**Introduction**

 It is well known that Haiti is the poorest nation-state in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest states in the world. Poverty has been a chronic problem in Haiti, further exacerbated by the recent earthquake in the country. Government instability and environmental degradation has been a chronic problem in Haiti as well. The extreme poverty, government instability, and environmental degradation in the state have resulted in non-governmental organizations or NGO’s coming into the state. Many of these NGO’s want to help Haiti develop into a more prosperous state; however, some NGO’s are hindering Haiti’s development. NGO’s may be inadvertently promoting a cycle of poverty, dependency, and political instability. In this paper I am going to argue that NGO’s have a major impact in Haiti that’s both helps and hinders development in the state. Then I will also argue that Haiti will have to become overall less dependent on NGO’s in order to become a more developed state that promotes a higher quality of life for its citizens.

**Background**

 Haiti has had a history of substantial foreign involvement from both governmental and non-governmental actors throughout its history, even after it obtained its independence from France. The United States government has been heavily involved in Haitian affairs throughout its history. The U.S. put Haiti under a nineteen year military occupation from 1915 until 1934, under the pretenses of maintaining political and economic order in the state (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Non-governmental actors are also not new to Haiti as anywhere from 3,000 to 10,000 NGO’s were operating in the state before the devastating 2010 earthquake (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). Estimates on the number of NGO’s in Haiti depend on the source. Lessard (2010) asserts there were around 3,000 NGO’s in Haiti, while Zanotti (2010) asserts there around 8,000 to 9,000 NGO’s in the state before the 2010 earthquake.

 Even using the conservative estimates of only 3,000 NGO’s in the nation before the 2010 earthquake, Haiti has the highest per capita number of NGO’s in the Americas, and the second highest in the world (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010; Lessard, 2010). The concerns about NGO’s in Haiti are not new either, as there have been concerns about their presence in the state for decades (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). A potential problem could already be seen with the involvement of NGO’s in Haiti, even before the earthquake. The wide range of estimates for the number of NGO’s in Haiti could mean that hundreds or even thousands of NGO’s may be unaccounted for in the country. The projects and activities these NGO’s are participating in may also not be known.

 Foreign governments and non-governmental actors have been involved in Haiti throughout its history, in part because Haiti has had a history of political and economic instability. Some of the responsibility of political and economic instability in Haiti can be placed on foreign governments. Haiti was not officially recognized by the United States as a state until over a half century after its independence from France in 1862, and the state was also excluded from many international meetings (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Haitian non-recognition from the U.S. and exclusion from international meetings had racial overtones since Haiti has a black majority population. Haitian non-recognition and exclusion from the U.S., as well as international community back in the 1800’s has probably been a major contributor to the nation having economic and political instability throughout its history.

 All the political and economic instability in Haiti cannot be blamed entirely on the U.S. or other foreign actors. A stable government in Haiti has been a rare exception in the state over the past several decades. Dictatorships, short lived unstable governments, violent overthrows, corruption, and chaos have unfortunately been the rule not the exception in the state. Oppressive dictators Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc) ruled from the late 1950’s until his death in 1971, and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) ruled until 1986 when he was forced to flee the country (U.S. Department of State, 2011). After these dictatorships Haiti attempted to install democratic reforms in the state; however, its long term success was very limited. In 1990 Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected President in a relatively free and fair election; however, he has been in and out of power until his last service as President in 2004, as a result of military coups with the support of Haiti’s economic elites (U.S. Department of State, 2011). The last couple of decades in Haiti have been marked by a lack of stable political rule, as foreign actors including the United Nations have had to come into the region to help maintain order (U.S. Department of State 2011).

 Haiti has also been burdened by extreme poverty, creating both economic and political instability in the country. The GDP Per Capita in Haiti is only estimated at $1,200 as of 2011, compared to $48,300 in the U.S. (CIA World Factbook, 2012). Eighty percent of Haitians as of 2003 are in poverty, as four-fifths of Haiti’s population makes less than two dollars a day (CIA World Factbook, 2012; Schuller, 2009). Haiti also suffers from extreme inequality as, “One percent of Haiti’s population controls almost half of the country’s wealth.” (Schuller, 2009, p. 94). The state also suffers from extremely high unemployment as 40.6% of Haitians as of 2010 were unemployed (CIA World Factbook, 2012). Also of note, the U.S. is Haiti’s largest trading partner (U.S. Department of State, 2012). This last statistic is important because American NGO’s involved in the region that are influenced or funded by major U.S. corporations would probably want to maintain U.S. trade interests in Haiti. That could be both a good or bad thing for Haiti, depending if the trade is mutually beneficial or the trade only benefits the U.S. and its corporations.

 The extreme poverty, political chaos, and other severe issues Haiti has faced resulted in thousands of NGO’s coming into the country even before the 2010 earthquake occurred. The earthquake just gave NGO’s even more reasons to enter Haiti, as the January 2010 earthquake killed around 250,000 people with four fifths of the capital city of Port au Prince being destroyed (Zanotti, 2010). A majority of the government buildings in the capital city were also destroyed in the earthquake (Zanotti, 2010). Around eighteen percent of Haitian government officials were killed in the earthquake (Lessard, 2010). Imagine, if almost one-fifth of U.S. government personnel died in an event that would have devastating repercussions for our nation, just like it did for Haiti. Also, one and a half million people were displaced from the earthquake (Bradley, 2012). These people were in need of food, water, medicine, and other essential items necessary for survival. The earthquake further weakened an already weak Haitian government, and further exacerbated the massive poverty in the state. The Haitian government could not perform basic functions after the earthquake (let alone before) so the NGO’s were more than willing to take their place in providing those functions usually left to government.

 After the 2010 earthquake the number of NGO’s in Haiti is now estimated at around 10,000, giving the state the less than flattering nickname a “republic of NGO’s” (Bradley, 2012). U.S. based NGO’s are major donors to Haiti as fifty-one percent of NGO’s that operate in Haiti are headquartered or based in America (Ramachandran and Walz, 2012). Twenty one percent of NGO’s are based in Haiti, while seven percent are in France, and six percent in Canada (Ramachandran and Walz, 2012). However, according to Lessard (2010) Canadian based NGO’s are the second largest donors to the country. Out of the Canadian based NGO’s many of them seem to be located in French speaking Quebec (Lessard, 2010). This is interesting as it indicates that French or French speaking based NGO’s are heavily involved in Haiti. Maybe they feel a linguistic connection of some kind with French-speaking Haitians. These headquarter statistics also provide another possible issue with NGO involvement in Haiti. Over three-fourths of them are headquartered outside of the country. This means that it is possible for these foreign NGO’s to be more influenced by outside actors than the Haitian people, as outside actors may not have an understanding of the best interests of the Haitian people.

 The NGO’s in Haiti provide a variety of services to the citizens in the country. A majority of the NGO’s services are based in the health sector at eighteen percent and education at sixteen percent (Ramchandran and Walz, 2012). Many NGO’s are also focused on humanitarian assistance, human rights, agriculture, and economic development; while a smaller percentage is focused on issues like water/sanitation and the environment (Ramchandran and Walz, 2012). No matter what their focus is NGO’s end up taking the place of government in Haiti, and providing essential services to the state’s citizens. It is estimated that in a nation where sixty percent of the population is rural, NGO’s provide eighty percent of the public services to rural areas and seventy percent of the healthcare in the rural regions of Haiti (Lessard, 2010). These numbers show a complete breakdown of the Haitian government especially in the rural regions of the country. These numbers also indicate that rural areas are very dependent on NGO’s; as if a NGO for some reason fell apart due to a lack of funding from its supporters or just left the country, these Haitians could be in left in dire straits.

 Right now many Haitian NGO’s have more access to money than the Haitian government in helping to fund their projects in the country, as many of the NGO’s have more money at their disposal than the Haitian Ministry of Planning (Kristoff and Panrelli, 2010). NGO’s in Haiti are receiving a significant amount of that money from foreign government entities. “In 2007 about 70 per cent of the funding available for Haitian NGOs was distributed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development

Agency (CIDA)” (Zanotti, 2010, p.759). The USAID spent three hundred million dollars on projects in Haiti during the 2007-2008 fiscal year, and all of that money went to NGO’s (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). So while the Haitians are dependent on NGO’s for essential services, many NGO’s in the state are dependent on foreign governments for their funding. This also means that NGO’s are more accountable to government officials in Washington and Ottawa, than they are to the Haitian people.

**Way’s NGO’s help development in Haiti**

 It is important to note that many NGO’s do very positive things in Haiti that help its citizens and helps the country develop. Many of these positive benefits are apparent, as if NGO’s did not provide essential services to the Haitian people, many of them would frankly not be able to survive. NGO’s also provide jobs to Haitian as, “It has been estimated that NGOs provide up to one-third of all jobs within the formal economy.” (Schuller, 2009, p.91). This may not be good for the long term; however, it is better for Haitians to have work in the short term than be unemployed. There are also some benefits to NGO’s being in Haiti that focuses on economic development or agriculture policies that can help Haiti develop into a country that can sustain itself without NGO assistance.

 There are examples of NGO’s that have overall been beneficial to its citizens. Two of these successful NGO’s are Partners In Health (PIH) also known as Zanme Lamaste and Fonkoze (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010; Zanotti, 2010). PIH is an NGO that focuses on providing health care to Haitians (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010; Zanotti, 2010). “PIH has now become the primary provider of free health care in an area that extends from the coast to the border with the Dominican Republic, serving about 1.2 million people.” (Zanotti, 2010, p. 763). Fonkoze is an NGO that focuses on trying to lift Haitians out of poverty through providing loans and offering other financial services (Zanotti, 2010). “Fonkoze provides a series of services that include microcredit for women based on ‘solidarity groups’, individual business loans, savings products, currency exchange, money transfer (remittance) services, basic literacy, health maintenance, and business skills.” (Zanotti, 2010, p. 767).

 There are a few important reasons why PIH and Fonkoze are more successful in promoting long term development in Haiti than many of their counterparts in the state. Zanotti (2010) asserts that these two NGO’s are successful because they involve the Haitians in their decisions, address other problems other than their focus, and they gives Haitians the opportunity to succeed without being dependent on NGO’s in the future. For example PIH provides training to Haitians to become medical professionals (Zanotti, 2010). PIH also collaborates with the Haitian Ministry of Health in providing health care in the state (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). Both PIH and Fonkoze also deal with issues that may hinder effective health care or starting a successful small business (Zanotti, 2010). Both NGO’s try to address water quality issues in the state by finding long term solutions to provide clean water to Haitian communities (Zanotti, 2010). The policies these two NGO’s pursue help give Haiti the opportunity to become more developed in a way that benefits its citizens in the long term.

 Many of the people that work or serve in Haiti deeply care about it citizens, and genuinely want to help them. On a personal level, my father went on a mission trip to Haiti on La Gonave Island in January 2012 with the religious organization United Methodist Committee on Relief or UMCOR. They helped provide essential medical services to the residents on the island that normally did not have access to any medical help. One of the medical issues they tried to address was the infant mortality rates on the island. They also helped add an addition to a school on the island, helping children have a better educational environment. It is certainly better for UMCOR to be on that island than no one there at all. It would be a disaster if all the NGO’s suddenly left Haiti tomorrow. A nation that is already a borderline failed state would probably become a failed state if all NGO’s suddenly left the country.

**Ways NGO’s hinder development in Haiti**

 The main argument is that Haiti is going to have to become less dependent on NGO’s in order to become more developed. While NGO’s may be providing positive benefits in terms of essential services to the state’s citizens today or in the short term, NGO’s are not a long term solution to problems the state faces. NGO’s are also not a long term solution to development or a higher standard of living in the country. The next several paragraphs are going to explain more the main reasons why NGO’s have negative long-term impacts on the state’s development. Some of these reasons are interconnected and relate to one another. It is important to note that most of these NGO’s are not intentionally trying to harm or hurt Haitian citizens. Many NGO’s are also providing both positive and negative benefits to Haiti at the same time. Some Haitian NGO’s are just inadvertently promoting programs or policies that are negatively impacting Haiti’s development in the long term.

 One way NGO involvement in Haiti hinders the state’s development is that they are keeping the state in a cycle of poverty. It is very difficult for a nation state to develop that is not able to get the majority of its citizens out of poverty. NGO’s may be saving Haitian lives in the immediate short term; however, they are really not raising their standard of living over the long term. Schuller (2009) asserts that many NGO’s in Haiti are reinforcing the structural and economic inequalities in the country. NGO’s do provide jobs to Haitians; however, in order to receive a well-paying job, similar to a middle class job in the U.S., you have to be well educated. Unfortunately, many Haitians do not even have a basic level of education to obtain these jobs. Therefore, a very small percentage of the Haitian population is qualified for these types of NGO jobs and many of them end up going to the small class of Haitian elites or foreigners (Schuller, 2009). If Haitians are not given the opportunity to obtain good paying jobs, Haiti will not be able to reduce its massive economic inequalities, and end the cycle of poverty in the country necessary in order to develop.

 Another way NGO’s in Haiti hinders the state’s development is that they keep the state in a cycle of dependency. As mentioned earlier in the paper NGO’s provide the overwhelming majority of public services to the people in the state (Lessard, 2010). NGO’s provide over seventy percent of public services in the state including medical, education, and sanitation services (Lessard, 2010). Haitians rely or are more dependent on NGO’s to provide public services than the Haitian government (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). Haitian dependency on NGO’s is a serious problem for the nation’s government and people because NGO’s are not bound or guaranteed to remain in the country. These NGO’s may also not be providing the best type of help or assistance the Haitian people need. Haiti will also not be able to develop further if the state continues to remain dependent on NGO’s in the future.

 Haiti’s dependency on NGO’s is related to other negative aspects of NGO involvement in the country. These problems include legitimacy, democracy, and accountability. First, the lack of legitimacy of the Haitian government is caused in part by the state’s dependency on NGO’s. The Haitian government has had serious problems in developing legitimacy throughout its history; as the state has struggled to deal with corruption, violence, and providing public services like education or health care (Lessard, 2010). Today, many Haitians have little or no trust in their government, further eroding the state’s governmental legitimacy (Lessard, 2010). NGO’s make the legitimacy of the Haitian government more difficult as they can usually offer higher salaries to public servants than the government can (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010; Schuller, 2009; Zanotti, 2010). The power of NGO’s in the state is currently a major roadblock to the Haitian government developing the legitimacy it will need in order to develop. Haiti will not be able to develop if the state’s government cannot gain more legitimacy than it currently has.

 The lack of strong democratic institutions in Haiti is another negative aspect of NGO involvement in the country. Haiti has had problems with developing democratic institutions throughout its history, as Papa Doc and Baby Doc imposed dictatorial rule on the state for decades (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Democratically elected Presidents in the state have also struggled to effectively govern; as military coups and other political violence are unfortunately commonplace (U.S. Department of State, 2011). This political instability has weakened democratic institutions in the country. However, the lack of democracy in Haiti is caused in part by the state’s dependency on NGO’s as well. NGO officials are unelected by the Haitian people. This is a problem because since many Haitians are dependent on NGO’s, a government that is even democratically elected carries less clout or legitimacy than the NGO’s operating in the country. Haiti cannot become more developed if its democratic institutions do not become more powerful than NGO influence in the state.

 The lack of strong democratic institutions in Haiti leads to another negative aspect of NGO’s involvement in the country. NGO’s suffer from a serious accountability problem in Haiti. “The accountability of international NGOs is mainly to their donors, foreign donors.” (Lessard, 2010, p. 42). This means that the NGO’s have little accountability to the Haitian government or people, in which they are so dependent on for services. This is a serious problem because since NGO officials are not elected, the Haitian people currently have few legal avenues to hold them accountable. This means that if the NGO’s are doing something in a region of the country that is not beneficial for its citizens, they have few means of holding NGO’s accountable, other than through violence, which just leads to more serious problems. Haiti will not be able to become more developed until NGO’s are able to be held more accountable for their actions by the Haitian government and people, not foreign donors.

 Another way NGO involvement in Haiti hinders the state’s development are that they are sometimes not able to or do not want to provide certain services necessary for the stability and development of a state. An example of an important public service many NGO’s in Haiti do not care to perform is picking up garbage. Schuller (2009) addresses this issue, as he asserts that the Haitian government has not provided much in the way of trash pick-up at all; as it is commonplace to see trash piled up literally on the streets. This trash impedes traffic flow as in one Haiti city, “…it often took a public transit (or taptap) 45 minutes to travel 4 blocks…”, due to the trash piled up in the street (Schuller, 2009, p.88). Then of course the trash pile ups create sanitation issues as well. Many NGO’s and their foreign donors do not want to help clean up trash, because, “Picking up trash is not “sexy,” like building schools or a clinic.” (Schuller, 2007, p.89). Haiti is not going to be able to develop if NGO’s or the Haitian government in the long term cannot perform an unglamorous, but necessary and simple task of picking up the trash.

 Another example of a service that NGO’s are not able to provide or should not be providing is performing military operations against paramilitary forces. Paramilitary forces have been a serious problem in Haiti as, “Legitimacy and authority of political leaders have come as much from the power from these militia as any benefits from the staging of internationally-promoted elections.” (Carey, 2005, p.331). In my opinion it is understandable in this case why NGO’s would and should not be providing military forces. NGO officials and workers in Haiti probably do not plan on getting killed in the country. It is probably not a good course of action to have multiple NGO’s engaging in mercenary like operations against paramilitary forces in the country. This could lead to more violence and more danger, as hundreds of private military forces are fighting each other in the country. NGO’s cannot and should not take the place of the Haitian military in combating paramilitary forces in the state. Haiti will not become more developed if paramilitary forces continue to have major influence in the country, as NGO’s are not the solution to that problem.

**Possible Solutions to help NGO’s help development in Haiti**

 While NGO’s have both positive and negative impacts on development in Haiti, there is a place for NGO’s in Haitian society, especially in the short term. NGO’s will have to make certain changes to help themselves be more effective in helping Haiti develop into a more stable and prosperous state in the long term. Other actors involved in Haiti, like foreign governments and donors that influence NGO’s will have to make changes as well, in order to help NGO’s become more effective in Haiti development. Last and most importantly the Haitian government will have to make changes, in order to help NGO’s be more effective in Haiti’s development and help their own citizens improve their quality of life.

 One important step that NGO’s will have to take in order to have a more beneficial impact on development in Haiti is to better coordinate their efforts with the Haitian government. NGO’s need to work together with the government and help support it. NGO’s cannot try to take the place of government, or work and compete against the government. More public-private partnerships between NGO’s like PIH and the government will be more helpful in promoting Haiti’s development (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). NGO’s and the Haitian government working together will help the country become less dependent on NGO’s over time. NGO and government cooperation will also help NGO’s be more responsive to the needs of the Haitian people, than foreign governments or donors. NGO and government coordination will also help strengthen the legitimacy of the Haitian government, thus helping the country become more developed.

 Foreign governments and donors are also going to have to do their part in order for NGO’s to be more beneficial to Haiti’s development than they currently are. Foreign governments and donors are going to have to provide more of their financial support to the Haitian government than NGO’s (Kristoff and Panrelli, 2010). Foreign governments and donors will also have to let NGO’s help implement Haitian government programs, not their own. Foreign governments and donors are also going to have to let the Haitian government have more authority in regulating the activities of NGO’s than it currently has (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). If more financial support and authority is given to the Haitian government, the state should become less dependent on NGO’s over time. These measures should increase the accountability of NGO’s to the Haitian people. These measures should also increase the legitimacy and political stability of the Haitian government, in order to help the country develop over the long term.

 The Haitian government will need to do its part in order for NGO’s to be more beneficial to the development of Haiti. The government of Haiti will have to be able to regulate, coordinate, and oversee the activities of NGO’s better in order to make NGO’s more accountable to the Haitian people than they currently are (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). The government should know what NGO’s are in the country, and also know what activities or programs they are promoting. If the government receives more foreign aid, they will also have to be able to spend or use the aid wisely. If the government does not use foreign aid wisely, international donors will probably stop funding them, and just fund the NGO’s again. The Haitian government will also have to deal with its corruption in order to regulate NGO’s more effectively. Haiti, with UN help in the short term, will also need to have a more formidable military to deal with paramilitaries in the country, that NGO’s should not be dealing with. If the Haitian government does it part, they will increase their own legitimacy, increase NGO accountability to the Haitian people, and decrease Haiti’s dependency on NGO’s in order to help the state develop.

 Another important step that NGO’s will have to take in order to have a more beneficial impact on Haiti’s development is sign and follow the NGO Code of Conduct (Kristoff and Panarelli, 2010). The full name NGO Code of Conduct for Health Systems Strengthening is designed to help mainly medical NGO’s promote public health policies in the state that benefits its citizens instead of hurting them (NGO Code of Conduct, 2009). PIH was one of the NGO’s that signed and helped draft the NGO Code of Conduct. Action Aid International USA, African Medical and Research Foundation, and Health Alliance International were some of the other major health care or medical NGO’s involved in the drafting of the NGO Code of Conduct. The NGO Code of Conduct is divided into Six Articles similar in a way to the U.S. Constitution, as each of the six articles deal with six main ways that medical NGO’s can improve in providing health care services to Haiti (NGO Code of Conduct, 2009).

 The NGO Code of Conduct addresses most of the steps necessary to help promote development in Haiti. NGO’s should provide more a supporting role to government health care policies and programs in Haiti, not dominate or take over them (NGO Code of Conduct, 2009). The NGO Code of Conduct addresses the need of NGO and Haitian government cooperation. NGO’s should also try to help provide Haitians adequate training and pay to work for the government or private businesses beneficial to Haiti, rather than to NGO’s (NGO Code of Conduct, 2009). NGO’s that follow the NGO Code of Conduct should improve NGO accountability, increase Haitian legitimacy, improve NGO/Haitian government cooperation, and decrease Haitian dependency on NGO’s. NGO’s that follow the NGO Code of Conduct should help Haiti become more developed and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

**Conclusion**

 NGO’s are probably not leaving Haiti any time in the near future. This is not necessarily a bad thing as long as NGO’s try to promote policies and programs that help the state’s development, not hinder it. NGO’s like PIH and Fonkoze that promote policies that help Haiti development are vital to the state’s development. These NGO’s allow local input, work with the Haitian government, and providing training to Haitians in a meaningful occupation like health care. These NGO’s help Haitians get out of poverty, strengthen government legitimacy, and promote democracy over the long term. On the other hand NGO’s that promote policies that hinders Haiti development causes multiple problems for Haiti over the long term. Haiti will remain dependent on foreign NGO’s, the government will remain weak, and the state will remain in a cycle of poverty.

 It is important to note that NGO’s are not the only actors involved in whether or not Haiti develops in the future. The Haitian government, foreign governments, and foreign donors to NGO’s will have to do their part as well. NGO’s in Haiti may be implementing all the right programs and policies to help Haiti; however, if these three other actors do not do their part, Haiti will remain underdeveloped. Foreign governments and donors will have to provide more funds to the Haitian government instead of NGO’s. The Haitian government will also have to use those funds wisely, and show some ability to regulate, as well as coordinate with NGO’s. Over the long term many of the public services NGO’s are providing today should be provided by the Haitian government in the future. None of these things are going to be easy to do. Foreign governments and donors will be reluctant to give money to a currently unstable Haitian government. The Haitian government has also had a history of instability and corruption well before NGO’s arrived in the state. NGO’s with their foreign donors may also not like losing the power and influence they currently have in Haiti, or prestige in the international community. With their major influence they currently have in Haiti, NGO’s will help decide whether Haiti develops into a more prosperous state , or remains the poorest state in the Western Hemisphere for decades to come.

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