

The Short Leg of the Three-Legged Stool: Power, Social Equity, and Sustainable Development in Haiti

Haley Flora class of 2014

ENVS Major at Lewis and Clark

Research Questions:

1. "How does discourse surrounding sustainable development reveal the assumptions relating to inclusivity of different organizations?"
2. "Which groups are able to implement sustainable development and succeed in achieving the third leg of sustainable development, that is social equity. (Social equity entail creating inclusivity and minimize power relationships characterized by domination)?"

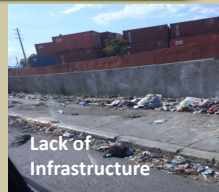
Why Haiti?:

Recent critiques of sustainable development argue that SD does not help the affected populations, and instead serves to spread the influence of the Global North (USA, Europe) Haiti troubles this blanket critique in two ways.

1. Haiti has serious environmental and economic problems
 - Lack of infrastructure
 - Deforestation
 - History of instability and corruption of the government
 - Poorest nation in the western Hemisphere
 - Recent crises, including the earthquake of 2010
2. The recent international focus on Haiti has led to a high concentration of Aid organizations. This allows one to analyze the power dynamic between different groups and aid organizations, troubling the North/South power axis.



Deforestation



Lack of Infrastructure

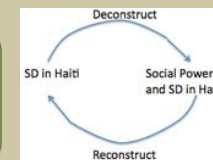
Methodology

Preformed discourse analysis of interviews, website text, images from websites, social interactions

- For text: hermeneutics, based on internal structure and common sense/assumptions
- Images using Stuart Hall's representations, looking at roles in images and who the image is created for or the ideal spectator
- Social interactions, using embarrassment as sign of shame, and signs of respect.

The Theory

I utilize theory to generate a criteria of when there are inequitable power relationships, connoting a lack of inclusivity, and what the characteristics of more equitable relationships are. Foucault's theory of power-knowledge-discourse is helpful in critiquing, or deconstructing sustainable development. Foucault's peer and critic, is helpful in reconstructing; he sheds light on when dialogue and constructed roles can be inclusive. Slavoj Zizek both critiques universal human rights, and reconstructs inclusive alternatives



Non-Profits



This picture is from one of the NGOs websites. It reveals how non-profits characterize Haitians in order to get donations

- Assume that NGOs speak for the people, this makes including the Haitian voice unnecessary
- In order to get donations, must cast Haitians as miserable and in need. This creates dependencies and un-empowered roles
- Assume that Haitians are ignorant about deforestation and need to be "trained" not to do bad behaviors.
- UN allowed for some discussion, unlike all the others, but the only discussion allowed was Haitians asking for help using a predetermined format (not allowing for actual inclusivity).
- All share common sense that giving is bad. They try to either create responsibility through labor or teach a man to fish. The Haitians that are included are only included as laborers and must labor to get aid

For-Profits

- 2 of the 4 chose to be for-profit to counter issues with non-profits.
- The answer to the problem of giving is not giving. Ownership is always reaffirmed through exchange of money, and thus sustainable development solutions are always valued.
- The exchange of money creates a role for Haitians as consumers, rather than commodifying them based on their needs
- Allows for flexibility and assumes that Haitians have valuable knowledge, for example Dlo changed their distribution based on the suggestions of the Haitian's involved.
- Gils (CEO of Constrmuex) and Thread assume Haitians are already empowered and entrepreneur



This is a water kiosk from Dlo Haiti. It is staffed by locals and provides clear water to the area

Haitian Villagers



Farmer:

- Said that he would always do what he is told, because Haitians must do what they are told to get what they are offered by NGOs which is not inclusive.
- He assumed that NGOs will always be there to help, which creates a dependent relationship and is not sustainable nor self-sufficient.
- His picture was owned by the NGO. This shows that Haitians are a commodity sold to donors.

Young Men:

- The only solution they see for their own situation or Haiti is more NGOs revealing dependency and decreased agency for Haitians.

Pastor John

- Education is needed from NGOs, not to unlearn bad behaviors but to teach alternatives. (This was the only major difference between the non-profits and Haitians).

TABLE OF ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED

Name of Person/Organization Interviewed	Type of Organization	Type of Analysis Used	Brief Description of Aims
Thread	For-profit business	Hermeneutics	Sustainable convert trash into clothing material, "thread".
Construmex, Gils	Non-profit NGO	Hermeneutics	Convert trash into biodiesel
Dlo Haiti, Jim Chu	CEO of for-profit business named Construmex	Hermeneutics	Sustainably provide clean, safe drinking water to Haitians
HSD	For-profit business. The CEO Jim Chu was interviewed	Hermeneutics	Build sustainable housing and co-ops.
United Nations Civil Affairs	Non-profit IGO	Hermeneutics	Address needs of grassroots organization.
LDS Church	For-Profit business	Hermeneutics	Build community relationships through the planting of trees with community members.
Haiti Communiere	Local pastor/ Haitian villager	Hermeneutics Visual	Convert trash into sustainable building materials.
Seguin Foundation	Haitian villager	Hermeneutics Visual	Protecting watershed/ ecosystem.
Pastor John	Haitian farmer	Hermeneutics	Served as translator from Creole to English.
3 Young Haitian Villagers	Religious Organization	Hermeneutics	Hopeful receivers of NGO aid.
Old Farmer	Non-profit NGO	Hermeneutics, Visual, Social	Direct receiver of NGO aid organization called Ithaca.

Conclusions

For-profits are currently implementing the most inclusive form of sustainable development. This makes sense because for-profits have to sell a service to the Haitian consumer, thus they have to be inclusive in order to understand what Haitians value enough to pay for. Additionally for-profits create job opportunities for entrepreneurs. Finally, for-profits are more flexible. This is important because the for-profits have to continually get information from Haitians and change accordingly. **Non-profits, especially NGOs, are the least inclusive,** but they have to potential to be the providers of inclusivity. Non-profits in Haiti are not inclusive because in order to justify their existence in Haiti and to collect donations they must characterize Haitians as being in extreme need. **However, NGOs could facilitate including of the diverse voices of Haitians in the international discussion.** The theory indicates that inclusive speech is not conscripted or delegated. This makes the task I appoint to NGOs all the more difficult. **Providing access to the Internet** could allow Haitians to participate in the international discussion without being subjected to particularly dominating forms of social power. Additionally Internet access would allow Haitians to both organize with each other, and attract the attention of the international media when inequity does occur.