Feeding Inequalities: Food Aid and Food Insecurity in Post-Earthquake Haiti

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

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May 2014

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This thesis titled
Feeding Inequalities: Food Aid and Food Insecurity in Post-Earthquake Haiti

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ABSTRACT

KRAL, COURTNEY E., M.A., May 2014, Political Science

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A complex understanding of food insecurity reveals that emergency food aid efforts often contribute to this problem rather than alleviating it. Both immediate response programs and long-term recovery programs carried out by the United States and the United Nations in Haiti after the January 2010 earthquake focused disproportionately on making food accessible and available in the short-term without appreciating that food’s proper and stable long-term utilization. This thesis explores the ways in which the NGO-based model of aid delivery created during the era of development aid in the late 20th Century carried over into emergency efforts and threatened Haiti’s future food security. I analyze a variety of USAID, UN FAO, and WFP documents on both development and emergency aid to Haiti as well as the broader literature on food security and food aid. I conclude that donors ought to shift away from heavily NGO-dependent giving and give long-term impact more serious consideration in order to improve food aid in future emergency responses.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to Dr. Debra Thompson for being my mentor throughout this process. I could not imagine a better advisor to both challenge and encourage me in regard to this thesis and countless other projects over the past two years. It has been an honor to work with you.

In addition, I am grateful to Dr. James Mosher and Dr. Andrew Ross for agreeing to be part of my committee and expressing such excitement and support for my project. I also thank every professor who has taught, encouraged, and stretched me during my academic career.

I would also like to thank my family (in particular my incredible parents and my wonderful sister and brother), my church family, and my friends for your love, support, encouragement, and prayers during each step of this adventure. There are too many of you to name, but each one of you is an absolute blessing to me.

Finally, and most importantly, I thank Jesus for being my rock and refuge during every high, low, and in-between. You are the reason I have made it through this year and this thesis is written for and to you.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

After an earthquake had rocked the Haitian state to its core—leaving behind piles of rubble, destroying the flimsy housing that covered the country, and killing thousands and displacing millions—the country was overrun by a variety of volunteers and political actors from all over the world. Among the most important donors to offer both immediate assistance and long-term recovery programs were the United States government, NGOS, and private citizens, and multilateral organizations through the United Nations (like the World Bank and the World Food Programme). These same organizations had been active in Haiti before the earthquake, pursuing development objectives, and continued to maintain a presence in Haiti even after the bulk of emergency response had concluded.¹ Despite their constant presence, little lasting development occurred either before or after the earthquake; in fact, the Haitian agricultural sphere was actually less productive in the years before the earthquake than it had been when development aid began to surge in the 1980s.²

My trip to the country in December 2011 was slightly belated, but there was still plenty of evidence of the earthquake’s destruction intermingled almost indistinguishably with preexisting poverty. Since I had not been to Haiti before the earthquake, I was not sure how different it would have looked then, but I had a sneaking suspicion that the experience would have been similarly disheartening. Nonetheless, I was blown away by

how well the Haitians I met functioned and even flourished under conditions that seemed relatively chaotic to me.

I had come to Port Au Prince with a Christian campus ministry from Ohio University to spend a week volunteering with a small American NGO called Team One:27 at Divine Ministries orphanage. For most of the week we simply hung around the orphanage, played with the kids, and visited schools. The culmination of our trip was helping with a Christmas Party for orphanages in the Port Au Price area that Team One:27 and Divine Ministries puts on each year. After a couple of hours of entertainment, we helped distribute health kits, Bible story books, toys, and a hot meal of chicken and rice. As soon as food distribution began, order unraveled. Some kids and orphanage owners sat quietly waiting as we passed plates, assembly-line style, to one another until they reached them. Others, however, were determined to get their own food. They pushed toward the kitchen and tried to grab plates out of our hands as we passed them along.

Growing increasingly annoyed, the other volunteers and I began to shout in a mix of Creole and English to sit down—everyone would get their turn. One of my friends took the lead and began to send volunteers to block the kitchen doors and other key points in the line. He asked me to stand by one of the exits that lead to the kitchen. As I stood there a particularly persistent little boy kept trying to talk to me and push past me. Since I had learned very little Creole before coming I had no clue what he was saying. I could tell from his body language and tone of voice alone, however, that he was becoming more and more frustrated with me. I too was getting frustrated with him. Finally, I resorted to simply making hand motions to shoe him away. In turn, he cussed
me out in the first English words I had heard him speak. Shocked, I tried to force a smile and turned my attention to corralling other kids.

This anecdote has significant parallels with foreign aid before and after the earthquake, food security, and NGOs. These issues come together to present a fascinating puzzle. Haiti has long been known for its underdevelopment and poverty. It has been labelled the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere—with 75% of its citizens living off of less than $2 a day. Furthermore, it has been victim to a variety of foreign interventions since its nominal freedom from French colonial rule in 1804. Within the past century, aid has been one of the central forms of foreign intervention. The United States especially has poured a variety of forms of aid into the country, primarily through NGOs. Indeed, so much aid needed to be processed in the late 1900s that Haiti was deemed the “Republic of NGOs.” Haiti is simultaneously famous both for its devastating lack of money, shelter, food, etc. and its abnormal abundance of aid organizations.

Herein lays the fundamental puzzle that this thesis attempts to explore: how can a country which has received such enormous quantities of development and emergency assistance continue to struggle so much with food insecurity? It seems thoroughly illogical that food aid would actually increase food insecurity. Yet, this is exactly the relationship that the data demonstrates. I am not arguing that donors intentionally practiced food aid in a destructive manner. Nor am I arguing that the Haitian government and other Haitian institutions are free from blame for the country’s condition. As with

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5 Ibid, 296.
any political or social phenomenon, Haitian food insecurity is a complex issue which is reinforced by countless domestic and international factors. The purpose of this thesis is simply to argue that international actors’ roles in Haitian food insecurity is understudied and underappreciated. The long-term implications of foreign aid are often overshadowed by donors’ admirable short-term desires to assist.

The insufficiency of good intentions

This gap between intention and impact is the subject of Ivan Illich’s famous speech, “To Hell with Good Intentions.” It is also obvious in the anecdote I offered above. Illich offers a series of criticisms of American volunteers in Latin America. He argues that “good faith can usually be explained only by an abysmal lack of intuitive delicacy.”6 My response to the Haitian boy persistently trying to reach the kitchen, although it did not come not out of malice or any other “bad” intention, betrayed my own lack of both intuition and delicacy. Similarly, in the majority of emergency response, donors lacked delicacy—pouring large quantities of tied food aid into Haiti without adequately considering the implications of such aid.7 In terms of food security, international donors before and after the earthquake placed an over-emphasis on increasing access and availability without giving sufficient weight to utilization and stability. The former two pillars were, of course, the easier to both satisfy and monitor. They were also deceptive, since they caused aid efforts to appear food secure even when they did not necessarily utilize food appropriately or sustainably.

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6 Ivan Illich, “To Hell with Good Intentions” (speech, Cuernavaca, Mexico, April 20, 1968) http://www.swaraj.org/ilikch_hell.htm.
This overemphasis on access and availability may have been caused, in part, by the donors’ general unfamiliarity with the Haitian people, government, and other factors. Illich labels this a lack of “common ground,” which causes volunteers to be unable to adequately appreciate the needs of the people they assist. He uses Latin America, a neighbor to Haiti and the rest of the Caribbean, as his case study. In Latin America, 75% of citizens do not complete education beyond the 6th grade. In the United States, those who do not complete high school are in the minority and are considered underprivileged. For the average American volunteer to find his or her “educational equal” in Latin America, they would need to interact with the “minority of the minority” who goes on to university education.\(^8\) Similarly, in Haiti education is not commonplace and the majority of education that does take place is private. Only 63% of 6-12 year old children go to school and because education is mainly private, “the quality of education children receive is directly related to where they live and to the level of tuition their families can afford to pay.”\(^9\) Donors and even NGO-workers on the ground thus differed from those they assisted significantly in regard to educational background.

In addition, the gap between donor and recipient was magnified by the huge difference in socio-economic status—another dimension that Illich mentions in his critique. As much as I truly desired to help alleviate hunger through my work at the Christmas party, in practice I was unable to fully appreciate the needs and desires of those whom I wanted to help. I had spent a week observing and learning about poverty and hunger. I had stayed at an orphanage and taken cold showers and wandered the

\(^{8}\) Ibid.

debris-ridden streets. Nonetheless, I knew that in another week I would be back in the United States, taking warm showers, sleeping in an air-conditioned room, and eating full, nutritious meals. In other words, I had watched, learned about, and temporarily experienced life in poverty. I had not, however, felt it. I had not truly lived it as my semi-permanent or permanent condition. I was still a middle-class American, no matter how much I wanted to empathize.

During development, emergency response, and recovery alike even the NGO workers who lived and worked in Haiti but came from the United States and other countries were subject to this socio-economic gap. Despite their best intentions to help, they could never fully understand, and this lack of understanding led to undesirable practices that had negative effects on food security. Since the issue of socioeconomic status affected NGO workers on the ground, working alongside Haitians, it only makes sense that it would affect policymakers in foreign countries even more. If those who experience life in an impoverished country still cannot fully understand poverty, those who have only observed poverty from afar or as an aberration in their own country certainly cannot understand it as it exists in Haiti.\(^{10}\) Specifically in regard to food aid and food security, those who do not experience hunger or food insecurity are unable to appreciate all of the potential causes and effects of each of these.

Another factor that hinders good intentions from translating into beneficial practices is language. Obviously, if donors do not understand the language of those whom they are assisting, it is much more difficult for them to cater their assistance to

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those individuals’ specific needs. Since food security depends in part on food’s utilization and stability in a specific local context, it is much more easily accomplished when domestic actors control food and agriculture policies. Foreign actors must understand unique dietary needs, food preparation mechanisms, and other issues surrounding food in order to offer the most effective aid possible. If those donors do not speak the same language as the citizens whom their aid is affecting it is even more difficult for them to offer aid effectively.

Illich also describes language’s ability to empower or disempower those who are being assisted. He states that “it is incredibly unfair for you to impose yourselves on a village where you are so linguistically deaf and dumb that you don’t even understand what you are doing or what people think of you.” The linguistic difference thus hinders the foreigners’ understandings of what they ought to do to help and their understandings of what those whom they are assisting think of their work. His advice is that volunteers stop trying to help in foreign states and rather focus their efforts on individuals who could criticize them in their own language if they are so inclined.

Language played a pivotal role in my interactions with the little boy at the Christmas party. Unable to explain in his native Creole why I would not let him into the kitchen, I resorted to hand motions that likely came across as harsh. Unable to explain his desperation in English, he resorted to anger and cursing. In this instance, of course, he did know enough English to curse me. Nonetheless, he did not know enough to explain the

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source of this dissatisfaction or to tell me how I could have assisted him more effectively. Our interaction was thus unproductive for both of us.

In the wider context of the general emergency food aid effort, donors faced both literal and figurative language gaps between themselves and their recipients. One of the teenagers who stayed at Divine Ministries explained Haitian language education to me. Kids learn Creole first, French second, Spanish third, and English fourth. For Haitians to know English, then, they not only have to be privileged enough to live close to a school and be able to afford enrollment, but they also have to be qualified and wealthy enough to stay in school long enough to reach English language curriculum. In the United States, Spanish and French are popular in high schools and universities. Yet, one would be hard-pressed to find a program for studying Haitian Creole. In addition to this literal language gap, the United States and other “Western” countries have linguistic differences from the Haitian people purely because of cultural, economic, religious, and other lifestyle differences. For example, to be hungry in the United States (a land of plenty with pockets of serious poverty) is a different circumstance from being hungry in Haiti (a land of poverty with occasional pockets of wealth).

The shortcomings that Illich summarizes in his critique of international volunteering apply to the relationships between donors and recipients in the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake in 2010. In particular, donors’ good intentions to meet immediate food needs after the earthquake did not translate into practices that increased long-term food security. The gaps in understanding that Illich outlines contributed heavily to the negative correlation between food aid and food security that I trace in this thesis.
Outline of the argument: Food aid and food insecurity

This thesis argues that international actors’ involvement in food aid both before the earthquake, in its immediate aftermath, and during the recovery phase actually negatively impacted that country’s long-term food security. Inherent in this argument are a series of important sub-arguments. First, there is a difference between short and long term food security. The prior does not necessarily imply the later. Indeed, food aid efforts that meet the criteria for food security in the short-term may actually damage that country’s long-term food security. This distinction is important because food security itself is a multifaceted phenomenon. The components of food security will be summarized in depth in Chapter 2, but for now it is sufficient to say that development food aid and emergency food aid alike met immediate Haitian needs without paying sufficient attention to what those citizens’ needs would be after the emergency response concluded.

The distinction between long and short term impact is closely associated with my second sub-argument: that food aid affects domestic institutions, which are vital to understanding and practicing food security. I argue that there is a positive correlation between strong domestic institutions and food security. On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between foreign involvement and strong domestic institutions. Thus there is also a negative correlation between foreign involvement and food security. In Haiti as in many other developing states, NGOs infiltrated the country in the late 20th

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century and began to perform the functions that the government normally would. During the emergency response, NGOs continued to carry out food distribution and agricultural reform. Their importance to the emergency effort made sense since they were among the most powerful actors in the state at the time of the earthquake and were thus well-equipped to respond. Nonetheless, by relying on NGOs, foreign donors actually negatively impacted the country’s own institutions’ long-term potential.

The relationship between aid before and after the earthquake leads to my third argument: that foreign food aid illustrates the influence of the past on the present and future. Laurent Dubois alludes to this relationship with the title of his book, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. Since he is a historian, it is unsurprising that Dubois argues that Haiti’s history of slavery, colonialism, economic exploitation, political corruption, and other issues reverberated throughout that state and weakened its ability to respond to the earthquake effectively. I too argue that Haiti’s lack of progress in regard to food security can be explained by its history of domestic corruption and foreign influence. This idea can be explained in terms of path dependence. From its colonization onward, Haiti was on a path in which domestic institutions self-perpetuated their own weaknesses and thus reinforced food insecurity. Although each of these manifested itself in different ways to different degrees at different points in Haitian history, they were both present throughout. Even when the country experienced periods of change or critical junctures (for example, the transition from colony to free country) it did not leave behind weak institutions or

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food insecurity. Rather, it simply transitioned from one type of foreign subjugation to another.

Foreign subjugation was especially prevalent during periods of intensified domestic instability. These periods of instability were made more intense, however, as a result of the state’s subjugation to foreign influence. This is my fourth sub-argument—that domestic instability and foreign intervention are intimately tied and mutually reinforcing. In analyses of Haitian difficulties, however, the former tends to be emphasized to the neglect of the latter. I argue that both are important to understanding the Haitian state’s struggles in general as well as its tendency to be subject to food insecurity in particular. Foreign intervention is especially important to understanding food insecurity because of the relationship between foreign influence and domestic institutions (outlined above). When domestic Haitian institutions have appeared too weak to deal with political, economic, or emergency circumstances, foreign powers have used that weakness as an excuse to take over and restore order using their own institutions and organizations. In doing so, however, they further weakened Haitian institutions and increased the likelihood that they would fail again in the future.16

Limitations

There are a handful of criticisms that readers may make of this work. First, it focuses its analysis of aid almost exclusively on the United States (and USAID in particular) and the United Nations. Clearly, these two actors were not the only ones to offer assistance to Haiti before the earthquake or after. Indeed, a wide variety of private,

16 Eric Holt-Giménez, Raj Patel, and Annie Shattuck, Food Rebellions!: Forging Food Sovereignty to Solve the Global Food Crisis (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2009), 22.
corporate, bilateral, and multilateral actors contributed to the aid effort. One may ask, then, why I would limit my analysis of the emergency relief and recovery efforts to the United States and the United Nations when the disaster caused the number of donors active in the country to increase.

I do not deny that in limiting my analysis I may have overlooked actors who practiced food aid more or less successfully than the United States and United Nations did. Rather, I argue that the limits of my analysis do not invalidate my findings. Although they were not the only donors, the U.S. and U.N. were the most significant donors in terms of amount given and symbolic leadership in the aid effort. In his essay to the American people after the earthquake President Barack Obama stated that:

When we [the American people and government] show not just our power, but also our compassion, the world looks to us with a mixture of awe and admiration. That advances our leadership. That shows the character of our country. And it is why every American can look at this relief effort with the pride of knowing that America is acting on the behalf of our common humanity.\(^\text{17}\)

Whether its leadership on the global stage is positive or negative, it would be difficult to argue that the United States is not a global leader. The United Nations was created to serve a similar leadership role. Although other states and multilateral organizations are not obligated to follow these actors’ leads, many do. Practically, each gave huge sums of money and goods. The U.S. pledged about $906 million dollars and the World Bank...

pledged around $307 million. Thus, since practical barriers of time and resources prevented me from studying more donors, these two seemed the most likely to offer a normative understanding of food aid practices.

Another possible criticism of my work is that it underemphasizes the impact that domestic instability had on increasing food insecurity after the earthquake. Although my research focuses almost exclusively on the efforts of foreign actors and their effect on food insecurity, it does so under the presumption that domestic instability and weak institutions also play an important role in understanding Haiti’s post and pre earthquake conditions. I simply do not spend much time independently analyzing domestic factors since the thrust of my argument is that foreign aid and its impact on domestic institutions is vital to understanding food insecurity.

Finally, the most compelling criticism of this research that I can think of is that it enacts the same type of well-intentioned yet disconnected foreign understanding that Illich warns against. As a middle-class, American, citizen, I am also potentially subject to a lack of intuitive delicacy. I lack common ground with the Haitian people, as my opening anecdote proves. Nonetheless, I do not believe that these shortcomings invalidate my findings. Rather, I recognized them throughout the research and writing process and was intentional about allowing the data to drive my analysis, instead of the reverse. I do not claim to have a complete understanding of domestic Haitian institutions or Haitian desires. This lack was one of the factors influencing my decision to focus on institutions

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as they relate to foreign donors rather than taking a more bottom-up approach. I detail my research method below.

Research method and theory

In order to understand the puzzle of food aid and food insecurity, my first step was to gain as complete an understanding as I could of what each of those terms means. I read a variety of articles and books on the issues of food aid and food security written by historians, political economists, and bilateral and multilateral government organizations. Although there are some discrepancies among the main analyses, they generally paint a clear picture of what food aid is and what it means for a country to be food secure. Indeed, the majority of difference among definitions of food security is in level of depth and detail rather than actual content. Thus, I adopted the most detailed definition of food security that I could find. I offer a more detailed overview of literature on both food aid and food security in Chapter 2 “Food Insecurity and Food Aid: What They Mean and Why They Matter.” In that same Chapter I also summarize the authors whose theories informed my argument. I focus especially on Roger C. Riddell. In short, these authors argue that foreign aid tends to do damage to the countries that it intends to assist.

After gaining a broad understanding of what food aid and food security mean and how they have manifested themselves throughout the world, I moved on to learning about each of these issues in Haiti in particular. I began by researching Haiti’s historical relationship to food aid and food security in terms of agriculture policies, receipt of development aid, and domestic institutions. Since the United States government has historically been the source of the lion’s share of bilateral development aid and the

United Nations has been the source of the majority of multilateral aid, I focused my analysis on each of these actors’ involvement in Haiti from the middle 1900s onward. In particular, I looked at publicly accessible documents from the USAID and United Nations websites. The changes that each of these organizations made to their aid delivery procedures over the course of the second half of the 20th Century heavily impacted the states whom them assisted—of which Haiti was one of the most prominent. I analyze my findings from this research in Chapter 3: “Food Aid in Haiti before the Earthquake: Paving the Path to Food Insecurity.”

Next, I researched the different components of emergency responses and discovered Comprehensive Emergency Management Theory. Although Comprehensive Emergency Management typically describes domestic responses20, I apply it the earthquake in order to break my research into emergency relief and long-term recovery. The former is the subject of Chapter 4: “The Emergency Response: An Abundance of Food and a Shortage of Direction.” The latter is the subject of Chapter 5: “Long-Term Recovery and the Persistence of Insecurity.” In compiling Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 I once again utilized public documents complied by USAID and the United Nations. In addition, I analyzed the US Government’s Strategic Plan for Aid to Haiti and the work of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, which was created at “Toward and New Future for Haiti”: a conference hosted by the United Nations. In performing the research necessary for these two chapters, I discovered that the line between emergency response and long-term recovery is often blurred. Thus, I did my best to separate different initiatives into

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these two phases while recognizing that to do so perfectly would be impossible.

Furthermore, this task would not necessarily be beneficial, since Haiti’s struggles with food insecurity have been path dependent rather than broken into distinct periods.

Finally, the thesis ends with a conclusion in which I summarize my major findings and their implications for a broader understanding of food aid and food security alike. In closing, I offer recommendations for further research in Haiti and in other areas of the world affected by development and emergency aid.

_A closing thought before beginning_

Even though my argument is a critical one, it is not meant to be an overly pessimistic one. Nor is it meant to be an attack on well-intentioned NGO-workers, politicians, and private citizens. Illich’s speech is helpful for framing my argument, but I adopt his ideas more than his tone. I do not think that all donors should simply leave Haiti alone and stick to helping the needy within their own countries. Rather, I hope that my work will have a normative as well as descriptive impact. By bringing attention to the adverse effects of foreign development and emergency aid as they have been practiced I hope to encourage readers to think of how such aid may be more effective in the future. In the conclusion I offer some of my thoughts on how this may be done.
CHAPTER 2: FOOD INSECURITY AND FOOD AID—WHAT THEY MEAN AND WHY THEY MATTER

Defining food insecurity

Food insecurity and its converse, food security, have become increasingly familiar terms in both the academic and political worlds. As is often the case, such popularity has led to a variety of definitions.

Food insecurity versus chronic malnutrition

Food insecurity is more complex than mere “hunger” in that it describes a structural rather as well as a physical state. In other words, one may be food insecure without being physically hungry. On the other hand, one may be physically hungry without being structurally food insecure.

Alberto Valdes and Ammar Siamwalla describe this distinction as one between food insecurity and chronic malnutrition. They call food insecurity “a problem of short-term variability” and chronic malnutrition “a long-term problem whose dimensions and solutions lie behind the question of food security.”

An analogy makes this distinction and its shortcoming clearer. Chronic malnutrition could be likened to AIDS, which, once it strikes, makes itself known to its victim on a daily basis. The causes of the disease are external to its victim, but the victim’s decisions generally have some impact on whether or not he or she will contract it. Once present, however, it is impossible for the victim to cure his or herself and the disease affects many aspects of the individual’s wellbeing. By contrast, food insecurity,

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as conceptualized by Valdes and Siamwalla, would be more like meningitis, which is just as deadly and powerful, but happens suddenly and unexpectedly. Furthermore, if it does not kill its victim when it strikes, it is unlikely that it will ever threaten him or her again. It certainly will not linger and gradually destroy its target over the course of his or her life as AIDS does.

Even the most basic knowledge of the history of world food insecurity proves this understanding problematic. Haiti provides evidence that food insecurity can be chronic. Indeed, I will argue that food insecurity often is a long-term issue; it is simply more evident at some times than it is at others. For this reason, chronic malnutrition and food insecurity are more alike than Valdes and Siamwalla allow. A deeper understanding of food insecurity makes it easier to distinguish between the two.

**Food insecurity vs. food security**

Most scholars of food insecurity actually define food *security* and characterize food insecurity as the opposite or absence of this. A clear definition of what it means to be food insecure is more important than a definition of food security, however, because food security is the universal ideal, while food insecurity is the widespread reality. To use another medical analogy, one defines wellness as the absence of many specific aberrations. It would be insufficient to define the common cold and cancer alike as the absence of wellness, since these illnesses are so practically distinct from one another. Nonetheless, it would also be faulty for me to simply neglect the literature which does exist about food security, since it has been so central to discussions about food insecurity.
Once again, Valdes and Siamwalla provide a good starting point. They define food security as the “ability of food-deficient countries, or regions within those countries, to meet target consumption levels on a year-to-year basis.” Food insecurity is the result of production fluctuations and/or price fluctuations. Regardless of whether these fluctuations occur for food or nonfood items they can still have serious effects on a region’s food security.

Within the past thirty years since Valdes and Siamwalla wrote, more accurate definitions of food security have emerged. The most useful, recent, definition that I have found comes from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ Committee on Food Security. The FAO defines food security as the condition when “all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” This definition is more specific and detailed than that of Valdes and Siamwalla. According to the UN FAO, food security is not merely based on a nation’s ability to meet externally defined consumption levels each year. Rather, a food secure nation must meet the needs and preferences of all of its people at all times in a way that is sufficient for that nation’s specific culture.

Furthermore, the UN FAO definition conceptualizes hindrances on an individual level—warning of physical, social, or economic barriers to access that affect individual citizens. By contrast, Valdes and Siamwalla point only to depersonalized, structural

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21 Ibid, 1.
22 Ibid, 5.
obstacles (fluctuations in production or price). Looking at food insecurity only as it affects an entire nation, or even an entire region of a nation, may unintentionally mask legitimate individual food insecurity wherever it does not affect the majority or cannot be attributed to national economic instability. For this reason, I argue that studies of food (in)security must begin with individual experience and trace these experiences back to structural causes.

The debate over food insecurity

Although I was unable to find an adequate definition of food insecurity, I found a couple of insights into its causes and characteristics which can contribute to one. The first of these comes from Valdes and Panos Konandreas. They describe food insecurity as “the reduction in a country’s total export earnings adjusted for by the value of imports that guarantee food security.”25 This definition conceives of food insecurity in purely structural, national terms—neglecting individual experience as Valdes and Siamwalla’s definition of food security did.

Eric Holt-Gimenez and Raj Patel offer an individualized conception in their political economic analysis of the world food crisis. They do not directly define food insecurity, but rather the food insecure. These are people who are “unsure of their next meal or unable to procure sufficient daily calories.”26 Although this definition is accurate, it is too simple to adequately analyze as complicated a phenomenon as food insecurity. Furthermore, just as Valdes and Konandreas’ definition focuses too heavily on national

and structural components of food insecurity, Holt-Gimenez and Patel’s definition of the food insecure focuses too heavily on individual experience and not enough on national and structural components. Food insecurity is both an individual and national phenomenon.

For these reasons, I am most satisfied with Louise Gerdes’ analysis in *Food Insecurity*. Gerdes believes that the issue of food insecurity is, most basically, a “lack of consistent and reliable access to food.” 27 This definition, although it is also quite simple, is superior to those of Holt-Gimenez and Patel as well as Valdes and Konandreas because it does not limit food insecurity exclusively to individual or national experience. Gerdes’ definition is also helpful because it can stand alone rather than only making sense in comparison to the concept of food security.

Despite its independence from food security, however, Gerdes’ definition is enhanced by her juxtaposition of the two. She describes four pillars of food security: availability, access, utilization, and stability. 28 In order to be called food secure, then, the place that the person or people studied inhabit must physically have enough food; there must not be any serious barriers to the person or people accessing it; the food must be used responsibly and not wasted; finally, food practices must be sustainable. By implication, then, symptoms of food insecurity are food shortages, serious barriers to food accessibility, food waste, and unsustainable agricultural and/or economic practices.

My definition of food insecurity

For the purpose of this project I will define food insecurity as a condition in which a person or group of people suffers from chronic or sporadic malnutrition, caused either by a lack of culturally appropriate and sufficient food, the inability to access such food, wasteful use of available food, and/or unsustainable agricultural and economic policies regarding such food. It is important to note that, in my definition, food insecurity is always a type of malnutrition (either chronic or sporadic). However, malnutrition is not always caused by food insecurity. In order to distinguish between malnutrition and food insecurity, then, one must look to causes. If malnutrition is caused by food shortages, trouble accessing food, food waste, and/or unsustainable food policy, it can be labelled food insecurity. If not, it is to be called malnutrition or something else.

My definition also classifies food insecurity as both an individual and structural phenomenon. It is disproportionately individual in its consequences (as Holt-Gimenez and Patel would argue) and disproportionately structural in its causes (as Valdes and Siamwalla, as well as Gerdes, would argue). In other words, food insecurity has serious effects on individuals’ quality of life by creating anxiety, malnutrition, distrust of government, and countless other issues. As Gerdes’ four pillars of food security suggest, domestic and international structures cause individuals to fall into this state. The individuals who suffer generally do not cause food shortages, inaccessibility, waste, or unsustainable use. Of course, the distinction between causation and effect is not a perfect split. Individuals can contribute to their own or others’ food insecurity by acting wastefully or unsustainably, despite the fact that no one individual can single-handedly
cause food insecurity to occur. Likewise, food insecurity can and does occur at a structural level—affecting large groups of individuals or even structures of the government or economy.

**Food insecurity: A diagnosis**

I have argued that, like chronic malnutrition, food insecurity generally describes a long-term structural inefficiency; it flares up at some times and lays dormant at others. It is for this reason that I reject Valdes and Siamwalla’s contrast of food insecurity (characterized by “short-term variability”) with chronic malnutrition (a “long-term problem”). Rather, malnutrition is always a characteristic of food insecurity and chronic malnutrition often is. By contrast, chronic malnutrition takes a variety of forms which do not always include food insecurity.

If this is the case, and chronic malnutrition can be compared to AIDS, perhaps the best metaphor for food insecurity would be HIV. Those who are infected with HIV have not yet experienced the full destructive power of it, but it is still part of their physiology and will quickly destroy them if it is not treated. Even if it is diagnosed early on, treatment will only slow its spread—it cannot completely eradicate it. Similarly, food insecurity is a complex structural phenomenon that has proved too complicated for any current antidotes to completely eradicate. Furthermore, food insecurity is especially dangerous because those who are infected by it often do not realize its existence until it strikes full force. They may thus exacerbate its effect or spread its influence to others without even realizing it.
As with any metaphor, this is an imperfect one. HIV/AIDS currently has no cure and will eventually destroy its victim. Food insecurity, although extremely difficult to overcome completely, does not always destroy those who fall prey to it. In addition, HIV is the only predecessor to AIDS, whereas malnutrition may be caused by food insecurity or something entirely different. This empirical example will prevent my discussion of food insecurity—an intricate and often theory-laden idea—from completely departing from reality. It reminds us of the very real and deadly effects that food insecurity can have on its victims.

Defining foreign aid

Food aid, the dependent variable in my study, is less difficult to define. Whereas food insecurity describes a state of being, food aid describes an action. As I discussed in the last section, a variety of social, political, and economic requirements must be met and pitfalls avoided in order for a state to achieve food security. Food aid, by contrast, has less ambiguous standards; it is either given or not given. Despite this simplicity, however, a brief discussion of the definition of food aid and its most common types will be beneficial.

*Food aid defined*

In my research I found little disagreement over the definition of food aid; rather, any controversy tends to surround what *types* of aid are most legitimate and effective. For this reason, I mostly accept Peter Uvin’s definition of food aid as the “transfer of food (mainly cereals, as well as oils, dairy, and other products) on concessional terms from
one country to another.” I do find one important flaw in this definition. Uvin considers food aid as always involving the transfer of actual food (rather than money for food) from one place to another. Food aid founded in the transfer of actual food is called “tied aid” and was the practice of most governments until recently. Reformists today ask for a form of food aid called “untied aid” in which donor countries send money to recipients that those recipients then use to purchase local food items. The debate between tied and untied aid has recently been prevalent in the Obama administration in the United States.

In contrast to tied food aid, Uvin classifies the “alternative operations” of the European Economic Community begun in the 1980s as food-related financial aid. “Alternative operations” take place when the donor has a particularly strong harvest and sends the financial equivalent of the food they would typically send to recipients. If this money will be used to purchase food, however, it seems unnecessary to call it something other than food aid. For this reason, I would modify Uvin’s definition slightly to say that food aid describes the “transfer of food (mainly cereals, as well as oils, dairy, and other products), or money for the sole purpose of purchasing food, on concessional terms from one country to another.”

Methodological categories of food aid

The distinction between tied and untied food aid describes a difference of method—how the donor goes about assisting the recipient. Other potential methodical distinctions in food aid are possible. The first of these is who gives. Does the food or

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money come from national governments, non-governmental organizations, private donors, international organizations like the World Bank, or some other source? Who donates is important in analyzing why they donate, how they donate, and what effect their donation will have on the receiving country. A private donor or NGO may give for purely altruistic reasons at no cost to the receiving country and expecting nothing in return, while a national government may give strategically, expecting the receiving country to become a loyal trade-partner or political-military ally. National governments are called bilateral donors and international organizations like the UN are called multilateral.32

Another methodological difference is who receives. Is the donated food or money sent directly to government officials or non-profit organizations within the state for distribution, or do government or charity officials hand deliver it to individuals in need? Are recipients chosen by their need, their geographic location, their occupations, or some other determinant? This question is important because even the most extravagant of donations are still not enough to help every person in need. This is especially true in the case of a devastating natural disaster like the Haitian earthquake.33 If not everyone receives, who gets to decide who does and who does not? Who receives is also important because offered aid is notorious for not always, or even often, reaching its intended recipients. For example, according to the UN Special Envoy for Haiti, in January of 2012 (two years after the earthquake), only 53% of the aid pledged for reconstruction had been delivered to Haiti and only 6% of delivered aid was processed through Haitian

33 Uvin, The International Organization of Hunger, 146.
institutions. Who was meant to receive what was offered and how much was pocketed by those entrusted to distribute it?

A final methodological difference, especially relevant to food insecurity, is what is given. This distinction goes beyond tied vs. untied aid. In tied aid, donors may only give their own surplus goods, which would likely reflect the dietary needs and preferences of their own country rather than those of the receiving country. Or, donors may send food specifically catered to the needs and preferences of the recipients—whether that food is originally grown in the donating state, a third state, or the receiving state. There is less room for creativity in the case of untied aid, but it still may be significant to distinguish between cash donations, electronic money transfers to banks or the government, vouchers to be used only at certain establishments, or another method.

Purposive categories of food aid

In addition to methodological differences, there are purposive differences in food aid. Donors may give with any variety of end-goals in mind. Uvin uses three purposive categories to describe food aid: “emergency food aid,” “project food aid,” and “program (or structural) food aid.” Although my goal in this project is mainly to analyze emergency food aid efforts, it will be beneficial to understand the other two categories for two reasons. First, comparisons with project and program food aid will enrich our understanding of what emergency food aid lacks and what it excels in; in other words, one can learn from what they do well or fail in. Second, I suspect that, as with any

34. 2010 - 2012 overall contributions from public sector donors to relief and recovery efforts in Haiti,” last modified December 2012, Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti, http://www.lessonsfromhaiti.org/download/International_Aid/2-overall-financing-data.pdf
categorization, the boundaries between each type are by no means absolute or impenetrable. Rather, there are likely to be elements of project food aid and/or program food aid in some emergency efforts and vice versa.

Uvin describes emergency food aid as a reaction to “famine and natural or manmade catastrophes.” He classifies 10%-25% of total food aid given as emergency and views famine as a powerful motivator for external donations. In fact, the desire to eradicate famine has caused governments to donate to other countries with undesirable or even hostile political institutions, as was the case when the United States donated to famine-ridden Communist Ethiopia in the 1980s. Uvin believes that examples such as this prove the absence of economic and political self-interest in donors’ decisions to donate. Riddell disagrees—stating that bilateral donors like the United States tend to give based on their own strategic interests rather than the greatest needs in the community.

The second category is project food aid. Project food aid describes any assistance given in accordance with development efforts or “targeted feeding programs.” Uvin attributes 20-30% of food aid to this group. It is anything which at least nominally aims to induce or enhance the receiving country’s development. The final category is program food aid, which consists of “bulk transfers of food to governments, to be used for sale on the local market.” The majority of aid (60%) falls into this group. It is the most narrowly defined of Uvin’s categories, and it is almost synonymous with tied aid. For this

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid, 146.
38 Ibid, 147.
39 Riddell, Does Foreign Aid Really Work, 57.
40 Uvin, The International Organization of Hunger, 129.
41 Ibid, 157.
42 Ibid, 129.
reason, I find Uvin’s definition unsatisfactory. It would be more useful for him to define program food aid in terms of its motivation, as he does with the other two categories. I will thus describe program food aid as any aid which attempts to strengthen and supply local markets using foreign-grown food. In accordance with this definition, program aid is always tied aid, but tied aid is not always program aid.

It should already be clear that neither of these categories is entirely independent. Emergency food aid may be a response to famine, but it may also be given with the end-goal of spurring long-term development in the receiving nation and/or supplying local markets. Furthermore, the fact that donors may give with one end-result in mind does not mean that their efforts will actually accomplish that end rather than another one. With these imperfect categories in mind, I establish my theoretical framework for the rest of the project.

Theoretical framework

In this thesis I explore the relationship between emergency food aid after the Haitian earthquake and the long-term food insecurity of that state. I hypothesize that emergency food aid efforts as they were carried out after the 2010 earthquake intensified the nation’s long-standing struggle with food insecurity, despite the fact that they may have decreased malnutrition in the short-term. My purpose, then, is to establish a causal link between specific types of emergency food aid and food insecurity. As I stated above, food insecurity is often a chronic issue caused by structural weaknesses. It can exist over a long period of time and only be evident at certain junctures when large groups of individuals suffer its effects. For this reason, another way to frame my hypothesis is that
emergency food aid as it was carried out reinforced pre-existing structures that will make periods of overt food insecurity and malnutrition more likely in the future.

I am not arguing that emergency food aid inherently increases food insecurity, nor am I saying that emergency aid donors necessarily intend to increase the receiving country’s food insecurity. Rather, I identify specific aspects of development aid and emergency aid that were destructive to domestic structures. I do so in order to identify the harmful aspects of aid and to encourage reform. In other words, my intent is not to suggest emergency aid’s cessation or to malign well-intentioned donors. Rather, I hope to offer practical suggestions for how emergency aid efforts can be more effective.

My work is by no means the first to argue that foreign aid is not always effective and at times harms the very people it is intended to assist. Some authors have argued that aid is always ineffective and always harmful, while others have offered overly optimistic accounts of its benefits. The former are usually scholars. The latter tend to be aid officials who claim their efforts are more fruitful than they actually are in an attempt to validate them. I take the middle ground between these more extreme interpretations—arguing as Roger Riddell does in *Does Foreign Aid Work?* that aid is not entirely useless but is often unsuccessful. I apply Riddell’s ideas to food aid and food security in Haiti. In addition to supporting Riddell’s argument, the Haitian case offers potential modifications and additions to his understanding of foreign aid.

*Aid is sick but not dead*

One of Riddell’s central arguments is that the aid system is broken but not destroyed. This brokenness ought to encourage reform rather than invalidating aid
altogether. He concludes that “support for aid needs to be based less on believing and convincing the public that it necessarily will work, or does work, and more on appreciating that it often doesn’t, and that efforts continually have to be focused on understanding how to improve its impact.” My analysis is also both critical and optimistic. It is founded on the idea that aid typically falls short of its goals as well as the idea that it can and should be improved. Throughout my research process I suspected that foreign aid had adverse effects on Haitian food security and thus focused my time on understanding to what extent emergency aid damaged domestic structures, why it had this effect, and how donors could have avoided it. One of my goals was to prove that emergency food aid damaged food security, but my primary goal was to illustrate what specific aspects of aid caused it to have this effect, so future emergency efforts may avoid those pitfalls.

Another important concept from Riddell’s work is that aid consistently suffers from systematic problems. In other words, failure is not caused by abnormal practices or circumstances, but is endemic to aid because of the very way aid is structured. In order to improve aid, then, donors must rethink the way they have always delivered it. For this reason, I not only analyze emergency food aid and its impact on food security but also development food aid and food insecurity before the earthquake. I argue that one can trace some of the same problematic processes throughout the history of aid in Haiti, despite the fact that one period may be labelled as development while the other is called emergency aid. For example, tied food aid flooded the domestic market with foreign aid.

44 Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid Work?*, 410.
goods both before and after the earthquake not because that type of aid was most appropriate in either circumstance, but because it was part of the flawed structure of aid delivery that informed both efforts. The emergency effort more or less inherited the issues of the development effort since both were part of the same system and relied on the same structures to deal with different circumstances. The system of aid is part of an international political system that reinforces global power and wealth disparities that begun during the colonial era.

How NGOs fail

According to Riddell, NGOs play an important role within this system. Aid that relies on NGOs for delivery is flawed in part because it lacks a central system of regulation and accountability. Some NGOs are extremely effective while others are embarrassingly ineffective, but donors typically do not compile data on which of their partnership NGOs fall into which categories. For example, bigger NGOs, who typically do not consult their beneficiaries and have insufficient understandings of poverty’s causes, often eclipse smaller, grassroots organizations who communicate more with their beneficiaries and better understand poverty’s causes in the region.46

I apply each of these criticisms to the Haitian case. First, NGOs were not held accountable by a centralized body during development or emergency assistance. Johnston and Main discuss the frustrating lack of accountability in the “Republic of NGOs” after the earthquake. Frustrated analysts complained that the large sums of money that the United States pledged simply went into a “black box” to be used by NGOs however they

46 Ibid, 367.
pleased. Indeed, I argue that development and emergency efforts in Haiti suffered from the same types of NGO-driven flaws as one another without taking steps to understand and correct those flaws. Since individual NGOs were given so much agency, even if donors had attempted top-down aid reforms, these would have been difficult to coordinate and enforce. Since the United States and the UN had already developed partnerships with large, foreign-based NGOs during development, they relied on these again during the emergency. As Riddell argues, however, grassroots organizations tend to have more knowledge of the community being served and more of a desire to communicate with it. They would have been more effective distributors for that reason, but they were passed over for their larger counterparts.

How emergency aid fails

In addition to issues specific to NGO-based delivery models, Riddell argues that emergency (or humanitarian) aid suffers from three other persistent shortcomings. First, the agencies involved in aid delivery do not coordinate their efforts as effectively as they ought. I rely on this idea throughout both chapters on aid after the earthquake. In particular, I argue that donors failed to establish equally strong relationships with NGOs and domestic Haitian institutions. In focusing heavily on the prior in development and the emergency response they made it more difficult to carry out their plans to involve the latter in recovery. Furthermore, donors sacrificed the input and experience that domestic institutions could have offered for a more appropriate and food secure response.

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Second, Riddell argues that humanitarian donors do not sufficiently protect the most vulnerable members of the assisted society. In Haiti donors focused on meeting the most obvious and immediate food needs after the earthquake by shipping large quantities of tied food aid to NGOs; NGOs then delivered it to Haitians. Whether or not NGOs actually gave the food directly to Haitians and whether those assisted were actually the neediest is difficult to determine, given the issues with accountability summarized above. Regardless, I argue that donors failed to assist the most vulnerable in a more long-term sense. Haitian farmers who sold their products to other Haitians before the earthquake suddenly had an influx of competition from donated free food after. Using common sense alone one could conclude that, when given a choice between buying locally-grown food and receiving foreign-grown food for free, any practical person would choose the latter. Haiti’s increased reliance on cheap foreign imports before the earthquake confirms this pattern. As vulnerable farmers attempted to recover from the earthquake, then, they faced loss of business along with the shock and damage of the disaster itself.

Third, Riddell argues that emergency aid fails to strengthen local institutions.\textsuperscript{48} For example, emergency food aid initiatives typically deliver insufficient quantities and rely on ill-informed understandings of country-specific needs.\textsuperscript{49} The substantive chapters of this thesis demonstrate that the international food response to the 2010 Haitian earthquake certainly suffered from the latter. Donors did not communicate directly with their Haitian beneficiaries and most of the NGOs chosen for delivery were large and disconnected from the citizens on the ground. Moreover, the emergency efforts in Haiti

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 339-340.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 343.
were simply one occurrence within the international system of aid. This system is not
catered to specific countries but rather applies similar practices in every country assisted
at different points at time.

*The Asian tsunamis of 2004: A similar predicament*

Riddell’s discussion of the international response to the Asian earthquake and
related tsunamis in 2004 demonstrates that this system was at work 6 years prior to the
Haitian earthquake, with similar practices and results. Even though this effort was much
more widespread than the Haitian one—delivering aid to multiple affected states—its six
biggest shortcomings were all present in Haiti after the earthquake there in 2010. First,
donors failed to attain and then follow a comprehensive assessment of need for victims.\(^{50}\)
Second, efforts lacked coordination, with each donor and NGO planning and delivering
assistance somewhat independently. Third, donors and recipients were woefully
unprepared for the disaster. Fourth, most donors did not discuss their plans with
recipients.\(^{51}\) Fifth, respondents typically did not act consistently with the principles they
upheld, such as local involvement and leadership. Sixth, donors did not adequately
distribute funds between short-term and long-term projects. Whereas long-term needs are
extremely important to delivering the most beneficial aid, donors focused
disproportionately on short-term, obvious needs.\(^{52}\) Each of these issues was present in
Haiti and is reflected in Riddell’s three central criticisms of humanitarian aid.

In summary, I rely most heavily on three of Riddell’s ideas, which I have outlined
in greater depth above. First, foreign aid is a system and its failures typically emerge out

\(^{50}\) Ibid, 347.
\(^{51}\) Ibid, 348.
\(^{52}\) Ibid, 377.
of issues inherent to that system. Second, NGO-based aid is especially problematic because NGOs are so widespread and diverse that they are not held sufficiently accountable by their benefactors. Third, humanitarian aid falls short because involved agencies do not coordinate their efforts, do not protect the interests of the most vulnerable within the receiving population, and fail to shape their responses in a way that empowers domestic institutions.
CHAPTER 3: FOOD AID IN HAITI BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE—PAVING THE PATH TO FOOD INSECURITY

The state of agriculture

Haiti’s food security has long been heavily influenced by its interactions with—and domination by—foreign powers. Although the colony technically earned its freedom from French colonizers on January 1st, 1804, it was by no means freed from foreign intervention altogether. This intervention took the form of overt political and military interference at times, but it was most consistently economic. Especially in regard to food security, economic intervention has been the most influential type, although its influence is not always obvious. The type of economic intervention that has had the strongest impact on Haitian food security has been aid programs.

This chapter argues that as foreign influence increased through agriculture policies and then aid, food insecurity actually increased. This correlation can be explained by foreign powers’ impact on some or all of the four pillars of food security. Typically, aid efforts either increase, or do not do serious damage to, overall access to and availability of food. Simultaneously, they neglect and unintentionally damage stable utilization. The shortcomings of developmental models for food security would carry over in the emergency response and recovery efforts after the earthquake. Their impact was thus double: to weaken long-term food security before the earthquake and to create food insecure norms for food aid that would be used in response to the emergency.
A brief history of imperialism

It would be over-simplistic to solely blame foreign powers for the undesirable practices that led to food insecurity. Indeed, the Haitian government played a role in the country’s dependence from the time of independence onward. After slavery was abolished in Haiti, its politicians strived to keep agricultural practices all but unchanged. When it was still a French colony, Haiti’s sole purpose was export crop production (especially sugar and coffee). Once it was free of colonial control, its own political leaders imposed heavy taxes on small-scale farmers and did their best to maintain a plantation system in order to maintain mass exports and survive in the world market.53 Such policies undermined farmers’ concerted efforts to create an alternative, self-sufficient domestic economy.

Nonetheless, Haiti’s dependence on foreign powers was largely a result of those powers’ actions. Foreign agents’ roles in creating and sustaining the country’s difficulties are less commonly discussed than the corrupt Haitian government. The evidence suggests that the former may have actually played a more significant role than the latter, however. Haiti’s freedom from French control in 1804 by no means meant freedom from French influence. Rather, the French imposed a neoliberal trade policy that placed half the tariff on French goods as on other imports. Furthermore, the French demanded that the Haitian government pay them a 150 million franc indemnity to cover French losses incurred by Haitian independence.54

53 Ibid, 11.
As French influence in the nation decreased, the United States quickly inserted itself in the void. The U.S. was no stranger to Haiti at this point; some argue that its influence over the state began as early as the Haitian revolution.\textsuperscript{55} Early in the 20th century, the U.S. Marines had come to Haiti eight times to restore order and protect American citizens and interests.\textsuperscript{56} In 1905, the United States was the source of 71% of all Haitian imports.\textsuperscript{57} In 1909 it took over the Haitian national bank’s operations. Economic policies often lead directly to political control. Renda argues that, “as U.S. capitalists made important inroads in Haiti, most notably through railroads and banking, instances of ‘gunboat diplomacy’ would become more and more frequent.”\textsuperscript{58}

In addition to increasing its political influence, the United States’ economic interference decreased Haitian food security. For example, in one instance the Haitian government granted a US investor named James MacDonald control over a bankrupt railway line and twelve miles of land on each side of it. Many local farmers lived and worked along this terrain.\textsuperscript{59} MacDonald proposed a banana-plantation creation project on the land beside the railway, which would force successful small-scale farmers in the area to give up their land and become plantation laborers. The aim of these plantations, of course, would be to generate mass-production for the purposes of export. Their other effect, however, was to create an agricultural sector eerily similar to the slavery-ridden plantations of the colony days. This case is an obvious display of the fact that, as foreign

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 30.
\textsuperscript{57} Dubois, \textit{Haiti}, 173.
\textsuperscript{58} Renda, \textit{Taking Haiti}, 30.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 174.
involvement increased, Haitian food insecurity also increased. Certain farmers could no longer utilize their land as they wanted to, but were rather subject to the unsustainable practices of plantation farming.

After the Marines occupied Haiti from 1915 until 1934, U.S. influence in the region shifted away from such overt capitalistic ventures and toward aid and trade policies. This chapter elaborates on the less overt, but equally dangerous, ways in which foreign economic influence through aid continued the colonial legacy of damaging Haitian food security.

U.S. trade, agriculture, and aid policies

The United States initially began to offer food aid during a period of national agricultural surplus. In 1954, President Eisenhower signed off on the Agricultural Development Act (later called Food for Peace) with the driving motivation of “lay[ing] the basis for a permanent expansion of our exports of agricultural products with lasting benefit to ourselves and people of other lands.” Food aid, trade, and agriculture were all tied together in a way that would theoretically benefit U.S. farmers (by giving them a market for excess goods) as well as recipients (by providing them with much needed food).

The U.S. government no longer bases food aid quantities on surplus amounts but follows an annually predetermined budget for aid. Furthermore, Food for Peace now includes aid programs beyond mere tied aid, such as education about agricultural

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productivity and food as payment for work.USAID continued to give large portions of American grown food despite this shift toward more diverse aid practices, however. In 2009 alone the Food for Peace Program supplied around 2.4 million metric tons of food. Interestingly 1.9 million metric tons of this went to emergency aid whereas 474,350 went to non-emergency aid. Some of this difference can be described by the fact that USAID gave more overall to emergency-ridden countries than non-emergency ones (a gap of a little under $500 million dollars between the top recipients in each category). Regardless, it is significant that tied food aid was still such a central component of emergency responses in 2009—even as development aid began to shift its stated focus toward more long-term goals.

The United States’ consistent shipment of American-grown goods to developing countries in the form of aid and trade was part of a broader U.S. policy plan to increase its own importance in the global market. Subsidies were a vital part of this strategy from the 1970s onward. When the American export economy faltered in the 1980s, the government simultaneously multiplied its subsidies to U.S. farmers and pressured competing countries to cut their subsidies for exports. In sum, despite nominal efforts to move away from strictly tied food aid, the United States continued to predominantly cling to this model for aid throughout the late 1900s and into the 2000s. Subsidies to U.S. farmers increased the likelihood that they would incur surpluses, which would in turn

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61 Ibid.
63 Rachel Garst and Tom Barry, Feeding the Crisis: U.S. Food Aid and Farm Policy in Central America (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 48-49.
64 Ibid.
allow USAID to fulfill its budgeted quantities of tied food aid during most years.

Obviously this system does not account for the dietary needs of recipients or the impact of foreign-grown goods on the receiving country’s agriculture. Rachel Garst and Tom Barry argue that U.S. methods for food aid were detrimental to receiving countries in Central America for those two reasons, and I argue that the same is true of Haiti.

Furthermore, the United States has traditionally placed subsidies and tariffs on cotton and sugar in order to enhance American producers’ abilities to export these for low prices and to prevent Americans from importing them from abroad. The Brazilian government successfully argued that U.S. cotton policies demonstrated “serious prejudice” by suppressing prices in the same market that Brazilian cotton-growers compete in.\(^\text{65}\) To argue this point, the Brazilian government relied on research by Daniel Sumner which proved that, from 1999-2000, world cotton prices dropped by about 15% as a result of U.S. subsidies.\(^\text{66}\) The U.S. historically treated sugar somewhat differently than cotton: placing high tariffs on its import but not securing a stable market for U.S. sugar exports.\(^\text{67}\) Nonetheless, the effect on sugar-producing states was similar: they could not sell their goods effectively in the U.S.

As I discuss in further detail below, Haitian agricultural production has steadily declined from the 1980s to the present. During its colonization and the century or so after freedom, Haiti’s economy was driven by sugar and coffee production and export; it was a


\(^{66}\) Ibid, 16.

\(^{67}\) Ibid, 36.
coveted trade partner for the United States. Yet, by 2008 its agricultural sector accounted for half of the portion of the GDP that it had in 1980 and 7% of the export-earnings. Part of this change is due to trade liberalization under Structural Adjustment Programs. Another part of it is likely caused by U.S. cotton and sugar tariffs and subsidies. These policies helped to create an unequal trade relationship between the two states—with the United States distributing large quantities of rice, chicken, and other goods to Haiti for suppressed prices but Haitian farmers unable to sell their primary crops of cotton and sugar in the American market. This unequal trade relationship set the stage for the one-side aid relationship that would mark both development and emergency efforts.

**Lakou: A model of food security**

Before moving on to analyze the impact of aid on food security, it is important to note that as U.S. investors and politicians intervened in Haitian economics in the ways summarized above some rural Haitians were busy creating their own food secure model for farming. After its independence in 1804 Haiti faced an internal debacle over what its agriculture ought to look like. On one hand, the government saw a continued plantation economy as necessary to the state’s survival. On the other, former slaves longed to own and cultivate their own land. Yves Pierre describes the result as “a dual agrarian economy… with large landowners promoting a plantation economy with coerced labor

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and small peasants defending freedom and independent civilization.”

The former camp was gradually defeated by the later over the course of the 19th Century, but plantations reemerged during the U.S. invasion in 1915, proving the precariousness of mass land ownership in times of imperialist intervention.

As the movement for mass land ownership gained more traction in the 19th century, so did the lakou system. Lakou describes a mechanism of land-ownership and cultivation which “emphasized self-reliance through working the soil.” This system, predominant in rural areas, was developed without the interference of the state. Indeed, Dubois characterizes it as a move “in opposition to the Haitian government,” since it created “an egalitarian system without a state.” Landowners grew their own food, sold the excess in local markets, and grew minimal amounts of export goods like coffee in order to pay for imported consumer goods. Although this method did not enable the Haitian government to profit, it was enough for individuals to survive.

Within themselves, the lakous met the conditions of food security. Food was directly available to its growers in the proportion that it was produced; it was easily accessible either through direct consumption or purchase on a local market, it was open to whatever form of utilization its growers deemed most appropriate; finally, it was largely stable in that producers were not reliant on external forces (other than the uncontrollable factor of weather) and only needed to produce enough to meet their own needs. Although the individual circumstances of lakou-members varied to some degree,

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71 Ibid.
72 Dubois, Haiti, 93.
73 Ibid, 92.
the general experience was one of secure existence and freedom from exploitation. This was the case since even the wealthiest lakou members abided by the rules of the system and did not seek to take over others’ plots of land. Furthermore, lakou members were not allowed to sell land to anyone outside the lakou community—a restriction which guarded against even the potential for imperial pursuits in these areas.

This discussion proves that, at least during the period of time during which lakous were widespread, food security in rural Haiti was possible. This food security was closely tied to control. As long as Haitians were given legally-mandated control over land, they were able to produce enough food to live in comfort. Control by many prevented any one party from accumulating mass amounts of wealth. Unfortunately, however, the lakou was a food-secure structure embedded in an economically-insecure one. Thus, once the Haitian government could no longer cope with its massive amounts of debt, it sacrificed control to the United States, who aimed to establish plantations where they had been eliminated. From the U.S. invasion onward, food insecurity increased in proportion to foreign involvement.

The international state of aid

Prior to the Haitian earthquake, food aid at the international level had been undergoing a gradual transformation in terms of actors, scope, and nature. Although these transformations were intended to make food aid more effective, they actually intensified its negative influence on food security in developing states. In Haiti, the weakened food

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74 Ibid, 94.
75 Ibid.
structure exaggerated the earthquake’s destructive capacity and disabled the state from effective response.

The United States government has long been the world leader of aid efforts. In 1954, Congress passed the “Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act” PL480 (also known as “Food for Peace”). This was the first nationally mandated law in the world to institutionalize international food aid. The first focused on agricultural development, the second focused on emergency aid, and the third focused on overall food security. The addition of the third title was inspired by a general shift in international understandings of hunger and aid in response to the world food crisis of 1972-1974. The World Food Conference in Rome in 1974, sponsored by the United Nations, created Resolution XVIII (“Improved Policy for Food Aid”), which called upon donors to focus their aid efforts on development; development, they argued, would lead to increased global food security. In other words, the United Nations and United States introduced the notion of food security to their food aid efforts beginning in the early 1970s. They tied food security to development, arguing that the latter would cause the former. As an analysis of their efforts will prove, however, their understanding of food security was oversimplified and actually caused them to pursue development in a way that counteracted it.

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77 Ibid, 140.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
An emblematic example of the negative impact of food-related development aid on food security is Structural Adjustment Programs, which became increasingly common in the 1980s. SAPs offered loans to developing states, conditional upon those states’ willingness to adopt a variety of macroeconomic changes.\textsuperscript{80} The economic changes mandated by the lenders included such values as “free market, trickle down, comparative advantage, and the merits of export-oriented growth.”\textsuperscript{81} In order to encourage the underdeveloped to develop, then, donors required them to open their economies to foreign interference. Yet, foreign interference in the domestic market causes domestic institutions to weaken and dependence on foreign goods to grow. This dependence and weakness violates the stability pillar of food security since it causes the Haitian state and people to rely on an unstable global market.

In the next decades, the total amount of international food aid dropped and that which was delivered was once again transformed. In 1988, the world saw $14,048,281 of food aid given; in 2011, this amount had dropped to $3,872,139.\textsuperscript{82} Of the $3,872,139 given, most took the form of humanitarian assistance, rather than the formerly popular development aid.\textsuperscript{83} According to the World Food Programme Food Aid Monitor, in 1988 $8,201,441 went to programme aid worldwide; in 1998, this amount had dropped to $2,808,869.\textsuperscript{84} In 1988 $3,698,798 went to project aid worldwide; in 1998 this amount had

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 231.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} “Quantity Reporting,” World Food Programme, accessed November 9, 2013, http://www.wfp.org/fais/reports/quantities-delivered-two-dimensional report/run/year/All/cat/All/recipient/All/donor/All/code/All/mode/All/basis/0/order/0.
dropped to $2,422,901. By contrast, emergency food aid worldwide in 1988 totaled $2,148,041; it increased to $2,843,548 in 1998. This pattern continued into the 21st century, with the amount of emergency aid increasing on and off and the amount of project and programme aid steadily declining. Thus, the international community had already begun to focus its efforts on alleviating emergency hunger before the earthquake hit—causing its focus to be short-term rather than long-term. Since emergency aid temporarily floods the domestic market it appears to reduce food insecurity in the short-term while actually failing to meet the utilization and stability pillars of food security. The flaws in methods of emergency aid delivery before the earthquake thus carried over into the time of crisis following the earthquake.

One of the central means through which food aid threatened food security was its methods of delivery. In 2005, the United States and the World Food Programme were the two most important actors in the food aid scene. National governments provided 95% of all food aid at this point in time, and the United States was responsible for 49% of the total. States who did donate aid did not often give it directly to the state being assisted. Rather, 54% went through multilateral channels, 24% went through NGOs, and 22% went directly to the receiving state’s government. The primary multilateral body to assist in aid delivery was the WFP, but the WFP often filtered the aid that it received (especially emergency aid) through NGOs. NGOs were thus a part of about ⅔ of all aid

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85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
delivery, even when multilateral bodies were involved.\(^8^9\) Although they are not inherently harmful, NGOs cause damage in practice since they perform the administrative role in distribution that the domestic government and other domestic structures would serve in a properly functioning state. Since strong domestic institutions are vital to food security, NGOs challenge the latter through undermining the former.

The history of aid in Haiti

Aid has long been a vital part of the Haitian economy. Even the U.S. Marine invasion in the 1930s was justified as emergency financial assistance to the struggling government. The U.S. began its take-over by sending the USS *Machias* to forcibly remove gold from the Haitian bank to repay debts. It subsequently took over that bank’s functions under the pretense the Haitian government had failed to handle its money appropriately. Dubois concludes that “the ultimate message of the *Machias* incident” was that “the Haitian government… could no longer be trusted with its own money.”\(^9^0\)

In addition to its reputation for mismanaging money, the Haitian government often had insufficient money to meet its needs. Directly before the earthquake, in 2009, it received aid from bilateral and multilateral donors in the amount of about 130% of the government’s internal revenue.\(^9^1\) The majority of this aid took the form of “direct grants and technical cooperation.”\(^9^2\) The total quantity of aid to the state began to rise steadily in 2002 and increased exponentially at times when the country faced political and

\(^8^9\) Ibid.
\(^9^2\) Ibid.
humanitarian crises. As the U.S. had done during the *Machias* incident, donors intervened most powerfully during periods of domestic crisis.

The main donors to intervene before the earthquake were the “Group of 11”: Canada, the EU, France, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Japan, Spain, the UN, the United States, the World Bank, and one representative from Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. National governments like Canada, France, and etc. are classified as bilateral donors; international institutions such as the IDB, the IMF, and etc. are called multilateral. In 2007, 54% of aid to Haiti came from bilateral donors and 46% came from multilateral ones. A slight majority of donations were thus from individual governments, a style of giving that tends to be more politically-charged. By establishing a presence in the country during each period of crisis, external governments increased Haiti’s reliance on foreign leadership and generosity and thus diminished its ability to react to future crises effectively on its own.

NGOs were also foundational to the Haitian pre-earthquake aid model. Bilateral and multilateral donors shifted their delivery-mechanisms away from Haitian governmental structures to NGOs out of concern about corruption within that government. By 2010 there were between 8000 and 9000 NGOs in Haiti and it came to be known as the “Republic of NGOs.” These organizations further normalized foreign-influence in responding to crises as well as carrying out everyday functions within

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93 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
97 Ibid, 757
Haitian society. Donors not only gave large sums of money and goods to keep the Haitian state afloat; they had representatives physically present on the ground across the Haitian landscape.

Three case studies: Food for Peace, Structural Adjustment Programs, and Feed the Future

The United States government assumed the role of donor shortly after it had ended its period as occupier. The marines left in 1934; the International Monetary Fund and World Bank were founded in 1945, the International Development Association was founded in 1960, and USAID was founded in 1961. Unsurprisingly, the United States was and continues to be the main source of aid to Haiti. From 1972 to 1981, Haiti received $584 million in aid; 80% of this aid came from the United States. U.S. aid efforts demonstrate some of the clearest shortcomings of development food aid as well as the relationship between that aid and increasing food insecurity.

*Changes to the food for peace model*

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is the most well-known American national aid organization. It funds a variety of development-based projects all over the globe and relies primarily on NGOs to deliver that aid. In order to address the issues of hunger and food insecurity in developing nations, USAID launched the Food for Peace Program in 1954 under the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act (PL 480). Food for Peace originally consisted of two different programs, with a third added in 1977. The first of these, Title One, was the main form of food aid until 1990. Entitled “Economic Assistance and Food Security,” and controlled by the U.S.

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100 Ibid, 140.
Department of Agriculture, this initiative gave low-interest loans to purchase necessary commodities to countries’ governments.  

Title One aid was a theoretically food secure option since it offered untied, rather than tied aid. The receiving country’s government was expected to determine what its people’s greatest food needs were and then provide for those needs. As the Haitian case demonstrates, though, this model only works in countries with honest and capable democratic governments. If the recipient country has a truly democratic government, citizens can express their needs and the government can purchase culturally appropriate food, make it easily accessible to those who need it most, ensure its proper utilization, and establish sustainable practices in order to meet those articulated needs.

The corrupt Haitian government was unready to spend the money selflessly, and thus Title One aid there failed. When Jean-Claude Duvalier was president, “foreign governments were well aware that Duvalier and his associates were simply taking much of the official aid money sent to the country for their own private gain.” In response, the Food for Peace program in Haiti and elsewhere shifted control away from the recipients and toward foreigners. In 1977 it introduced Title Three, Food for Development Aid. Under Title Three, the receiving countries’ governments were held responsible for implementation, albeit under the direct supervision of USAID. The United States donated commodities to support domestically-organized food security programs. This allowed the receiving country some impact over how they used aid, while removing their control over what aid they received. In theory, under Title Three governments were able to shape food

security policy in order to increase food’s availability, accessibility, and sustainable utilization. Since the actual food given was grown in the U.S., however, it was less likely to be culturally appropriate. Title 3 thus risked increasing receiving states’ reliance on foreign imports (whether donated or purchased). It was discontinued in 1994, but its adverse effects continued through Title 2 aid.

Title 2 of Food for Peace, Emergency and Private Assistance Programs, was the culmination of previous reforms. It is the only Food for Peace Program that is still funded and since Titles 1 and 3 have ceased, its funding has dramatically increased. It is administered by USAID and implemented by NGOs, private voluntary organizations, and intergovernmental organizations (especially the World Food Program).\(^{103}\) Title 2 is similar to Title 3, except that it relies on NGOs and other organizations, rather the receiving country’s government, to plan how aid will be distributed. Thus, whereas Title 3 food aid allowed a degree of domestic control over how to distribute food but not what to distribute, Title 2 aid does not allow domestic control over how or what.

The Food for Peace website argues that PVOS/NGOS can identify types and amounts of food aid most appropriate for the country and thus more adequately meet the peoples’ needs than a corrupt government could.\(^{104}\) I do not doubt that there may be some truth behind this argument. Neither do I believe that the majority of PVOS/NGOS have self-interested motives. Rather, I argue that Title 2 is problematic for three reasons. First, as is the case with Title 3 aid, the organizations are forced to choose from a list of U.S.

\(^{103}\) Ibid.

\(^{104}\) Ibid.
grown and U.S. approved commodities. This stipulation hinders even the most well-intentioned and knowledgeable of PVOS/NGOS from meeting local needs if those needs lie outside what USAID offers. No matter how well they know and communicate with the Haitian people, then, NGO officials are still limited by a distant United States government agency.

Second, the mere multiplicity of NGOs them makes it difficult, if not impossible, to hold them accountable. Even if most are well-intentioned, good-intentions do not necessarily translate into effective practices. For this reason, NGOs ought to be, but typically are not, held accountable to USAID for actually meeting recipients’ interests. Whereas aid filtered through domestic government is problematic because it is at the whim of a few government officials alone, aid filtered through NGOS is problematic because it is at the whim of many representatives. When the government is the only organism receiving and distributing aid, it is more obvious who to blame when that aid is not properly delivered. It is less obvious who to blame when hundreds of organizations deliver aid and some do so effectively while others do not.

Third, Title 2 aid is problematic because it takes control away from the Haitian people and puts it in the hands of outsiders. No matter how honorable those outsiders are, they are outsiders nonetheless. Illich describes some of the practical reasons why outsider intervention is problematic. I summarized his argument in the introduction to this thesis. In addition to his practical concerns, the issue of control has symbolic significance given the colonial history of exploitation in the nation.

\[^{105}\text{Ibid.}\]
Structural Adjustment Programs

The UN also introduced a development initiative in Haiti with the Structural Adjustment Programs (or Structural Adjustment Loans) that began in the 1980s. An initiative of the World Bank, SAPs utilized “a combination of the carrot of financial aid and the stick of conditionalities, which were the actual policies that countries were told to implement if they wished to become well again.” The World Bank and the IMF framed SAPs as an effort to assist developing countries to pay their increasing debts and to encourage growth within these states.

In particular, SAPs were justified as efforts to create more “macroeconomic balance” and “institutional change in favor of the private sector.” They were created out of a neoliberal conception of economic growth and focused on removing any hindrances to free trade within the receiving country. The three main components of SAPs were fiscal austerity (reducing spending and increasing taxes), privatization of industries and agriculture, and trade liberalization (free trade between states). In Haiti, financial austerity efforts took the forms of laying off public employees, restructuring the national bank, a debt-payment budget program, a hiring freeze, and other initiatives aimed at relieving the debt and strengthening the economy. Privatization included discontinuation of government funding for infrastructure projects and public education.

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107 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid, 53.
Finally, trade liberalization took the form of reduced import tariffs in order to allow cheaper imports and stabilize prices on such commodities as rice.\textsuperscript{111}

In sum, the expectation of the World Bank and IMF was that SAPs would benefit receiving countries by increasing their potential for trade partners, creating a stronger, more self-sufficient civil sector, and reducing the national debt. SAP-proponents claimed that the required changes would increase the affected country’s exports even as it opened that country up to cheap imports from abroad. Gros offers an alternative explanation: that SAPs actually removed asset-control from the receiving states and opened those states’ economies to other powers.\textsuperscript{112} In Haiti specifically, “the loss of state control of the economy was a direct result of the lending conditionalities imposed upon Haiti after 1986.”\textsuperscript{113} Among these conditionalities was currency reform, which caused the Haitian gourde to plummet in value while the amount that the average Haitian worker made a day stayed the same.

Perhaps the most damaging SAP conditionality was trade liberalization. As a result of the lowered tariffs, cheap rice from the United States flooded the Haitian market and took the place of Haitian-grown rice. Between 1980 and 1990, rice exports from the United States to Haiti increased from 7,300 tons to 100,000 tons.\textsuperscript{114} The World Bank claimed that SAP reforms would increase exports, but they did not have this effect in Haiti. Rather, Haitian rice production decreased from 170,000 tons in 1985 to 150,000

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid, 54.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Gros, 976.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid, 978.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
tons in 1990. The effect was not limited to rice; U.S. producers out-competed the Haitian chicken industry by sending cheap, artificially beefed-up poultry. According to Gros, “the story of Haitian agriculture, in all sectors, is the story of decline in the past 30 years.” In 1980, agriculture was the source of over 50% of the country’s GDP and 65% of its export-earnings; by contrast, in 2008, it accounted for 25% of the country’s GDP and 5.6% of export-earnings.

In other words, two years before the 2010 earthquake, the Haitian state had lost a quarter of its agriculture-based income and had changed from a predominantly agricultural export economy to barely exporting agricultural goods at all. The move away from agricultural self-sufficiency caused Haiti to become increasingly food insecure. It not only lost its competitive edge as a global exporter; its farmers lost their competitive edge in domestic markets. Haitians could import staples of their diet for fractions of the price they would pay to buy those same products from their Haitian neighbors. Within this increasingly dependent economy, the food that Haitians needed was typically accessible and available to the same degree it was before, but it was not necessarily utilized in the most appropriate way (most Haitian chicken, for example, was organic, whereas imported chicken was genetically modified). Most significantly, Haitians’ access to food was only as stable as its donors and the global economy allowed. Although other factors certainly could have contributed to this shift, Structural Adjustment Programs

115 Ibid, 982.
116 Ibid, 983.
117 Ibid, 981.
118 Ibid, 982.
clearly served as a catalyst for policy changes that ultimately damaged Haitian food security.

Conclusions

My research on development aid in Haiti before the earthquake has three broad implications.

First, the Haitian economy prior to the earthquake was still deeply impacted by the legacy of colonialism in the state. From the original French invasion to the latter U.S. one, the Haitian state lived and existed in a precarious relation to the rest of the world. Dubois states that “no other country had faced such hostility, such resistance, even outright doubt about its very capacity to exist. The racist ideas that saturated the Western world at the time, coupled with the rage and fear that many slaveholders felt regarding black revolutionaries, raised the stakes immeasurably high for Haiti’s early leaders.”119 The exploitation that the state suffered increased its reliance on its very exploiters in order to survive. Given Haiti’s history, the fact that its economy was utterly dependent on former colonizers directly before the earthquake is unsurprising. Rather, colonial history informed the relationships between donors and recipients within the international development aid system.

Second, the lakous demonstrated real potential for food security in Haiti. As I discussed above, these plots of land met the four pillars of food security more efficiently and sustainably than foreign food aid did. The demands that the international sphere placed on the Haitian state, however, caused the Haitian government to open these plots of land to foreign investment and plantation-like labor. Haiti’s food security thus

increased in rural areas when those were free from national and international interference and decreased when the government and foreign actors took control.

Third, the flaws in the development aid system in Haiti were carried into the emergency response to the earthquake there. Since the international community was trying to respond to the quake as quickly and effectively as possible, it utilized many of the practices already in place under development initiatives. One of the most significant of these was a heavy reliance on NGOs for delivery. Although the “Republic of NGOs,” was a well-intentioned attempt to counter government corruption, it had its own significant shortcomings. First, it took control away from Haitian actors and gave it to a wide array of foreign actors. Second, the aid system lacked centralized mechanisms for accountability. With many actors participating in the Haitian economy and Haitian agriculture, it was much more difficult to determine if Haitians were able to utilize the food they received effectively and sustainably, regardless of how much food may have been available and accessible to them. This difficulty would only be compounded by the chaos of a devastating natural disaster and a huge upsurge in aid. I will now turn to that scene.
CHAPTER 4: THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE—AN ABUNDANCE OF FOOD AND A SHORTAGE OF DIRECTION

Relief

This chapter focuses on the response phase of the international relief effort. I argue that this phase was heavily impacted by the norms for aid delivery that donors created under development aid. Development food aid treated Haitian agriculture as if it was already in crisis—focusing more on meeting short-term hunger than long-term food security. Thus, when Haiti actually was in a state of emergency, the state was far less equipped than it could have been to assist its citizens. Furthermore, the US emergency response inherited many of the same issues that the development response had in addition to the unique difficulties caused by natural disaster. As the previous chapters demonstrate, agriculture, trade, and aid were largely path dependent over the course of Haitian history. Colonial rule was replaced by economic exploitation, which was replaced by exploitative trade policies, which was replaced by damaging aid policies. Each step in this history represented a cyclical process by which foreign powers weakened the Haitian state and then exploited this weakness. Exploitation led to further weakness, which led to further exploitation. This chapter demonstrates the weaknesses that plagued Haiti during the response phase and the way in which these weaknesses led to damaging aid practices, which led to increased food insecurity and a weaker Haitian state.

Understanding emergency responses

The international community followed certain pre-established norms for disaster response in the Haitian relief effort. Scholars have reduced typical emergency responses
to four phases in Comprehensive Emergency Management theory. The first two steps occur prior to the disaster and the later occur in response to it. The purpose of mitigation, the first step, is risk reduction.\textsuperscript{120} Policymakers identify factors that put a country at risk of disaster and then seek to decrease the likelihood that said disaster will occur. The second step is preparedness: creating a plan to respond to potential disasters. A response plan ensures necessary resources will be available and establishes relationships with useful agencies. The response phase is third and occurs after a disaster has happened. During this phase, responders provide emergency aid and attempt to prevent further damage.\textsuperscript{121} In the context of a natural disaster like the Haitian earthquake, this phase occurs in the days, weeks, and months directly following the disaster and its main focus is saving lives. The final step of Comprehensive Emergency Management, recovery, helps the affected community to return to its normal lifestyle, as it was prior to the disaster.

The international community’s involvement in Haiti before disaster struck was either imperial or focused on development. Thus, the international governments and agencies that offered response and recovery after the quake generally did not offer mitigation or preparedness before. Some organizations, such as the World Bank, attempted to incorporate disaster-preparation into their development plans, but such efforts were still in the primitive stages when the earthquake hit. Furthermore, they focused on hurricane, rather than earthquake, preparedness since hurricanes were more

\textsuperscript{121}Ibid.
Other organizations, such as the Red Cross, did not develop disaster preparedness plans until after the earthquake.\textsuperscript{123} The fact that the international community led response and recovery proved that the Haitian government had also failed to adequately mitigate and prepare. In fact, President Preval’s first act after the disaster was to ask the international community for assistance.\textsuperscript{124} His decision implied that the Haitian state lacked the plans and resources necessary to initiate response or recovery on its own. The Haitian state was ill-equipped but not inactive. Preval attempted to guide relief efforts by requesting that the international community help specifically with search and rescue and communication in the short-term and political stability and housing in the long-term.\textsuperscript{125} Since the Haitian state had to rely on the international community in order to achieve these goals, however, it was at its mercy in regard to \textit{how} it would do so.

Although most international actors likely had good intentions to help the Haitian people as much as possible, their failure to mitigate and prepare for disaster led them to treat Haiti’s emergency needs too similarly to its non-emergency, development needs before the earthquake. For this reason, the relief efforts suffered from the same shortcomings that development aid did, in addition to the unique challenges caused by the earthquake and emergency response.

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\itemIbid, 4.
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Barriers to effective response

USAID labelled their response effort the “rapid” phase.\textsuperscript{126} With the main goal of life-saving in mind, USAID offered search and rescue missions, emergency food assistance, water, sanitation, emergency shelter, and cholera relief during the rapid phase.\textsuperscript{127} Other organizations who were active in the relief effort generally focused on one or several of these areas of assistance. USAID did not offer one important aspect of the international response—security. The UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which was established in 2004 to increase security and stability, effective political processes, and human rights, was the primary organization to enforce security during the emergency response. It announced on January 19th, 2010, that it would increase its military presence in order to “support the immediate recovery, reconstruction, and stability efforts.”\textsuperscript{128}

MINUSTAH’s military and police presence after the earthquake represents what journalist Jonathan Katz argues was an unnecessary part of the international response. Many foreign policymakers feared that disorder and lawlessness within Haiti would disrupt aid’s delivery. Katz argues that the opposite was true. While Haitians generally acted lawfully in the earthquake’s aftermath, the international community’s panic caused aid delivery to be ineffective and dangerous.\textsuperscript{129} Katz concludes that the “urge to help

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} Jonathan M. Katz, The Big Truck that Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 80.
\end{itemize}
seemed to have overpowered the desire to do so thoughtfully."\textsuperscript{130} The lack of mitigation and preparedness in Haiti before the earthquake likely contributed to the sense of disorder that led donors to place such a heavy emphasis on immediate security. The resources that went to this short-term interest were thus not available for more long-term concerns like food security.

Another barrier to effective emergency response was domestic. Haiti already suffered from inefficient infrastructure and political corruption prior to the earthquake. The devastation caused by the earthquake simply compounded the issue. During this time, aid was both more necessary and more difficult to deliver. For example “in many parts of Port Au Prince roads were ruptured or blocked by collapsed buildings, debris, bodies, and people seeking open space.”\textsuperscript{131} Katz describes how cars had to turn around after sitting for hours in stopped traffic on the country’s cramped roads because entire portions of the road were gone.\textsuperscript{132} The areas that suffered from the worst damage and thus needed the most assistance were the most difficult to deliver to.

Although much infrastructural failure was caused by the earthquake itself, some infrastructural weaknesses were in place long before the disaster struck. In the Haitian state, poor infrastructure had historically been accompanied by weak political institutions and a highly dependent, unstable economy. Katz argues “the chaos laid bare the consequences of a centralized state with an export-focused economy and its failure to invest in education, healthcare, agriculture, and food production for the country’s fast-

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, 79.
\textsuperscript{132} Jonathan M. Katz, \textit{The Big Truck that Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 22.
States with stronger domestic institutions rely less on external support. Furthermore, strong domestic institutions would have made aid easier to deliver, organize, and distribute.

As the previous chapter demonstrates, a primary cause of the Haitian state’s weakness was foreign interference. This interference manifested itself in colonialism, economic exploitation, and aid. The shift away from giving food aid directly to the Haitian government and toward giving to a variety of NGOs prior to the earthquake shaped international institutions’ methods for emergency aid after the earthquake. In both the response and recovery phases, the majority of assistance went to NGOs and private contractors. Of the total aid donated, about 99% went to a foreign organization and less than 1% went to the Haitian government.\textsuperscript{134} The lack of accountability that marked NGO-based development efforts were carried over into the emergency efforts and magnified by the destruction and disorganization caused by crisis.

A final barrier to effective response was a lack of communication between recipients and their benefactors. Aid groups actually held meetings in Haiti after the earthquake to discuss how they might improve their efforts, but these meetings were difficult for Haitian citizens to get to and were held in English, so that the majority of Haitians could neither understand what was being said nor contribute their ideas.\textsuperscript{135} Once aid reached NGOs, Haitians may have been able to give some input on how it ought to be used, but they generally lacked the ability to influence what would be given.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, 45.
\textsuperscript{134} Vijaya Ramachandran and Julie Walz “Haiti: Where has all the Money Gone?” Center for Global Development Policy Paper 004 (2012): 8.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 97.
The United Nations’ efforts

The United States offered the majority of emergency food aid (and aid in general) after the earthquake. From the time that the earthquake hit until July of 2010, the United States was responsible for 60% of the food aid given, with a total of $173 million. 72% of this amount was U.S.-produced food delivered through the UN World Food Program and 28% was cash in the form of emergency food vouchers and cash transfers through the US Emergency Food Security Program.

Thus, the vast majority of US-offered aid (and of all aid by implication) was tied. Rather than encouraging citizens to buy locally grown food in order to meet immediate needs, the US donated massive amounts of its own produce. The purpose of the Emergency Food Security Program, by contrast, was to allow the Haitian people to buy locally grown food from areas less severely affected by the earthquake. It thus offered citizens quicker access to food than foreign-grown products allowed, since cash transports more quickly and easily than products. On the other hand, untied aid is more difficult under emergency conditions than non-emergency conditions since disasters damage parts of the agricultural sphere and make local food scarcer. I will analyze the implications of the US model for food aid later in this chapter, but first I will discuss the UN’s efforts.

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

Another major player in the food aid scene after the earthquake was the United Nations. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and USAID in particular focused

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on food-related needs both during the emergency response and the long-term recovery phases. Under a UN Flash Appeal given on January 15, 2010, the FAO received $24.1 million dollars to spend on improving agriculture. A variety of countries and organizations such as Belgium, Brazil, and the Clinton-Foundation contributed to this amount.

The FAO’s efforts were important because the earthquake had a significant impact on the country’s agriculture—specifically in rural areas surrounding the main cities. In these areas, 32% of farmers lost their seed stock and 4% lost their livestock. Furthermore, 29% of farmers’ homes were either destroyed or damaged by the quake. Many farmers also took in relatives from the urban areas that had been hit most heavily by the impact and had to sell livestock and drain food reserves in order to feed them. As a result of these and other factors, farmers’ incomes fell and markets were distorted.

The FAO relief effort does not fall neatly into either the response or recovery phase of Comprehensive Emergency Management, but rather falls somewhere in-between. The “FAO Short and Medium-Term Emergency and Rehabilitation Response” was a three year program that began within a week of the earthquake and consisted of three initiatives. The “Coordination of the Response in Agriculture” phase focused on reducing food insecurity through strategic agricultural activities. The Agriculture Cluster, which consisted of over 200 institutions and organizations, and offered technical advice

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138 Ibid.
139 Ibid, 2.
and coordinated NGO efforts in order to increase agricultural productivity and food security, was central to this component.\textsuperscript{140}

The second component of the FAO response was called “Support to food security of earthquake-affected families.” The two central goals of this component were to “increase food production capacity and rural employment” by distributing seeds, farming tools, and fertilizer to Haitian farmers.\textsuperscript{141} The third part of the FAO response was called “Support to the reduction of risks related to natural disasters” and its focus was on increasing self-sufficiency for farmers located in watersheds. It sought to provide immediate relief by assisting those directly impacted by the earthquake to rebuild with more sustainable agricultural practices. It simultaneously focused on the future by increasing disaster-preparedness.\textsuperscript{142}

Although, like any relief effort, the UN FAO response had shortcomings, it still took impressive steps to secure long-term food security for the Haitian people. It represents the ideal food aid effort because it was modelled around the four pillars of food security: access, availability, utilization, and stability. It sought to fulfill these four goals not only in the direct aftermath of the earthquake, but into the recovery stage as well.

The FAO’s efforts increased both short-term and long-term access to food by providing farmers with the necessary seeds and tools to begin to grow their own food immediately after the earthquake’s impact. Since the Agriculture Cluster brought together a variety of experts to offer technical advice, it also helped farmers to use the resources

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
they had received to produce the highest yields possible. High yields and domestic production ensure greater likelihood that food will be available throughout the year, year after year.

By giving resources directly to Haitian farmers and streamlining NGOs’ efforts, the FAO response also focused on securing short and long-term availability. Rather than delivering seeds and tools to certain centralized points in the country where a selective group of farmers would be able to access them and then enjoy the food they made available, the FAO delivered these goods to individual households, across the country, in rural and urban areas. This model increased the likelihood that each city and town would have farmers making food available to it.

Perhaps the most unusual components of the FAO response were its focus on the second two pillars of food security: utilization and stability. The organization did not simply distribute resources to farmers and then leave those farmers to decide how to use them effectively in a post-disaster environment. Instead, it offered advice to farmers through the Agriculture Cluster and the risk reduction initiative. The organization’s focus on sustainability and disaster-preparedness served to further empower the Haitian citizens. As this thesis has mentioned again and again, the Haitian government is notoriously weak and was obviously unprepared for a disaster like the 2010 earthquake. Historically, this weakness has led to foreign involvement and domination of Haitian affairs. By strengthening farmers’ understandings of sustainable practices and disaster-preparedness, the FAO increased the agricultural sector’s potential for long-term growth and self-sufficiency.
In order to respond to the short-term food shortage caused by the earthquake, another UN organization called the World Food Programme gave food aid in conjunction with the FAO’s agricultural reforms. The goal of the World Food Programme effort was to meet the Haitian population’s immediate needs and save lives. The WFP was in a good position to offer food aid after the crisis because it had previously stocked various storehouses throughout Haiti with food. This preparation allowed the WFP to avoid the extra expenses and wasted time that would have come from exporting food from other countries after the earthquake hit. The food from the storehouses was mainly highly-nutritious biscuits that did not require cooking. Since they did not require preparation, these biscuits were useful even to those whose cook stoves had been damaged by the earthquake.

The later emergency phase of the WFP emergency response took place when the program exported food via airlift from the organization’s emergency hub in El Salvador. This food amounted to 86 metric tons and was enough to feed 30,000 people for seven days. After these two emergency phases, however, the WFP began to mainly distribute rice and cooking oil. This move was problematic, since many Haitians lost their cook stoves in the earthquake and most of those who did not had to switch from

144 Ibid.
gasoline to traditional fuels, which were much less efficient.\textsuperscript{146} Essentially, the WFP provided massive amounts of food that the majority of those Haitians could not prepare and enjoy. Rice distributions thus had two negative effects. The first of these is obvious: that in the short-term some of those who needed food to survive were unable to eat the very food they were given. Although food was accessible and available in the short-term, then, many Haitians were still food insecure since it was difficult for them to \textit{utilize} that food effectively. Those who had to borrow stoves from neighbors or utilize community kitchens also had less stable access to this food than they would have if they had their own stoves.

A second, less obvious effect of the WFP program was to artificially inflate Haitians’ perceived access to food. This was especially true since the food that the WFP offered in the later stages of its emergency response was easy to store for long periods of time without it expiring. Recipients of aid could thus prepare and consume small portions of what they were given and save the rest for the future. Furthermore, individuals likely wasted time that they could have spent sowing seeds and growing food trying to access cook stoves to prepare the donated rice. The WFP’s decision to give rice in bulk further increased Haiti’s pre-existing reliance on foreign-grown rice rather than offering an opportunity for Haitian farmers to grow their own rice.

As the aid efforts that I have discussed so far prove, the earthquake provided an opportunity for Haitians and the international community alike to reform the state’s agriculture—making it stronger and more self-sufficient. Although the WFP’s model for

emergency food aid was not perfect, the United Nations ought to be commended for pairing emergency relief with long-term agricultural reform through the FAO. The United States also paired emergency food aid with agricultural reform, but it placed too heavy of an emphasis on emergency food relief to the detriment of the Food Security Program’s efforts.

The United States' initiatives

USAID organized the majority of the United States’ food-related efforts after the earthquake as it did prior. Rather than classifying its aid using Comprehensive Emergency Response categories, USAID broke its efforts into three phases. These were: rapid relief (emergency assistance aimed at saving lives), recovery relief (as a bridge between rapid and reconstruction relief), and reconstruction relief (to promote sustainable, long-term development).147

Directly after the earthquake struck, the United States donated $50,000 through USAID for “instant emergency response.” Four days later, President Obama pledged an additional $100 million. In addition to these monetary donations, the U.S. promised 14,550 tons of food aid.148 Its emergency food relief effort took place within the first three months after the earthquake struck and assisted almost 4 million people.149 This was the largest USAID emergency food distribution to date and the majority of it was tied aid sent from the United States to Haitians. From January 3, 2011 onward, USAID based its

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initiatives on the “Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy.” The U.S. Government intentionally made this plan consistent with the mission of the “Government of Haiti Haiti Action Plan.” Furthermore, the US design required a strong partnership between the two governments.\textsuperscript{150} Both governments focused on the state’s reconstruction and long-term development through “housing, energy, agriculture, health, security, and national and local governance.”\textsuperscript{151} The US government plan offered opportunities for Haitian empowerment, growth, and eventual self-sufficiency in agriculture and other areas.

Since the “Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy” was not published until almost a year after the earthquake, however, it had no effect on the United States’ immediate emergency response. In the absence of a guiding plan, the government reverted to food aid norms that it had established for Haiti under non-emergency conditions. The efforts of the US Emergency Food Security Program were an exception to this rule.

\textit{USAID emergency food assistance}

The USAID Emergency Food Assistance response was modelled after Title 2 Food for Peace Aid (Emergency and Private Assistance Programs), which had become the most popular method of Food for Peace donations in the years preceding the earthquake.\textsuperscript{152} In order to meet affected Haitians’ immediate needs, the United States shipped US-grown products to NGOs and other organizations on the ground in Haiti, who then distributed this aid to Haitian citizens. One of the main differences between USAID prior to and after the earthquake was that NGOs disseminated the majority of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{151}{Ibid.}
\footnotetext{152}{I discuss the move to Title 2 Food for Peace Aid in further detail in chapter 2.}
\end{footnotes}
nonemergency aid, while the World Food Programme distributed the majority of emergency aid.

One potential benefit of the USAID decision to filter its food donations through the WFP was that its efforts were more centralized than they would have been if it had divided food deliveries among many different organizations. Since there was a clearer chain of responsibility, it was easier for the United States to hold involved actors accountable for getting food to its intended recipients. Furthermore, since the United States had a strong relationship with the United Nations, it likely had more influence over its operations than it would over distant, independently-run, NGOs. If the WFP did not deliver food how the United States wanted it to, the US had power to pressure it to do so.

This benefit also came with a cost, however. USAID shifted away from donating to receiving countries’ governments and toward donating to NGOs in part because NGOs are more likely to interact regularly with ordinary citizens and understand their needs than a distant (and often corrupt) government would be. In this way, the NGOs who received food before the earthquake were able to cater food distribution to the specific population being assisted and to influence USAID’s decisions about what food to give. In terms of food security, the NGO-model was still problematic, since it increased dependence on foreign goods and foreign actors and decreased domestic food stability. Nonetheless, it was superior USAID’s post-earthquake methodology since it allowed for a greater degree of flexibility and citizen-input. As mentioned above, the WFP’s efforts were quick and commendable in certain regards, but they also ignored some fundamental
citizen needs. By tying its emergency food response to the WFP, USAID exposed itself to the same shortcomings and disrupted existing relationships.

USAID’s emergency food response was thus problematic, in part, for the ways it differed from the normal, developmental Food for Peace model. It was also, problematic, however, because it was far too similar to this model to appropriately handle the unique obstacles that emergency conditions create. Although Food for Peace and other USAID initiatives state development as their goal, they tend to treat underdevelopment as an emergency condition. In other words, development aid and emergency aid are not as distinct from one another in practice as aid literature implies.

Chronic malnutrition and food insecurity are vital issues that ought to be addressed with great urgency and seriousness. They are not, however, the same as sudden disasters like earthquakes. Yet, Food for Peace focused the majority of its efforts in Haiti prior to the earthquake on distributing large amounts of food rather than strengthening Haiti’s’ ability to grow its own food. In doing so, it placed a greater priority on meeting immediate needs than procuring long-term stability. US development aid thus treated Haiti as if it was already in a state of emergency and long-term planning would hinder its ability to save lives in the short-term.

The 2010 earthquake offered a critical juncture in which both donors and recipients could have rethought and reformed aid in order to break the cycle. To do so would have also been extremely difficult, however, given the devastation caused by the earthquake. In other words, the earthquake simultaneously revealed prior aid efforts’ inefficiency and robbed donors of the ability to spend time reorganizing aid. After all,
people could not survive without food and water for long. This was likely the reason why USAID simply joined with WFP to offer traditional, tied, emergency response aid until it was able to create the “Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy” in 2011. It is difficult to criticize USAID for this decision, since many lives would have been lost if the organization spent too much time planning and analyzing more effective aid.

Thus, my criticism is less of the Emergency Food Assistance program and more of the legacy left by Title 2 Food for Peace. I argue that the Emergency Food Assistance program did damage the country’s long-term food security, but that it had this effect because Title 2 failed to plan for disaster. Rather than assisting the Haitian government to distribute aid effectively and fairly, USAID responded to government corruption by filtering aid through NGOs. When the earthquake struck and the Haitian state was faced not only with its normal level of food insecurity, but with widespread hunger, injury, homelessness, and other issues, the US response was, unsurprisingly, to take control away from the Haitian government and citizens. As I have already alluded to, the WFP was even less likely to understand Haitian citizens’ needs than smaller NGOs who had already built relationships prior to the disaster. By further isolating Haitian citizens, the emergency relief effort robbed its recipients of control and thus increased their dependency on foreign organizations. Dependency increases long-term food insecurity.

The USAID Emergency Food Assistance program negatively affected the four pillars of food security in both the long and short term. Since USAID had a close partnership with the WFP, it affected food security in a similar manner. In terms of access, both USAID Emergency Food Assistance and the WFP temporarily increased
Haitians’ access to food. Since this food was donated, Haitians did not have to worry about financial barriers to access. No matter what a citizen’s socioeconomic status prior to the earthquake, emergency food aid was theoretically free to whoever needed it most (whether or not aid always went to those who needed it the most is another question). In terms of access, then, tied USAID temporarily improved food security.

Emergency Food Assistance also temporarily increased food’s availability in the short-term. Especially immediately after the quake, USAID sent massive amounts of food across the country, making it available to people from all different areas, economic statuses, and etc. Issues with infrastructure made it difficult for donors to reach all affected parts of the country at the same pace, but once they did reach an area, food would be available to all regardless of economic or other barriers.

USAID’s emergency assistance damaged the second two pillars of food security just as its relative, the WFP’s, efforts did. Since USAID decided what food it would send, and its options were limited to food grown within the United States, Haitian recipients had very limited options as to how they could utilize the food they received. Furthermore, foreign-grown food is less likely to meet a country’s unique dietary needs. In terms of stability, the Emergency Food Assistance Program left Haitian recipients reliant on their donors’ ability to deliver food consistently and effectively. This issue continued past emergency response as well, since individuals who relied on foreign-grown food directly after the earthquake would be more likely to rely on either foreign donations or purchases than those who ate locally grown food would be. After all, imports were cheaper.
The “Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy” that was implemented in 2011 was commendable for its attempts to increase Haitian self-sufficiency and improve food security. Unfortunately, however, a lack of planning and the influence of foreign-domination prior to the earthquake disabled USAID from holding these values high from the very beginning of its response. Rather, its immediate response increased the state’s propensity for long-term food insecurity and thus made its latter purposes harder to achieve. Before dealing with the natural barriers to food security, it would have to undo the ones it had created in attempting to save lives.

US Emergency Food Security Program

A small percentage of the food-related emergency aid that the US gave Haiti was filtered through the newly created US Emergency Food Security Program. The EFSP is operated by USAID and intends to compliment rather than replace Food for Peace. It was founded in 2010, so it had very little experience prior to the earthquake. The program is cash, rather than food, based, and its purpose is to offer an alternative when tied aid cannot reach the country in need quickly enough or when untied aid is judged to be more appropriate given the condition of the local market. The program’s website does not specify what factors would cause USAID to determine that EFSP would be more beneficial to the local market than Title 2 aid. Given the percentage of US funds that went to EFSP compared to the tied Emergency Food Assistance response, it is obvious that USAID did not deem local market conditions such that untied aid would be most appropriate.

The EFSP has three components: Local and Regional Procurement (LRP), Cash Transfers, and Food Vouchers. LRP assists recipients in purchasing food grown in their own or nearby countries. Cash Transfers provide recipients with cash that they can then spend on food or non-food needs to improve their food security. Food vouchers allow recipients to purchase specific items or to spend specific amounts at certain local vendors.\(^{154}\)

In terms of food security, the EFSP is more beneficial in the long-term than traditional tied aid is. Although in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster local food may be less available and accessible than it normally would be and food security may thus temporarily suffer, the EFSP avoids the long-term damage that a temporary surge in foreign-grown food could cause to local agriculture.

Even if Haitians had purchased the majority of their emergency assistance from a nearby country like the Dominican Republic while Haitian farmers recovered, this food would have been more appropriate to Haitian dietary needs since the countries share a similar climate and economic/developmental status. Local and Regional Procurement could have thus improved utilization by not forcing Haitians to make major changes to their diet or lifestyle to survive. Once local farms recovered, then, the Haitian people could begin to buy and eat local food rather than finding themselves reliant on cheap, foreign-grown aid and imports.

By helping Haitians to buy and eat local food, a program like EFSP could have incentivized farming for those who had been displaced from urban to rural areas as well as farmers who incurred serious losses from the disaster. There would be very little

\(^{154}\) Ibid.
motivation for these individuals to take up or resume farming unless they were sure they could sell their goods both immediately after the earthquake and into the future. An increase in local farming and local purchasing would then improve food’s stability, since those who grow and purchase it would not be at the mercy of changes in the international market.

Conclusions

In summary, then, the international food aid response to the Haitian earthquake served to reinforce that country’s existing food security in the short-term and increase it for the future. The international relief effort had this effect not because the donors intended harm to the Haitian people, but because they relied heavily on their previous, flawed models for giving. These models were founded in an exploitative colonial past which had continued to manifest itself through damaging trade and aid models. The earthquake provided an opportunity for the international community (and especially the United States) to recognize and reform the downfalls of developmental, tied, aid. In part because neither donors nor the Haitian government had effectively practiced mitigation or preparedness (the first two steps of Comprehensive Emergency Management), they missed this opportunity for reform.

The US response through USAID models some of the most important shortcomings of emergency food aid as it has been practiced historically. First, it tends to focus too heavily on temporarily improving the first two pillars of food security (access and availability) and neglects the second two. Second, it fails to recognize that temporary surges in accessibility and availability threaten to damage long-term utilization and
stability by increasing reliance on foreign goods. Third, it fails to appreciate the relationship between food and agriculture and tends to categorize food as part of the emergency response and agriculture as part of recovery. Instead, donors ought to implement agricultural initiatives immediately in order to counteract the potential for food insecurity that inevitably comes with massive foreign donations. Fourth, emergency food aid relies too heavily on tied aid—using untied aid as a supplement only when tied aid is considered inefficient. This relationship ought to be reversed in order to encourage local production and purchase rather than foreign imports as the norm.
CHAPTER 5: LONG TERM RECOVERY AND THE PERSISTENCE OF INSECURITY

Recovery

Once the immediate needs for food, water, medical help, and shelter had slowed down, donors turned to planning for Haiti’s recovery. The central aim of recovery efforts in general is to restore the affected country to its pre-disaster status. It has the country’s long-term stability and success in mind. In this stage of the process, donors filtered a much larger portion of aid through Haitian institutions than they had during the emergency response. They also relied more heavily on Haitian input via the Haitian government plan for recovery and the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission. The steps that both USAID and the United Nations took to ensure Haitian involvement in the recovery phase represent a positive step toward the country’s empowerment. However, this intention was still mixed with a variety of undesirable practices that challenged the country’s long-term stability and food security. The United States and United Nations intended to work alongside the Haitian people and to respect the Haitian government’s plans for recovery, yet were unwilling to give the majority of aid directly to the Haitian government or follow its plan alone.

Yet, even if USAID and the UN had given more control over to Haitian institutions, these institutions would not have been ready to take control of the recovery effort. Through years of NGO-based development aid as well as a period of intense NGO-based emergency aid, these foreign organizations had become a vital component of the Haitian political and aid systems. They had taken over many of the functions that
normally belong to domestic institutions, such as food aid delivery and agricultural and economic reforms. Continuing to funnel aid efforts through NGOs was thus simultaneously the most responsible choice for short-term success and the most dangerous for long-term domestic stability.

The rhetoric of recovery

Although recovery is typically aimed at restoring an affected community to its pre-disaster status, in Haiti the international community desired not only to return the Haitian state to life as normal but to increase the quality of that life. In his address to the American people after the earthquake, for example, President Barack Obama alluded to Haiti’s “hopeful signs of political and economic progress” directly before the earthquake. This progress was especially significant, according to Obama, given Haiti’s “decades of conflict and instability” prior to it. The American relief effort would thus aim to “help the people of Haiti continue on their path to a brighter future.”

Obama’s language is interesting for two reasons. First, he uses ambiguous terminology about Haiti’s pre-earthquake progress and does not offer proof that the country was actually progressing. Although it would be overly cynical to say that Haiti had not grown at all from the time of its freedom until the earthquake hit, it is also overly ambitious to designate its overall position as one of improvement. Indeed, as chapter 3 of this thesis demonstrated, American trade policies and development efforts had a negative effect on the state’s food security by causing cheap imports to replace locally grown rice and chicken.

Second, Obama’s illustration of a “path to a brighter future” implies continual and steady progress from before the earthquake to after. In other words, it seems as if Obama had every intention of carrying on the U.S. development efforts from before the earthquake into the recovery effort and beyond. United States policymakers were not interested in returning Haiti to its normal life before the disaster but rather wanted to continue to develop the state as it rebuilt it. Most donors followed the same philosophy as the United States, mixing recovery with development. As they had during the emergency relief phase, the U.S. and other donors failed to distinguish between disaster recovery aid and normal non-emergency development aid.

Planning recovery

As in the response phase, the main foreign actors in the recovery phase were the United States and the United Nations. Since USAID split its response into three, rather than two, stages, its “recovery” efforts were split between the later part of what it labelled the recovery phase and the entirety of the reconstruction phase. USAID’s recovery phase, which was meant to bridge the gap between its rapid relief and reconstruction relief, included cash-for-work programs, rubble-removal, shelter, education, and coordination and planning. Its reconstruction phase included programs aimed at housing and energy provision, increased economic security and food security, and health, education, and disabilities programs.156

Although USAID decided to break its long-term response into these two phases, the programs offered under each make it clear that both had similar objectives in mind.

Both phases included initiatives aimed at shelter and education. The United States relief effort thus generally followed a singular path to progress through recovery and development. This path was consistent with the one that Obama alluded to in his article. It is also important to note, however, that the second two phases of USAID response broke to some extent from the first in that they began to follow the outlines of the “Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy” rather than relying solely on existing norms for disaster response. Since this strategy was introduced almost a full year after the earthquake, part of what USAID labelled recovery was carried out without it and the second part was carried out under it. Since the US Government Strategy demanded interaction with the Haitian government and consistency with that government’s plan, the later parts of the USAID effort also held this priority higher than the earlier ones did.

The United Nations also took steps to further include and empower the Haitian people during its recovery effort that it had not taken during emergency response. The UN hosted a conference for international donors at its headquarters on March 31, 2010. This conference was titled “Toward a New Future for Haiti,” a name which implies similar objectives to those articulated by Obama. The goal of the conference was to discuss how to practice aid more effectively with the end goal of Haitian recovery past its status prior to the earthquake and into a better future.

One of the most significant outcomes of this conference was the creation of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), which was approved by Haitian lawmakers in April 2010 and held its first meeting on June 17 of that same year. This organization had a governing board with voting members from the three branches of the Haitian
government, many of the donating nations (Brazil, Canada, EU, USA, and etc.), and Haitian labor unions and members of the Haitian private sector. Interestingly, it was co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Haiti, Jean Max Bellerive and the former president of the United States, Bill Clinton. The IHRC’s main purpose was to oversee international aid as it related to the country’s ability to follow the “Government of Haiti’s Action Plan for National Recovery and Development.” It aimed to hold donors accountable and to make their work more transparent in order to ensure that said efforts coincided with Haitian plans.  

The IHRC’s set-up implied something about the United Nations and other donors’ opinions on the Haitian people’s rightful role in their recovery. Haitians were to lead the effort only in conjunction with the major donors. In fact, as the biggest donor, the United States government ought to have been one of the commission’s main subjects for review. Rather, it boasted the most powerful representative position of any of the donors, with one of its former presidents as a co-chair with the Haitian prime minister. Clinton’s influence on the IHRC did not necessarily disqualify the organization from being able to criticize American recovery efforts, but it certainly did make unbiased criticisms much less likely. As it had done by taking over the national bank and then invading during the national financial crisis in the 1900s, the United States again responded to instability within Haiti by exerting its influence over the country’s response. Designing a recovery commission with heavy foreign influence is obviously not the same as a physical occupation like that of the Marines, but the concept is similar. In order to empower Haiti,

the biggest donors felt it necessary to even be a part of that country’s efforts to prevent abuse by those same donors.

_Growth in the Republic of NGOs_

The U.S. Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti published a report in June of 2011 summarizing the nature of aid to Haiti both before the earthquake, immediately after it, and during the recovery phase. One of the biggest differences between the international relief effort and the international recovery effort was who received aid. During emergency relief efforts, 99% of all aid went to bilateral and multilateral humanitarian agencies or international nongovernmental organizations. In other words, all but 1% of foreign aid was delivered into non-Haitian hands to be distributed by those non-Haitian hands to the Haitian people. During the recovery phase, however, only 55% of all foreign aid went to bilateral or multilateral humanitarian agencies or international NGOs. 12% went directly to the Haitian government and 33% went to the Haitian public sector.\(^{158}\) The significant percentage that was given directly to the public sector was meant to avoid the potential corruption of both the national government and internationally-based NGOs and to ensure that the donated money and goods went straight into Haitian people’s hands. This portion of aid represented a refreshing move away from foreign-centered aid delivery, but the recovery efforts were too recent for any in-depth analysis of their effectiveness to be available.

Nonetheless, even with 45% of aid either going directly to the Haitian government or the Haitian people, over half was still filtered through foreign-based

organizations. In addition, certain donors were more likely to distribute aid through certain organizations than others. During the recovery effort, bilateral donors (individual governments like the United States) gave 75% of aid through multilateral agencies and NGOs. By implication, multilateral agencies like the UN or the Red Cross provided most of the aid that Haitian entities received directly. The difference between multilateral and bilateral giving methodologies is consistent with the notion that foreign governments like the U.S. acted to maximize their influence over the recovery effort—even when doing so came at the expense of Haitian sovereignty.

Bilateral donors’ recovery efforts had strikingly similar outcomes to USAID’s Food for Peace program before the earthquake. Haiti had already earned the title of the “Republic of NGOS” before the disaster. Despite a conscious effort to involve the Haitian government and people in recovery aid distribution, donors’ practices during the emergency response lead to an increase in NGO activity during recovery and beyond. Recovery efforts that sought to empower the Haitians did not simultaneously reduce foreign influence in the state. For the most part, recovery did not directly lead to a growth in NGO presence, but it also did not do anything significant to stop the pattern of growth that began during the response phase.

John B. Coles, Jun Zhuang, and Justin Yates place the NGOs who were part of the emergency response in four categories: those with no contacts prior to the earthquake, those with contacts but no active partnerships, those with partnerships with active agents in Haiti but without their own permanent physical presence in the country, and those with
an active and permanent presence in Haiti. In their case study of 18 agencies, three of five of those who had contacts in Haiti, but no partnerships and no physical permanent presence (the second category) transitioned to have an active, physical, permanent presence in the state after the earthquake (the fourth, most involved category). All four agencies studied who had partnerships in Haiti but no physical presence (the third category) before the earthquake established a permanent physical presence (the fourth category) after. None of the 18 agencies studied lessened their involvement after the earthquake, meaning that all seven who fell into the fourth category before the earthquake still fell into that category after.

**NGO relations**

In addition to an overall increase in the number of NGOs present in the country, the emergency relief and long-term recovery efforts caused foreign NGOs to become increasingly disconnected from local organizations and increasingly involved in one another’s affairs. Coles, Zhuang, and Yates argue that as a general rule interagency cooperation is less likely to occur when the agencies involved have not communicated or have not established trust with one another prior to the disaster. Furthermore, cooperation is less likely to occur in contexts where there is little governmental supervision or regional empowerment.

Thus, Haiti, with a weak government and weak domestic institutions (and countless foreign-run NGOs in their place), was not a favorable climate for effective

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160 Ibid, 68.
cooperation. The majority of cooperation thus occurred between agencies that had already established relationships before the earthquake and thus knew they could trust one another and communicate well. As a result, NGOs who did not have partnerships in Haiti before the earthquake sought out partnerships with those who had a long-standing permanent presence in the state. Since foreign-run NGOs were the most powerful distributors of aid prior to the disaster it made most sense for new NGOs to seek relationships with these actors rather than less powerful, less specialized local agencies. As a result, during the emergency response foreign NGOs simply strengthened established relationships or formed new relationships with one another to the exclusion of local agencies. Aid distributed through NGOs continued to be a thoroughly foreign enterprise. Since past interaction leads to future trust, this tendency toward foreign partnerships during response had the long-term result of decreasing future collaboration between foreign-run and local agencies.

Rather than providing an opportunity for the Haitian public sector to gradually replace NGOs in aid distribution, donors treated the two separately and thus reinforced the gap between them. The Republic of NGOs remained alive and well, governed by a variety of foreign donors, while the public sector began to grow and govern other aspects of the country’s reconstruction. This distinct separation between NGO and Haitian distribution mechanisms hampered donors’ ability to carry out their combined goals of both meeting immediate food needs and increasing long-term food security.
Additional NGO shortcomings

Since the majority of reconstruction aid (55%) was disbursed to NGOs, it is important to understand how these NGOs utilized the aid they received. One of the biggest issues with aid distribution through NGOs is a lack of accountability. Since the number of NGOs present in Haiti actually increased after the earthquake, it became even more practically difficult to trace how each donation was used. Indeed, it was even questionable whether aid to be distributed through NGOs made it into Haiti at all. Most of USAID’s donations both for relief and reconstruction were shipped to NGOs in Washington D.C., southern Maryland, and northern Virginia. These NGOs were then responsible for transporting the aid to Haiti and distributing it within Haiti. USAID did not make the details of its efforts publicly accessible, however, which made it difficult for private citizens to know what happened to aid once it was distributed to NGOs. It was difficult to determine whether aid actually made it from these organizations’ home bases within the United States to Haiti at all.

The gap between aid promised and aid delivered was actually far greater for the recovery phase of the earthquake response than it was for the emergency response phase. In 2010 and 2011, donors promised around $4.5 billion dollars for reconstruction projects but only delivered 53% of this. The United States in particular had only disbursed about 30% of its committed amount as of December 2012. By contrast, by the end of December, 2011, donors had delivered 86% of their pledged amounts for emergency

Some of the undelivered recovery aid may have been intended for the Haitian government or the public sphere, but since the majority of the promised bilateral aid was to be distributed through NGOs, the majority of unfulfilled aid was likely meant for NGOs.

Whether the United States simply failed to distribute the aid to NGOs or whether those NGOs failed to distribute the aid is unclear from the data. Regardless, U.S. aid in general lacks accountability so much so that one may conclude that “US foreign assistance goes into a ‘black box’ where it becomes nearly impossible to tell what happens afterward.” The black box is a world of NGOs, both within Haiti and outside of its borders. If the United States had a more direct, centralized model for giving recovery assistance, it would have been easier to trace the aid’s movement and determine when and how it failed. Since it gave the majority of its aid to a variety of NGOs, however, it was more difficult to hold distributors accountable for delivering the aid they received. In reverse, when the U.S. failed to deliver to NGOs, those organizations did not did not have the same level of power to hold the U.S. accountable that a single unified recipient like the Haitian government could have had. Whether the disparity between pledged and disbursed aid was the fault of the donors or the distributors does not matter. Either situation proves the weaknesses of the NGO model.

NGOS, USAID, and monetization

One of the most concerning NGO practices related to non-emergency food aid both before and after the earthquake was monetization. Monetization occurs when NGOs sell foreign-donated food aid in local markets in order to contribute to their organizational needs. In other words, NGOs monetize when they sell food meant to be given freely to the receiving countries’ recipients and use the money to accomplish what they deem to be more important tasks.¹⁶⁵

USAID’s primary NGO partners both in their emergency response and recovery efforts were Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and the Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA). These organizations continued programs that they had already begun before the earthquake (called Multi-Year Assistance Programs) until at least September of 2012. Each of the programs began in 2008 and offered non-emergency food aid including distribution and reform.¹⁶⁶ All three NGOs have historically practiced monetization and continued to after the earthquake, in spite of USAID’s attempt to ban the practice in 2011 and their own rhetorical opposition to it. Monetization was especially prevalent directly after the earthquake in 2010—accounting for half of all non-emergency aid. It has tapered off, but not disappeared, since then.

Thus, even in regard to non-emergency food aid, donors and their NGO distributors exercised less caution during the emergency response than they normally

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.
would before the earthquake or did thereafter. In so doing, these actors normalized plans of action that placed a higher priority on meeting their own short-term needs than establishing lasting integrity and relationships of trust with the Haitian people and government. They treated the Haitian people’s food-related survival as of upmost immediate importance by placing higher priority on it than long-term food security. As monetization proves, they held this prioritization for the Haitian people while simultaneously treating their neediness as a means to the NGO’s growth and survival.

During recovery, then, donors attempted to give through both NGOs and the Haitian government without acknowledging the acute power inequality between the two. NGOs had become a vital component of the Haitian economic and agricultural atmosphere. They had used food aid strategically to pursue their long-term stability in the wake of the quake. They were a foundational part of the country’s food insecurity by increasing its reliance on foreign charity, purchases, and actors alike. At the same time, however, they were a foundational part of the country’s short-term hope for food and survival. They were part of the disease and they held a temporary anecdote. Even as they continued the work of Multi-Year Programs commenced before the earthquake, they continued to play this dual role. Indeed, their transition from emergency food aid response to food security programs was not as drastic or complete as they expressed.

Recovery food aid and misunderstanding food security

Transitioning from food aid to food security programs

In regard to food in particular, recovery efforts fell into two general categories: food aid programs and food security initiatives. The former were not as explicitly
mentioned in recovery plans because they generally followed pre-existing models for development aid; thus, they were not disaster-recovery specific. Food security initiatives, on the other hand, were a centerpiece of most recovery programs. The UN FAO was unique in that it infused its efforts with initiatives for improved agriculture and long-term food security from the start of its disaster response.  

Most donors’ transition from emergency response to long-term recovery, however, was marked with a transition from simple food aid (whether tied or untied) to food-security and agriculture reform. This is not to say that donors simply stopped shipping food or money for food to the Haitian people, but rather that they resumed pre-earthquake models for food aid while focusing their rhetoric on structural reforms. While one of the building blocks of the USAID relief phase was titled “emergency food assistance,” one of the building blocks of its reconstruction phase was called “food security.” This transition was consistent with the new “Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy,” which listed “Food and Economic Security” as one of four core development pillars in its strategic framework. Similarly, the Government of Haiti “Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti,” published in March 2010, listed “food security and nutrition” as one of the building blocks of social rebuilding and listed “agricultural production” as central to economic rebuilding. Foreign donors and domestic officials alike agreed that a successful recovery effort required all actors to focus on improving agricultural institutions.

USAID reported that Haiti would be home to a minimum of 106 food security projects in 2011 alone, among which there would be 17 giving traditional food aid and 46 offering some type of agricultural reform.\textsuperscript{171} This conception is problematic, of course, since food aid tends to decrease long-term food security rather than increase it. By considering food aid a type of food security, program, then, USAID demonstrated an oversimplified understanding of food security. It placed too heavy of a focus on access and availability to the detriment of utilization and stability.

In actuality, the transition from “food aid” to “food security” programs was not as drastic or complete as the rhetoric may imply. For this reason, it is important to analyze the exact makeup of food-related recovery efforts. Where donors continued to practice food aid as they had before and directly after the earthquake, their efforts were likely to have the same negative effects on long-term food security that they had in the past. Yet, even the parts of the food recovery effort that departed from food and money donations in favor of structural reform fell short of their intended positive impacts on food security. Much of their failure can be attributed to their inability to appreciate the complexities of the Haitian food situation.

\textbf{The structural shortcomings of food security programs}

One of the most fundamental issues with food security programs in the recovery process was their method for determining which areas would receive assistance. USAID, for example, performed a “departmental-level food security analysis” similar to the ones it had carried out under Title 2 Non-Emergency efforts for development aid. The food

security indicators for the analysis were the percentage and number of households who reported poor consumption, poverty levels, the rate at which children under the age of five had stunted growth, and rainfall levels. Consumption levels were assumed to demonstrate levels of access and availability, poverty levels were meant to demonstrate access, children’s’ stunting rate was an indicator of chronic malnutrition, and rainfall levels offered a basis for determining food availability.172

This method of analysis, which served as the basis for much of USAID’s decision-making, was founded on a fundamental misunderstanding of food security. First, although USAID mentions utilization as a pillar of food security on the next page, it did not mention any indicators focused especially on analyzing food utilization in its food security analysis. The document’s language does imply that USAID used other indicators in addition to the ones listed (“indicators include…”). Nonetheless, its failure to list a utilization indicator demonstrates that even if the organization did consider utilization, it placed less importance on this than it did on access and availability.

Furthermore, USAID does not even mention stability either in its list of indicators or its analysis thereafter. After listing the indicators mentioned above, the authors state that “depending on which proxy for availability, access, and utilization is used, one could reasonably conclude that any of the following departments face high levels of food insecurity.”173 They then offer a list that covers almost the entirety of Haiti. One can conclude that USAID did not base its parameters for food security on stability at all and it

173 Ibid 66.
did so minimally for utilization. It thus continued in the same erroneous mindset that it had both before the earthquake and during its emergency relief effort.

It is unclear whether the designers of USAID strategy considered access and availability superior to but separate from utilization and stability or if they believed that the former are always positively correlated with the later. Either conception is inaccurate, as the discussion so far proves. Access and availability are superior priorities to utilization and stability only when one focuses exclusively on short-term needs, since the latter are vital to long-term stability. They are also clearly separate from access and availability in that an abundance of easily accessible foreign food can, and historically has, damaged the receiving country’s agricultural and economic stability as well as its ability to utilize food most effectively. Stated differently, access and availability can have a negative correlation with proper utilization and stability.

Another interesting component of USAID’s structure for food-security analysis is its decision to study stunting in children’s growth. Stunting is an indicator not of access, availability, or any of the four pillars of food security, but of chronic malnutrition. As the definitional chapter of this thesis argued, chronic malnutrition is not synonymous with food insecurity and should not be treated as such. The two are distinct phenomena that have distinct, unique solutions. Chronic malnutrition could be a symptom of food insecurity, but so could sporadic malnutrition. A state that appears to only sporadically struggle with malnutrition but has institutional weakness that combine with situational factors to cause periods of difficulty is food insecure just as one that chronically demonstrates malnutrition is. The same can be said of geographic regions within the
state. Some regions may appear to be more food secure during certain periods because their people are not struggling with prolonged malnutrition. Nonetheless, those regions may be very food insecure for the long-term because they lack proper utilization or stability in their agricultural practices.

A food-security analysis that studies chronic malnutrition along with the four pillars of food security is not necessarily dangerous. USAID neglected utilization and stability while placing emphasis on chronic malnutrition, however. This decision is problematic because chronic malnutrition is not always caused by food insecurity. The only way to determine if food insecurity is the cause of malnutrition is to analyze the population under consideration and decide if it lacks either access to food, available food, proper utilization of food, or stable food practices (or a combination of all of these). Since a failure to fulfill any one of the four pillars could cause food insecurity, one can only determine food insecurity’s presence or absence by studying them all.

A region or state that appears to have access and availability to food but still suffers from chronic malnutrition may or may not be food insecure depending on whether or not it properly utilizes food with stable practices. On the other hand, a region or state that does not appear to struggle with chronic malnutrition but also fails to meet any of the four pillars may still be structurally food insecure and susceptible to sporadic malnutrition. Chronic malnutrition is not a cause, but a potential effect, of food insecurity. Looking for chronic malnutrition in order to prove food insecurity is thus a fallacy in logic akin to concluding that because a man has a cough he has cancer. He may have cancer, but he also may just have a cold. Similarly a region with chronic
malnutrition may be food insecure, but it also may be suffering from corrupt government policies, the greed of the wealthy, or any other potential cause of malnutrition.

USAID states another flaw with its food-security analysis process outright: there may have been pockets of food insecurity within the larger regions studied that the departmental analysis failed to appreciate. In other words, the categories may have been too broad to capture small sectors suffering from food insecurity within larger, more stable regions. This fault is unsurprising given the normative model for NGO-based distribution that USAID and most donors had long followed. By the time of the recovery phase, years of development aid and months of emergency aid had made food assistance a predominantly foreign initiative. Foreign donors drew lines and made decisions based on their limited understandings of the state and its intricate struggles and needs. A multitude of NGOs were trusted to articulate the Haitian people’s needs although the majority of them were based outside of the country and those that were present within were run by Americans and other foreigners.

In theory, the Haitian government, a supposed “republic,” would have been able to offer a more comprehensive understanding of food insecurity in the nation by allowing citizens to express their struggles with food insecurity even within largely food secure regions. The Haitian government was corrupt and undemocratic in many ways, however, and its weaknesses had been made especially clear by its inability to respond to the earthquake effectively and independently. Thus, the issues with USAID’s recovery model were multifaceted—including its neglect of utilization and stability in its food-security analysis, its misunderstanding of the relationship between food insecurity and

\[174\] Ibid.
malnutrition, and the regions it chose to study. USAID could not rely on NGOs or the Haitian government to rectify these problems, however, since each of these suffered from unique structural shortcomings. The shortcomings were common to both NGO-based and Haitian government-based distribution because they were caused by flaws with the donors’ understandings of food insecurity as well the NGOs and Haitian government themselves. Thus, although the United States and other donors’ moves toward empowering the Haitian people through the recovery effort were commendable symbolically they were ineffective practically.

Conclusions

USAID was one of the most important donors in development aid, relief aid, and recovery aid alike so it is a useful case study. Of course other donors had different practices that may have been more effective, but many did follow the model set forth by the United States. The mere fact that one of the co-chairs of the IHRC was a former president of the U.S. is both symbolic and practical proof of the heavy American influence on the recovery stage. The UN FAO’s agriculture programs, which are analyzed in depth in the previous chapter, offer a promising alternative to food security programs as practiced by the U.S. Had the United States and other major donors focused their food security initiatives more on agricultural, structural, reform and education from the emergency response onward, the response and recovery phases alike would have had a more positive impact on food insecurity.

Instead, during the emergency response, foreign donors set a norm that they would continue to follow during recovery. This norm was essentially to prioritize
immediate needs over long-term, structural effects. During the weeks and months after
the earthquake this response style seemed to be the most logical since Haitian citizens
would have died if they did not receive food, water, and other necessities immediately.
Had the Haitian government and/or foreign donors been more prepared for the disaster,
however, they would have been able to introduce long-term food security initiatives
aimed at improving utilization and stability simultaneously with emergency food aid.
Indeed, they could have filtered more of that very food aid through Haitian organizations
and institutions instead of foreign NGOs. By trying to suddenly introduce domestic
distribution in conjunction with NGO distribution during the recovery phase, donors
sacrificed the potential to do either as effectively as they could have. The Haitian state
hosted more NGOs than ever before because of the emergency response, yet it cut their
responsibilities nearly in half (from 99% to 55%) during recovery. By contrast, the
Haitians had even weaker domestic institutions than before the earthquake as a natural
result of disaster, yet they were expected to suddenly deliver 45% of the recovery
assistance.

Functioning institutions do not simply fall from the sky. So much of the Haitian
governance, especially in terms of trade and aid, fell into foreign hands that foreign
influence and assistance was intricately woven into the Haitian governing machinery. The
sudden rhetorical move to domestically-delivered aid during recovery demonstrated
fundamental misunderstandings both of Haitian institutions and the nature of food
insecurity. The mere fact that an actor as important as USAID continued to deliver
traditional food aid as part of its food security initiative shows that it was unable to make
such a significant leap toward domestic empowerment even as it expressed a desire to do so. Access and availability are important components of food security but they are also the most simple to observe and the most likely to offer false positives. Food may be momentarily accessible and available even as it is being utilized in an unstable, unsustainable way. By continuing to offer tied food aid through NGOs as it had during development and emergency response donors entrenched this food insecure situation while attempting to combat it.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This paper has offered an overview of development and emergency aid efforts to Haiti before and after the devastating earthquake that rocked that state in January 2010. Specifically, it has analyzed the impact of food aid as it was practiced by the United States and United Nations on Haiti’s short and long-term food security. Throughout the paper I define food insecurity as a condition in which a person or group of people suffers from chronic or sporadic malnutrition caused either by a lack of culturally appropriate and sufficient food, the inability to access such food, wasteful use of available food, and/or unsustainable agricultural and economic policies regarding such food. I frame my understanding of foreign aid and its shortcomings around Roger Riddell’s book, Does Foreign Aid Really Work? Food aid in particular is tied if the donors send food grown in their own countries to the receiving country or untied if the donors send money for recipients to spend on local food. The United States and other individual governments who donated are called bilateral donors and the United Nations and other international governmental organizations are called multilateral.

The main argument of this thesis is that foreign food aid efforts to Haiti before and after the earthquake negatively impacted Haitian long-term food security by momentarily increasing access to and availability of food while neglecting that food’s proper utilization and stability. Although domestic issues certainly impact food security, most donors and authors tend to overemphasize domestic causes and to neglect foreign donors’ roles in both weakening domestic institutions and reinforcing food insecurity.

Development aid and emergency aid alike threaten domestic food security, but the latter is more dangerous for several reasons. First, especially in the case of natural
disasters, donors and domestic actors alike must deliver aid amidst the added difficulties caused by damaged infrastructure, injury and death, and potential political and social instability. Second, emergency aid efforts tend to focus almost exclusively on meeting short-term needs without paying much attention to long-term stability. This issue is difficult to overcome, since when people are dying the only ethical response seems to be to meet their needs as quickly as possible (even if meeting those needs quickly requires putting long-term agricultural stability on the back-burner). Finally, donors simply have less practice responding to emergencies than they do offering other types of aid. Even development aid—a fairly common practice—is largely an experimental endeavor. It is common sense that emergency responses would have even less precedent to draw from and thus be even more experimental in nature. Nonetheless, development aid and emergency aid share many similarities, so studying both creates a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between aid and food insecurity.

Throughout the substantive chapters of this thesis, a handful of sub-arguments support and expand upon the central argument that food aid in Haiti damaged food security. First, short-term food security does not necessarily imply long-term food security. This distinction is especially important for understanding the emergency response and recovery efforts that followed the earthquake. Although these appeared to be food secure by meeting short-term needs, their security actually masked the aid’s negative effect on long-term food security. Second, strong domestic institutions are vital to food security, but food aid typically undermines these institutions. This relationship is especially clear from NGOs’ infiltration during the development era and then their

175 Riddell, Does Foreign Aid Work?, 178.
entrenchment throughout the emergency response and recovery. Third, Haiti’s historical susceptibility to overt colonialism and colonial economic policies is useful for understanding its struggles with food insecurity and the ways in which the food aid response to the earthquake contributed to these struggles. This connection between history and the present is the motivation behind Chapter 3, which focuses on agriculture, food aid, and food security prior to the earthquake. Fourth, domestic instability within Haiti has historically tended to coincide with foreign intervention in that same state. In other words, times of crisis like the period following the earthquake tend to serve as excuses for foreign powers to intervene and exert control over Haitian affairs.

Implications

The data and analysis in the previous pages lead to a variety of broader conclusions about development and emergency food aid, food insecurity, and their relationship to one another. Although the potential insights are many, I give five implications that are the most practically useful for future research and aid reform. First, in order to more effectively incorporate long-term stability into emergency aid, scholars and policymakers alike ought to spend more time studying the unique possibilities and dangers posed by emergency aid. Of the three types of aid that he summarizes in Does Foreign Aid Work? Riddell states that “historically, the literature on aid and its impact has focused overwhelmingly on only one of these worlds: the world of official development aid.”\(^\text{176}\) One of Riddell’s focuses is to correct this inequality by analyzing official development, emergency aid and development aid offered by NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs). In my case study, I also argue that emergency aid and

\(^{176}\) Ibid, 8.
NGO-driven development aid are unique and important phenomenon and I thus study each as they occurred in that state, rather than only focusing on one type to the exclusion of the others.

Indeed, the distinction between each of the types of aid is typically not as clear-cut as donors may try to make it. Rather, development donors in Haiti often treated that state as if it were in a period of emergency even before the earthquake by offering large amounts of tied food aid. On the other hand, emergency aid (especially in the recovery phase) tended to focus on meeting immediate needs while also advocating for the country’s development (even though in practice most aid sacrificed long-term food security to short-term hunger relief).

In certain cases of development aid, some emergency-style assistance may be necessary. In certain emergency situations (like the Haitian earthquake), donors ought to focus on developing domestic institutions in conjunction with meeting immediate needs. As the Haitian case study demonstrates, however, donors have not historically integrated the different types of aid effectively. Rather, they often transfer the shortcomings of one type into their practice of another. If donors understand each class of aid more fully, they can then integrate the best practices from each into whatever type of aid they are pursuing.

The second implication of my findings is that donors must pursue deeper understandings of the countries they are assisting, no matter what type of aid they plan to offer them, if they want that aid to be effective. Riddell concludes that one of the most important findings from impact studies of aid in specific countries is that “the influence
and impact of aid is predominantly dependent upon, and determined by, a range of
country-specific variables.”\textsuperscript{177} Yet, “donor knowledge of country contexts and history has
often been found to be exceptionally shallow, with donor staff who are responsible for
making key decisions… ignorant even of relevant studies undertaken by their own
agency in the same recipient country.”\textsuperscript{178} Even though these officials typically have good
intentions to help, good intentions do not necessarily translate into effective aid,
especially when those intentions are not balanced out by knowledge and “intuitive
delicacy.”\textsuperscript{179} Indeed, they often simply mask the negative impact of aid.

Food aid provides a particularly clear illustration of how aid ought to differ
according to the state it is going to. Structural Adjustment Programs were especially
destructive in Haiti because they contributed to farmers’ loss of monopoly on rice and
chicken sales. Whereas a more service or industrial-based economy may not have
suffered as much under the weight of cheap foreign food imports, these same imports
severely undermined local agriculture in Haiti. The influx of tied food aid after the
earthquake continued to normalize a heavily dependent economy and an underproductive
domestic agriculture sphere. Similarly, donors’ dependence on NGOs for aid delivery in
the country was more damaging than it would have been in a country with strong
domestic institutions in place. Donors have consistently demonstrated an oversimplified
understanding of the Haitian plight in their interactions with that country. Rather than
utilizing periods of crisis to act alongside and strengthen Haitian organizations, they
blame instability on domestic corruption and simply bypass these institutions in

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid, 225.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid, 375.
\textsuperscript{179} Illich, \textit{To Hell With Good Intentions}. 
delivering assistance. Weaker institutions then increase the likelihood of future instability.

The third implication is similar to the second: NGOs should no longer be used to bypass the receiving country’s government, but should rather act alongside that government and other local and international organizations. This idea is prevalent in Riddell’s discussion of emergency aid. Two of the biggest issues with emergency aid that he mentions are its lack of coordination and its failure to help strengthen local capacities. Instead of working together to create a comprehensive framework for country-wide or at least region-wide emergency response, donors and the NGOs they use for distribution tend to act independently in the regions that they aim to assist. In so doing, those donors forgo the opportunity to strengthen their effectiveness by drawing on one another’s resources and knowledge while simultaneously denying local organizations (whether political, social, or something else) a say in how and what aid is given.

Donor reliance on individual NGOs is a result of a variety of factors. First, the move toward NGO-based delivery in the late 20th century was justified as an attempt to avoid government corruption and ensure aid’s delivery to the intended recipients. The change created an unnecessary dichotomy between government and NGOs—implying that donors must utilize one or the other rather than a combination of both. Since each fail on their own to ensure satisfactorily effective delivery, the two ought to be used together to make up for one another’s failings. Second, donors rely on NGOs in order to avoid the unique barriers caused by communicating with foreign officials and citizens. These are the barriers that Ivan Illich outlines in “To Hell with Good Intentions.” Haitians speak a

different language, have lower average levels of education, and lower socio-economic statuses than their typical donors. By communicating with both foreign-run NGOs and the domestic government and citizens, donors would have a more complete understanding of how to offer aid effectively, while still avoiding too heavy a reliance on weak domestic institutions. Ideally, domestic institutions would gradually replace NGOs as they grow stronger.

In fact, foreign aid of all types should be practiced with the long-term goal of creating self-sufficient, non-aid-dependent countries. Stated differently, aid ought to be a temporary solution rather than a perpetual state of being for receiving countries. This is the fourth implication of my research. Unfortunately, as it has historically been practiced in Haiti and other states, aid has had the opposite effect. Most donors focus the bulk of their resources on meeting immediate, obvious needs like those caused by a natural disaster or famine. In so doing, they spend resources that could be filtered toward long-term growth and stability. Short-term focus has two effects: receiving countries rely on aid for a longer period of time and need more aid during the period of assistance.\(^{181}\)

Food aid in particular highlights the dangers of narrowly-focused efforts and the barriers to pursuing long-term goals. Since food is necessary for survival, donors often offer short-term assistance out of a sense of moral obligation to preserve lives and alleviate suffering. At the same time, the more dependent individuals and countries become on free or cheap imported goods, the more food insecure they actually are, since they are subject to the instabilities of a globalized market and the agricultural productivity of a foreign state. Haiti represents an extreme case of this cyclical problem.

\(^{181}\) Ibid, 377.
Throughout its history, the country has been subject to foreign exploitation and unequal trade and aid relationships, which have weakened its own institutions and made foreign intervention appear necessary in times of crisis. The earthquake was simply the latest crisis to expose Haitian dependence on donors.

The final implication of this research is that aid is a complex system within a set of other complex systems. What I have studied is simply one part of this system as it manifested itself during one specific historical instance. The United States and the United Nations are two leading players within the framework of development and humanitarian aid, yet even these do not act independently. My analysis of their efforts is meant to be part of a larger discussion about food aid and food security. As Riddell argues throughout his work, aid is best understood in terms of its wide implications for those it is meant to assist, those who offer it, and the overall international mechanisms for aid. Aid has effects on the present as well as the future and the recipients as well as the donors. It is part of political, economic, and social systems and it both has effect on and is affected by each one of these. This complexity makes it challenging to understand aid or its impact fully. As a result, reform must necessarily be piecemeal and take place on a case-by-case basis until scholars and policymakers alike have a firmer understanding of each aspect of the foreign aid system.

Recommendations for further research

With the above implications in mind, future researchers may want to analyze a few subjects further. First, the small amount of literature that exists on emergency aid has not adequately distinguished between different types of humanitarian assistance. Future
research can analyze the unique circumstances and needs caused by natural disasters versus other emergencies like famines. Although combining sudden and more gradual emergencies is beneficial for simplicity’s sake, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters require a different degree and type of response in practice than famine, civil war, or other more predictable phenomena do. I suggest, then, that researchers analyze each of these categories individually in order to create more appropriate models for giving in each.

Another significant aspect of aid is the gap between promised aid and delivered aid. Especially during recovery, donors did not deliver all that they had promised. For example, the U.S. Office of the Special Envoy to Haiti reported that, in the middle of 2011, donors still had not disbursed 60% of the funds they had pledged for 2010-2011.182 It would be interesting to study the impact of unfulfilled promises on the donor-recipient relationship. Furthermore, if recipients depend on accessing promised food aid their food security is threatened when they do not receive that aid. Finally, research on why promised aid does not materialize could enable donors to offer more reliable aid in the future. For example, if the data demonstrates that certain NGOs use aid for their own needs rather than distributing it to the neediest people, donor governments could filter their future efforts through different NGOs or through the receiving country’s government.

Finally, future research specific to Haiti and the 2010 earthquake may want to focus on the gaps in aid delivery between different regions of that country. For example,

the divide between urban and rural delivery may offer interesting insights into the food security of those regions. After all, different regions of the same country may be more food insecure than others. In addition to creating a fuller picture of the aid effort and food security, this study may unearth food secure practices in place during the aftermath of the emergency. Just as some Haitian farmers utilized the food secure lakou system while their government and foreign powers pushed for a plantation-style economy in the 19th century, domestic farmers may have been pursuing food security after the earthquake despite foreign food aid. If such practices were in place, donors could model future aid efforts in Haiti around them in order to avoid the shortcomings of their historical methods of aid delivery. If such practices were not in place, future researchers could interview Haitian farmers and policymakers to discover why they did not pursue food security apart from foreign donors.

Getting it right: A closing anecdote

I introduced this thesis with a personal anecdote about my experience assisting with a Christmas party in Haiti a year after the earthquake. Although the event was not entirely ineffective (many kids did receive health kits, Bible story books, and toys and some received a hot meal), it was fraught with many of the same shortcomings that emergency and development aid demonstrated. It would be unfair for me to only share this tragic illustration of my experience in the country, however. Aside from the day spent helping with the Christmas party, I spent five or so days living at an orphanage, playing and cuddling with kids, and developing relationships with the Haitians running that orphanage. Despite the fact that I spent time almost every day ruing my
embarrassingly limited knowledge of Creole, I managed to build relationships of love and trust with children and adults alike, simply through spending time playing, dancing, laughing, worshipping, and smiling. Each day, when the children came home from school, they immediately ambushed us with hugs. They showed their love for us by bringing us chairs to sit in and then sitting on our laps. We showed our love for them by visiting them at school during the day and offering them balloons and glow sticks to play with at night. One day we installed makeshift lights in a couple of schools, using two liter bottles filled with bleach and water. Another day we worked alongside a couple of Haitian men we had just met to build a step at one of the school entrances.

The main difference between our interactions during the week and our interactions at the Christmas party at week’s end was that the former took place in the context of relationship and mutuality, whereas the latter were one-directional and impersonal. The types of relationships that we formed with the kids and other Haitians throughout the week took time and effort. They also led to much more fruitful and lasting results. We found out that the kids needed lights and steps built in their schools by speaking with them and their teachers. We built trust by working alongside them and allowing them to take the lead on certain projects. Our efforts were certainly not perfect, and we were only in the country for a week. Nonetheless, that week mattered to us and the people we interacted with much more than the couple of hours we spent trying to distribute items at the Christmas party.

When people are in the type of desperate need that many Haitians were in directly after the earthquake, the temptation has long been to simply pour as much aid out as
possible as efficiently as possible. Efficiency is certainly important in the wake of an
emergency, and donors must continue to search for more effective means of aid delivery.
They must simultaneously keep in mind, however, that they are assisting people with a
unique set of circumstances, needs, and desires that are very different than those of their
helpers. The deeper the relationships donors have with recipients, the more appropriate
their assistance will be. The more appropriate aid is, the less likely it will be to have
detrimental long-term effects like food insecurity.

Despite the criticisms throughout this thesis, aid is not a lost cause. Donors must
shift their focus from always doing to knowing. Haiti is simply one of many cases to
prove that failed aid is typically the result not of inaction, but of inappropriate action. The
2004 earthquakes and resulting tsunamis in parts of Asia provide another example. The
six biggest shortcomings of that effort, as outlined by Riddell, were its failure to provide
a comprehensive assessment of need, failure to coordinate donor activity, a lack of
preparedness, failure to consult with aid recipients, failure to practice aid according to
principles held by the donors, and confusion over what funds should be used for long-
term needs and which should be used for short-term.\footnote{Riddell, \textit{Does Foreign Aid Work?}, 347-349} Each of these six issues was also
present in the international response to Haiti’s earthquake. Haiti was certainly not the first
unsatisfactory development or emergency food aid effort and it will not be the last.
Improving aid will be a gradual process of learning and reforming. In order to learn what
is most appropriate for each donation effort in the future, donors must develop stronger
relationships with one another, scholars of aid, and most importantly, the people whom
their efforts intend to assist.
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