability to interact on the world stage. Furthermore, a series of violent dictatorships and heart rendering natural disasters discussed throughout this research have further shackled Haiti to abject poverty. For the past few centuries the world has used Haiti for political and economic gain.

My critique is that the Haitian government lacked a plan. Common in the global south, a contingency plan in the face of an unlikely disaster or conflict does not usually reach the top of the priority list. However, Haiti could have preplanned better evacuation policies. A consequence of poverty and corruption is that all too often, basic public services and human rights go neglected. Haiti, with its abysmal monetary contributions to health and education, left little in the war chest for public safety planning and urban management strategies. The scene was set for a cataclysmic event to strike a population least prepared for it.

The tent city locale is an extremely complex space, and usually the reasons behind its creation are even more complicated. This thesis set out to highlight the creation and cessation of the Champ de Mars settlement by framing its creation with the historical reports and geospatial narratives. Although, this research provided a glimpse into the formation of an infamous tent city, much more could be done. Left unregulated, the tent cities of Port-au-Prince will continue to fester, reinforcing human insecurity. These temporary settlements will take generations to successfully transition into safe and
healthy communities, with many of the tent cities already beginning to formalize into neighborhoods.

Limitations of Work

This research was severely limited by the rapidly evolving social, political and economic events in Port-au-Prince. Following up with survivors in a disaster situation is often difficult, as many were displaced and continue to be highly mobile. The lack of accurate census data in Haiti regarding internally displaced people caused some issues when trying to crosscheck data from the IOM and independently verify claims. While Haiti is unofficially know as “The Republic of NGO’s” many of these non-profit organizations and religious institutions do not share data or combine their efforts. Many are so busy with their independent outputs and activities that there is little information sharing and cross-pollination between them. Finally, the security situation, cross-cultural barriers and linguistic differences caused minor headaches. My fluency in French allowed me to converse, but continuing lessons in Haitian Creole would be beneficial to my continued research.

Future Studies

The results of this thesis confirm that further research is needed to understand how the Champ de Mars evolved. This research seems to have raised more questions than it has answered. Future research lends to the questions: what will happen to the former residents of the Champ de Mars long-term? And how will Haiti account for the rise of Canaan? More research could be accomplished by spending an extended period of time in the capital. The best option for future research would be multiple trips over a series of a
year or more. This would allow more exposure to different elements of the problem. My fieldwork concluded during the beginning of Haitian Carnival, which made an already haphazard situation even more chaotic. The already congested capital was amuck with large crowds. The Champ de Mars was the scene of almost daily violent protests while I was in Port-au-Prince. Residents of the country were demanding the government limit inflation of gasoline prices, pegging it to international benchmarks of crude oil with limited taxation. This was Spring 2015, when a barrel of crude was hitting rock bottom around $40 a barrel. With the Haitian diaspora in Miami reporting $2.25 gallons stateside, an already overburdened populace was hitting its breaking point. This was the primary causation of protesting and rioting at the Champ de Mars during my fieldwork.

Personal Note

My interest in refugee studies stems from my time as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the West African nation of Burkina Faso. From 2010 to 2012, I lived and worked in a small rural village, living amongst the Lobi people. It was during these years that both Cote d’Ivoire and Mali experienced varying refugee crisis situations, causing thousands of people to flood across the borders into Burkina Faso. My region was heavily affected by civil strife, ranging from food shortages and military rebellions. I was deeply impacted by the experience and returned to the United States with a keen interest in cartography, GEOINT/HUMINT operations and vulnerable populations. Interactions with the Haitian diaspora in Miami led me to pursue thesis research on the island of Hispaniola. In a way, my fieldwork in Haiti felt as if I had returned home to West Africa. Haiti is an amazingly beautiful country with such potential and I will forever be indebted to all those who
shared their stories with me. My goal is that my research will increase awareness and allow governments to develop sustainable strategies to cope with future refugee situations. My aim is to cultivate further papers and reports on crisis situations in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.
Works Cited


**News Articles and Reports**


https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx

**Interviews and Personal Communication**

Note: Interviews were conducted in French or English by the author. In certain circumstances, a member of the Port-au-Prince research team acted as a Haitian Creole translator.


Maignan, P. Haitian Red Cross. 2015. Interview by author. Port-au-Prince, Haiti. February 5.


**Television and Film**

Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations Haiti (Travel Channel, Season 10, Episode 1

Fatal Assistance (Assistance Mortelle) by Raoul Peck (Haiti/France/US, 2012
APPENDIX I

List of organizations contacted for this research

• Amnesty International
• The Brookings Institution
• Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement
• Haiti Works
• Haitian AFP Press
• Haiti Fixers
• J/P Haiti Relief Organization
• Google
• International Committee of the Red Cross
• Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti
• Center for Economic and Policy Research
• International Organization of Migration
• Millennium Challenge Corporation
• United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
• United Nations Development Program
• United States Southern Command
• U.S State Department
• U.S Peace Corps
• World Health Organization
• The Washington Post
• Haitian Student Association, The University of Miami
• Departments of Geography and Regional Studies, International Administration, Architecture, and the Center for Latin America Studies

A host of independent journalists and book authors were also contacted. This list however is not exhaustive and does not mention the many organizations and individuals who did not reply. My response rate for research inquires was 30%.
APPENDIX II

All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

**Sample Questions in French**

1. Quel est votre nom?

2. Quel âge as-tu?

3. Lieu de naissance?

4. Où étiez-vous le 12 Janvier 2010?

5. Combien de temps avez-vous été vivre ici ?

6. Avez-vous jamais habiter le Champ de Mars ?

7. Vous sentez-vous en sécurité ici ?

8. Que faites-vous pour le travail ?

9. Que savez-vous à propos des villes de tentes dans le Champ de Mars ?

**Sample Questions in English**

1. What is your name?

2. What is your age?

3. Place of birth?

4. Where were you on January 12, 2010?

5. How long have you been living here?

6. Did you ever inhabit the Champ de Mars?

7. Do you feel safe here?

8. What do you do for work?

9. (If not a resident) What do you know about tent cities in the Champ de Mars?